

GARY KRAHMER

TAPE 2, Side 1

December 1, 1995

M.O'R.: This is a continuation of the interview with Gary Krahmer at his home on December the 1st, 1995.

So which one of your parents would you say played the greater role in just sort of keeping track of you kids, or was there a division there?

G.K.: Although it wasn't recognized, perhaps, at the time, I certainly think it was my mother that played that role, because Dad was so busy ...

M.O'R.: Sure.

G.K.: ... with the farm, and yeah, she played the greater role in riding herd, if you will, on us kids. Yeah. Yeah, she made sure we had lunches for school and that we had clean clothes to wear to school, and just made sure everything worked in that regard.

I should mention my first two years in school, grade one and two ...

M.O'R.: I was going to ask you about school, actually. You're anticipating all my questions.

G.K.: There were -- interestingly again, related to the two synods of the Lutheran church, there were two schools in the Blooming area; one immediately adjacent to the St. Peter's Lutheran Church, which is a Missouri Synod, and there was the parochial school for those kids who were raised in that particular church, and they went to that school. But immediately adjacent to that was

another school, identical in terms of its architecture, that was a public school.

And we kids, then, we walked to that public school for our - my first two years of grade school, which again was very interesting because if I'm not mistaken I think we used the same outdoor restrooms, both schools, but here all of these kids went to this one school, and then all of we who weren't a part of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church had to go to the public school - which was fine, but it seemed kind of strange.

Both of those schools are now gone, of course, and all of us then went to the Cornelius public school.

M.O'R.: Oh, so those schools disappeared ...

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: ... while you were attending school?

G.K.: Yes. Yeah, that's right. Yeah, they -.

M.O'R.: And you couldn't - you were barred from attending the Missouri Synod school?

G.K.: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Mm-hmm. Yeah. You had to be a Missouri Synod Lutheran in order to be allowed to go to that school. Yeah. Yeah, it was always kind of interesting.

Of course, we had our little conflicts between the two schools, and maybe that was good, but - football games and stuff like that, you know, one school playing the other.

M.O'R.: Was there religious training, then, as part of the curriculum in the ...

G.K.: In the parochial ...

M.O'R.: ... Missouri Synod school?

G.K.: Yes. Yeah, that's right. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

M.O'R.: What was the public school like? Was it the ...

G.K.: Well, it was ...

M.O'R.: ... the classic one-room schoolhouse or ...

G.K.: Yes, it was. Yeah, a classic one-room schoolhouse, all eight grades, one teacher. And as I mentioned, no indoor plumbing. An outdoor privy. And of course we had - that's what we had at home, also. We didn't have indoor plumbing other than water to the kitchen during my early years, and we had an outdoor privy on the farm. Thank goodness for Sears and Ward catalogues, because that was the toilet paper at those - during those times.

But yeah, all eight grades, and I couldn't qualify the education we received at that time. I was too young to really appreciate or not appreciate that. That's a very vague memory anymore, those first two years of school.

M.O'R.: Do you recall whether you liked school or not?

G.K.: I liked school during the grade school years, yeah. I didn't - I wasn't that good of a student, but I enjoyed the school. And perhaps the reason for that is that I got away from some of the work on the farm. That might be why I enjoyed the school. But I was never that good of a student, and I can't say that I particularly enjoyed high school. I didn't grade well, and I was so busy always on the farm - that not being an excuse for not getting good grades, because my middle brother Robert got very good grades when he was in high school. But I guess I would rather sit and listen to Joe Louis fights on the radio or some - or Amos 'n Andy or something like that rather than study, you know.

But, you know, we made it through high school all right.

M.O'R.: What about the social aspects of school? Did you enjoy getting together with other kids and then later on in high school, I suppose, there was interest developing in dating and this kind of thing?

G.K.: Yeah, right. There was some of that. I was never involved with any of the organized social clubs in school. Simply I had to get home after school in order to work on the farm, so I couldn't do the extra time if there were a need for that. But I - like I say, I didn't get involved in any of the clubs as such in school.

In terms of dating, I probably - my parents finally allowed me to buy an automobile when I was a senior in high school, and that's probably when my dating really started, although they allowed us to use their car from time to time to go out in the evening. So I suppose there was some dating that occurred in Dad's car, you know.

M.O'R.: What was that first car?

G.K.: My first automobile was a 1940 Ford. Four door or two door? I can't even remember; two door or four door. And it was obviously just the greatest automobile in the world, I thought, because it was painted chartreuse green, had fender skirts, white-wall tires. Really, really nice automobile, you know.

M.O'R.: Sounds like it.

G.K.: Oh, I've got to share something else there. I paid \$400 for it, which was a tremendous amount of money in 1951 for me, although I had the money. The reason I had the money is because when we were kids and we were old enough to carry a golf bag, our

parents allowed us to be caddies at the Forest Hills golf course every Thursday afternoon, which was men's day at the golf course.

And I got to know the owner of the golf course very well, and for some reason he took a liking [to me], and so I always caddied for him every Thursday, and we would get paid - for 18 holes we would get paid maybe two or three dollars for caddying, carrying their bag for them.

And the minute we got home we would give that money to our mother, and she would put it in a savings account for us kids. And that went on for years. Any time we would earn money working on somebody else's farm or doing our caddying for the golfers, that money would go into our savings account. So then when it came time for me to buy a car, I had the money to buy the car. That was probably, speaking of values again, a very strong value that was instilled in us is saving, saving money, and I know that's still with all of us today. No doubt about it, very strong believers in saving money for when you need it sometime in the future. Yeah, we're not much on credit card people.

M.O'R.: Well, yeah, that actually was another question I had. Obviously you were born in the middle of the Depression ...

G.K.: Right.

M.O'R.: Maybe even a little past the middle of the agricultural depression.

G.K.: Right.

M.O'R.: But the - so you probably would have been moving out of it by the time you were old enough to start remembering ...

G.K.: Yes. Right.

M.O'R.: ... things, but how well did your family fare in the Depression and just how well off were they generally?

G.K.: Yeah. Being farmers, being the fact that the farm was paid for, they really did well during the Depression, probably better than most. Raised their own food, had their own land. They were able to sell their product during those times, and therefore they fared very, very well during the Depression. Never went hungry or anything of that nature. Always had a warm bed to sleep in. Really did well. Really did well. Just good fortune that they owned the land that they were farming, otherwise they probably would have had a difficult time.

It wouldn't surprise me if my parents were even able to save a little money during the Depression. They probably did. I don't know that, but they probably did, because they were such strong believers in putting away a little money every month for whatever might occur.

M.O'R.: Back to your school experience just for a moment, even though you characterized yourself as a marginal student during the grade school and high school years, I'm just wondering if you had any favorite subjects during that time?

G.K.: I always enjoyed math, and I still enjoy mathematics or algebra or whatever today. That was one of my more favorite subjects, and also all of us boys, at the insistence of my father, were in the FFA class, and we always enjoyed that, and it was especially - I especially enjoyed the shop work that were allowed to do as part of our FFA - Future Farmers of America class and enjoyed in that regard working with metal. That's something we

didn't do a lot of on the farm, and I always enjoyed seeing what you could do with metal to make various things. So I guess those were kind of the two favorite things that I enjoyed in school in terms of class work.

That reminds me also back on the farm that we did a lot of our own metal forging on the farm, and we had this - what I - I can describe it something like a barbecue, only we used coal in here to heat metal, and then we had an anvil. And of course any time we had to - we broke a metal part on a machine or something like that, oftentimes we would make our own, using the forge and heating the metal and bending it to whatever shape it had to be, drilling holes in it and so forth, which is always kind of interesting.

M.O'R.: I guess farmers in those days had to be machinists as well?

G.K.: Yes. Yes. Yeah, that's right.

M.O'R.: Maybe not precision machinists but ...

G.K.: No, not precision, by any means. [laughs]

M.O'R.: But you knew how to repair something and make it work again, eh?

G.K.: Yeah. Right. Right. Cutting the grain, we always did that with what they called a binder, and this machine would cut the grain down. It was pulled with horses, of course, and it would cut the grain down, and the grain would come up some - what we called draperies, which were canvas-type things that were mobile, and gather it into a bundle, and then it would automatically tie a string around it, and then drop it off.

Then of course we would have to come through and we would shock, or set these things up in rows. And then of course eventu-

ally we'd come in with horses and wagons, and somebody would throw the bundles on the wagon, and somebody on the wagon would load them, and then they'd take them into the threshing machine.

And although I was not born at the time, something that you had to be careful with is when you were cutting the grain you had to be careful of animals in the fields, like cats and dogs, because you could sure cut them up with this machine, you know.

My brother, Calvin, at two years old, and I don't want to fault my mother here, but somehow he got out in the field, and Dad was cutting grain, and - whew - to this day I don't know why he didn't lose his leg, but he got his leg cut. He was standing in the grain and Dad didn't see him, and boy, he got cut with that binder.

And like I said, he was two years old, and he had 17 stitches, which was a lot of stitches for a small leg like that. But it turned out really good, and it's just as good a leg as anybody else, you know. But like I say, I wasn't born at that time, but that's a story that is still told about, you know, in our family.

M.O'R.: Sure. It must have been a close call for sure.

G.K.: Oh, yeah. Yeah. My dad always said it was the horses that saved the leg, because I presume he must have shouted or yelled when that binder hit his leg, and Dad said that immediately the horses stopped, just dead stopped. So they knew was something wrong.

M.O'R.: So they sensed it before your dad did, then?

G.K.: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it was interesting when we were using horses for the farming how reasonably intelligent they were, especially in operating machinery. Like plowing, the horses have

to be in certain positions. One of them has to be in the furrow that's from where the last plow went down, and the other two have to be above the furrow, and you never had to steer them as such. They knew where they had to be.

I recall putting hay in the barn. We never had balers at that time; it was all loose hay. And I would operate or run the horse that pulled the hay up in the barn, and it would be very hard for me to describe this specifically, but anyway, they had some tongs that went into the hay and then would pull it up on a cable, and then it would attach to a runner and go into the barn. And there was a horse that would pull those big gobs of hay up into the barn.

And all I ever did with that horse, he was so - he had done this so often, all I ever did was hook the cable up and release the cable. The horse knew exactly what to do. I never had to steer him, never had to say "whoa" or "giddup" or anything like that, you know. He just knew.

M.O'R.: He knew when to stop and when to start?

G.K.: Yeah, he just knew what to do. Yeah. Interesting.

M.O'R.: Did your father eventually buy a tractor, then?

G.K.: Yes. Eventually - let's see; when was that? The first thing he purchased was a caterpillar, one of course they don't make now. It was a fairly small one. And I believe that that first Caterpillar was purchased - I think they got it before I got out of high school, which would have been 1949 or '50. They bought this used Caterpillar, and that was primarily used for plowing. Plowing was - plowing the soil was always hard work, hard for the horses and hard for the guy running the plow. And that's primarily what it was used for.

But to my knowledge, we never ever bought another tractor, and that didn't occur until my brother took over the farm. Dad still used horses when he retired from the farm for a lot of his work - which was in 19 - what was that? About '54, I think, when Cal took over the farm. Something like that.

M.O'R.: This is sort of backtracking ...

G.K.: Sure.

M.O'R.: ... way, way back to close to where we started this interview, although it has to do with the farming operation there. I wanted to ask you when we were talking about the various wastes that were discharged to the Tualatin, what kind of wastes came off of your farm that went into the river?

G.K.: Oh, my. Well, I guess it wasn't that serious, when I think about it.

All of the cattle waste would be piled up in the winter time. Now, certainly there had to be some leeching out of there, and especially if you get rain like we've had here in the last week or so, some leeching out of there that would eventually get into the river.

We also had our garbage disposal location on the river bank, and although there wasn't a lot of stuff like there is today, but there were tin cans and a lot of glass things that were thrown in the garbage, and they were dumped along the river, so there had to be some leeching out of there into the river.

But probably the most prominent thing, and I know this is not the case today, but when we finally put in inside toilet facilities, there was a septic tank installed at that time, and then

there was a drain line out of the septic tank that went directly to the river.

M.O'R.: Not into a drain field, then?

G.K.: No. Although that was a good third of a mile of drain line, clearly in the winter time it would discharge into the river. Now, in the summer time it's possible that that liquid seeped into the soil before it got to the river, but that was the way you did it in those days, you know, you'd just run that thing out to someplace, either the river or the ditch along the road, in order to get rid of those waters.

Those were the primary things. Now, we didn't use commercial fertilizers in those days, nor did we use any pesticides, so therefore there wouldn't have been any of those particular things that would have been washed into the river. So it was primarily leeching from animal manures, septic tank overflow drain, and the garbage dumps.

M.O'R.: So you'd fertilize with manure?

G.K.: Fertilized with manure exclusively, yeah. Yeah, that was another chore in the winter time, hauling manure. Yeah, that was fun. Loading up the old manure spreader, and of course again with the horses, you know, and pull it out in the fields and spread this stuff all over the land out there.

Another thing we always had to do, not every year would we cover the entire farm, but we would also have to lime the soil. The soil in the valley is of such an acid nature that you have to put lime on it every once in a while to sweeten it up, or it will increase the - [pause] - pH. For goodness sakes, I shouldn't forget that term! It's been with me all my career.

And that was all done by hand, and we did that - all of the lime would come in hundred-pound sacks. So you'd load these sacks into the old box wagon, the same wagon we used to haul the grain to town in order to get it processed for cattle feed, load the lime in there, and then Dad had built a box on the back end of the wagon that you could set on there, and you'd dump the lime in there. And then I would drive the horses down the fields, and he would stand back there and throw this lime out onto the land. And he would just be white as a sheet at the end of the day, you know. [laughs] I don't know whether there's any harm in breathing in lime dust, but he certainly breathed in a lot of it during his life. Oh, my. Yeah, that was interesting.

M.O'R.: Probably didn't do him any good, did it?

G.K.: No, I'm sure it didn't do him any good.

M.O'R.: Well, another couple - just sort of follow-up points on stories, you mentioned the chartreuse white-walled '40 Ford, a couple points on that. One was that you brought it with proceeds from your caddying job. I'm just wondering if you yourself golfed in those days?

G.K.: No, I didn't in those - well, no, I can't say that. Because of my good friendship with the owner of the Forest Hills golf course, he allowed us kids to play golf at no charge, and he would even provide us with the golf clubs and the golf balls. So whenever we had the opportunity, which was probably two or three times a year, we did go down and play nine holes of golf, yeah.

But I really didn't get seriously interested in golf - and I can't say I'm a real serious golfer today, although I really enjoy it and play a lot, until - actually until I went to Walla Walla,

Washington. The five-and-a-half years I spent up there, that's when I really got interested in playing golf, but we just had so little time available to us when we were kids. But we did now and again play, yeah.

M.O'R.: Well, and then the other follow-up question I had about that was that we had just sort of touched on the topic of dating in your senior year when you got the '40 Ford.

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: I'm just wondering what kind of things you did? Did you go to the movies or dances, or what?

G.K.: Went to the movies, but also a very popular thing in those days was cruising up and down Main Street in Hillsboro, and of course we did quite a bit of that. Also in those days it was a macho thing to have a set of pipes on your automobile that make noise, you know? And of course my '40 Ford had a set of duals on it, you know. [laughs] And we did a fair amount of just cruising up and down the streets.

But yeah, movies primarily was the entertainment during those times. Every now and again there would be a dance that we would go to, but mostly it was going to the movie. Yeah.

M.O'R.: Right. Also in terms of just maybe putting this story in the context of the larger world, of course those years were pretty interesting years, with the - well, in fact one thing I was going to ask you before, I was going to ask you just now about World War II and what you saw of that.

G.K.: Old war memories, right.

M.O'R.: But before I ask you that, you mentioned that your father was a Democrat.

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Was he a New Deal Democrat? Did he go along with Roosevelt?

G.K.: Oh, my. I don't know. I don't know. I think he did. I think he did, but I can't say for certain. I'll ask my mother that question.

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, you mentioned that the war years prevented your family from purchasing things such as a new automobile.

G.K.: Right.

M.O'R.: But I'm just wondering, what do you remember about the war?

G.K.: Ah, yes. Well, the most vivid memory I have of the war is that in the winter time of course when it gets dark early, 5:00, 5:30, and we never milked cows until 6:00 or 6:30. So we had to have light, and of course we had electricity and we had lights in the barn. But there was the great fear that the Japanese were going to bomb the West Coast, so we were under orders, if you will, from the federal government that we could not turn on any lights after dark unless we covered the windows. So I remember having to cover the windows, especially in the barn, with some kind of black plastic material - I'm not sure it was plastic. Probably didn't have plastic at that time. But I remember how we were so concerned at having all of these windows covered in the barn so there wouldn't be any light showing outside, and we paid a lot of attention to that, because we knew that the Japanese were going to be here sometime, you know. That was the belief that we had at that time.

I remember that. I remember the shortages in terms of getting fuel and sugar. Difficult to get sugar, and of course sugar was very important to my family because of all the canning we did of the fruits and so forth, and how we had stamps that we could use in order to purchase sugar, and my mother would guard those stamps as strongly as she guarded money to make sure that she had enough stamps to buy enough sugar in order to do enough canning in the fall that we'd have enough fruit and stuff to eat over the winter time.

We didn't use a lot of fuel, so that was not a big problem with us, because our trips in the Studebaker automobile amounted to probably two times a week from the farm to Cornelius. There was a grocery store in Cornelius and we could buy whatever groceries we needed there. And of course that was only two miles, so that was never a problem for us, having fuel, but I know it was for some of those who had tractors and needed the fuel to operate their tractors.

But those are basically the things I remember about the war, although I had - my mother's brothers, two or three of them served in the service, and I do recall the trauma when one of them was wounded. Fortunately none of them were killed during the war, but one of them was wounded quite badly, I think, and that information was shared with us young kids, and oh, that was really a traumatic thing at that time, of course. But fortunately all of them came home and they were all in good health eventually after they healed.

[end of side one]

GARY KRAHMER

TAPE 2, Side 2

December 1, 1995

G.K.: ... huge forest fire in the Tillamook Forest, and it had to be in the 40's sometime. And of course this was during summertime, and we were always out in the fields working. And that fire put up so much smoke that by two, three o'clock in the afternoon the sun would turn red, and the lower the sun got the less you could see of it, you know, and that's a memory that I'll never forget, because that was very frightening to us kids, because we thought, "This fire's going to come down and get us," you know. But of course obviously it wouldn't have done that, but that was a belief that we had. But I'll never forget that sun turning just red as that candle.

M.O'R.: Yeah. This would be the so-called Tillamook burn, then?

G.K.: Yes. There were actually two burns, one in the early 30's and then this one in the 40's sometime, which was very devastating, burned a tremendous amount of timber at that time.

M.O'R.: Right.

G.K.: Yeah. Yeah.

M.O'R.: I'm a few years behind you in terms of age, but I remember making trips out from Portland to the Coast and through the Tillamook burn, and it was a fairly recent event even then, even though that was probably, you know, ten years later or something ...

G.K.: Yeah. That's true.

M.O'R.: ... or maybe 15 years after it actually happened.

G.K.: You could still see evidence of it today.

M.O'R.: Oh, yeah. Sure. I'm sure you can. It was just desolate in those days.

G.K.: Oh, yes. Oh, my gosh, yes.

M.O'R.: And you said that your family would make trips to the coast now and then?

G.K.: Yes. Now and again they would make trips to the coast. Once in a while, not very often but once a while my mother, along with a family in Cornelius - matter of fact, their name was Herring, and they owned and matter of fact they still own Hank's Super Center supermarkets, one in Hillsboro, on in Cornelius. Very good friends of that family, my family, and we did a lot of things together.

And every now and again my mother and Mrs. Herring would load up all the kids and we'd all go to the coast for two or three days, and boy, we thought that was the greatest thing in the world, of course. And of course the fathers, they would stay home, because they had to work - like my dad on the farm, or Mr. Herring, he had to make sure the store was operating, you know. But yeah, we did that probably two or three times when I was a kid. Our mothers would take us down to the coast so we could spend a little time at the beach.

But then my parents, they would go, just the two of them, you know, from time to time and spend a few days at the coast, yeah.

And that was quite a trip, you know? That was not an easy trip in those days.

M.O'R.: Yeah, I can imagine.

G.K.: No roads.

M.O'R.: Would you take the Studebaker down there, then?

G.K.: Yeah, took the Studebaker. I have an aunt, my mother's sister, and her husband lived in Southeast Portland back then. They subsequently have moved into Beaverton, although she has - she died just a year ago. My mother's sister.

But I can recall us going to visit them, and that was a major trip to take the 1936 Studebaker - there was no Sunset Highway. Tualatin Valley Highway, Canyon Road, was two lanes. And we'd take off and we'd go to Portland, and we'd go across one of the old bridges and go out and visit them. And that was always an exciting time, because that was a significant trip for us kids, you know?

Nowadays you can drive down there in 20, 25 minutes, probably, depending on traffic.

M.O'R.: Probably took a couple hours then?

G.K.: Yeah. Yeah, that was a pretty big deal. Yeah.

M.O'R.: And to get to the coast you'd take what road?

G.K.: Well, it would be Highway 6 to Tillamook.

M.O'R.: To Tillamook, okay.

G.K.: Yeah. And then from there we would go either north or south depending on which - whether we wanted to go to Seaside, we'd go north, or if we wanted to Cannon Beach we'd go south.

M.O'R.: So those would be the two beaches you'd hit most often?

G.K.: Yes. Right.

M.O'R.: Actually, you'd still go north to get to Cannon Beach from Tillamook.

G.K.: Oh, that's right. Yeah, north, that's right. Yeah. I don't know that we ever went south, now that I think about it. We might have gone out west of Tillamook to ...

M.O'R.: To Oceanside, that area?

G.K.: Oceanside, yes. In that area out there.

M.O'R.: There was also that - that spit was developed ...

G.K.: Right.

M.O'R.: ... for while, then, I guess.

G.K.: Right. What was the name of that town out there? Besides Oceanside. Isn't there another one out there?

M.O'R.: Well, there's Netarts.

G.K.: Netarts, that's it.

M.O'R.: Okay.

G.K.: We would go to Netarts. I remember that, yeah.

M.O'R.: I mean, it still is a really beautiful little spot there.

G.K.: Oh, it is. Yes. I still enjoy very much going to Netarts.

M.O'R.: I imagine it was especially beautiful back then, even less development?

G.K.: Yes. Right. Right. Never ever realized what value there might be in beach property, you know. I mean, there's so much of this, you know, it can't be worth anything. Oh, my. Yeah, you think about those things, you know. Why did great-grandfather settle out here? Why didn't he buy a farm on the banks of the Willamette River where downtown Portland is, you know? [laughs] Oh, well.

Well, no, we've had just a wonderful life, and never really ever wanted for anything. Of course, we're pretty conservative people, too. No doubt about that. Yeah.

M.O'R.: Now, there was yourself, Cal and your sister?

G.K.: Yes. Four kids. Cal's the oldest.

M.O'R.: Okay.

G.K.: And then there's a brother. I'm the third.

M.O'R.: Oh, that's right. Your other brother.

G.K.: Brother Robert.

M.O'R.: Robert.

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: The good student.

G.K.: Very good student, yeah. He ended up with a Ph.D. in Forestry, and he was - for many years he was a professor at Oregon State University in forestry.

And then the youngest is my sister Judy, and she lives just out of Banks. So all of the kids - other than Robert, he lives in Corvallis; he's not that far away, but all of the kids are still generally in the area.

M.O'R.: How did you get along as children?

G.K.: Fairly well. Yeah, fairly well. We had the typical kid battles that probably still occur today. And of course all the brothers always had to pick on our little sister because we always felt that she got special treatment, of course, you know, but I don't know if that's necessarily true.

But no, we got along very well, and we still get along very well today. Matter of fact, when Cal was taken to the hospital my brother from Corvallis came on up, and he and I went in to visit

him on - Tuesday, I guess. Like I told you, I lost a day this week. It was Wednesday, I guess. And I'm sure my sister -.

Yeah, we still get together as a family every Fourth of July and have a barbecue and just play cards, have a good time, you know. So we're a close family.

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, the - I guess we sort of have discussed things up to about the time that you left high school.

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Or through the high school years.

G.K.: Right.

M.O'R.: Then did you go into the service at that point or did you go to college first?

G.K.: No, I did not go to college at that point. I stayed home and worked on the farm, and the reason for that was that both of my brothers were in the service at that time, and Dad needed me on the farm. So I stayed home and worked on the farm, but I only stayed with him for about a year-and-a-half, and then I joined the service. And that did not set well with my parents, because they had to actually hire a hired hand at that time to help them out while I was gone. But the reason I did that is that they had the Korean conflict, and that conflict ended in 1953, I believe. And it was my view that I wanted to get in the service and get out of the service before we had another conflict. I thought that made sense, so I joined the service, and I spent my two years in the Army and then came home after that in January of - December 1955 is when I got out of the service.

M.O'R.: Okay. So you joined right about the time the Korean War was winding down, then?

G.K.: That's right. And I thought, "Okay, I can get in and get out before we have another conflict," because I didn't want to really go fight a war, you know.

M.O'R.: Sounds like your brothers did get involved in that, then?

G.K.: Actually, they were fortunate that they did not get involved. Cal was in the Navy, and he did not get involved in that conflict, and Robert, although he was in the Army, I'm not - he spent his time in Germany and never got involved in the Korean conflict. So we were very fortunate in that regard that at least one of us didn't get involved, you know.

M.O'R.: And what was your service experience like?

G.K.: Oh, I had a great time because I got to see some of the United States that I had never had the opportunity to see and haven't seen since, and also I got to go to Okinawa, and from there - the greatest experience in the service was the good fortune to see things that most likely one would never get the opportunity to see without paying a lot of money. I got to go from Okinawa - the Navy informed the Army that they were going to go on this little sojourn from Okinawa to Japan to Hong Kong and then back to Okinawa, and if any of the Army guys wanted to ride along, they had a certain amount of room that they could take some of us. And so I said, "Yes, yes. I want to go." And I was allowed to do that, and that was a great experience. We found out the Navy chow was a hell of a lot better than the Army chow! [laughs]

But I really enjoyed having an opportunity to see Japan for just a day, and then we got to spend seven days in Hong Kong, which was a memory I'll never forget. We just had such a wonderful time.

It's just so different there, you know. What is it? You don't have to pay tax on anything, and my goodness, watches and anything were just cheap, cheap, cheap. And good restaurants. That was a good experience.

M.O'R.: And the Asian culture, too.

G.K.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Chinese culture, I guess, in that case.

G.K.: And I really enjoyed Okinawa because of the Hawaiian-type weather. Beautiful weather, and always really nice and warm. Typhoons were interesting. I experienced four typhoons in a year-and-a-half on Okinawa, and it's just amazing how violent those storms can become. Fifty-gallon drums flying down the street and things like that, you know.

But the service was a good experience. It caused me to grow up pretty fast, and I think that I benefitted from that for the rest of my life in terms of discipline and just growing up fast.

M.O'R.: Where did you do your basic training?

G.K.: Fort Ord, California.

M.O'R.: Okay.

G.K.: A place I'd never ever been. Although I had been by Fort Lewis, I had never been in Fort Lewis. But from Fort Ord we went to Fort Lewis, and we were there for about two weeks before they shipped us out to Okinawa. So I got to spend some time there that I normally wouldn't have.

And we went to Okinawa on a ship, not an airplane, and we came back from Okinawa on a ship. I can't recall the number of days, but it seems like it was maybe 12 or 13 days that we were on ship, on board ship. It was an interesting experience. Good food. Good

playing around, laying around, not doing anything. And the closer you get the better the weather gets, you know. It was kind of fun.

M.O'R.: You must not have had a problem with seasickness or anything?

G.K.: No, fortunately. No.

M.O'R.: Now, then when you came back, did you then go to college or ...

G.K.: No. I'm - see, I did not graduate from college, and I thought I had shared that with you, but maybe I didn't.

M.O'R.: Well, actually I probably have it in my notes.

G.K.: Okay. Yeah, when I came back - I got back in - actually got back in December of 1955. And in June of 1956 I married my high school sweetheart, whom, by the way, we are no longer married together. This is my second wife.. But we got married ...

M.O'R.: And what was her name?

G.K.: Shirley Freuling was her name. Her father was a builder during those times. Built quite a number of houses in the area. And we still have a good relationship today, and I still see her parents.

Anyway, then, you know, we settled down and bought a house out in the Witch Hazel area, and I went to work - I went to work for International Harvester at that time. I had to drive from Witch Hazel to Milwaukie, and what a - I just thought that was terrible to have to drive that far to go to work every day and back, you know. And of course traffic wasn't near what it is today, you know, but ...

M.O'R.: A bit of a drive, nonetheless.

G.K.: Yeah, it was. And I worked there for about seven months, and then it came fall, and I was in the parts department, filling parts orders. And then it came fall, and lo and behold, they laid me off, and I could never understand why, because I was one of their best employees based on the records they were keeping. But it was a union shop, see? So they laid me off.

And shortly thereafter, then, I got a job with A.B. Smith Chevrolet Company in Portland, reconditioning used cars, which was interesting. Not a bad job, though. And I did that then for about two-and-a-half or three years, and then I got the opportunity to go to work for the City of Hillsboro in the wastewater treatment plant, and that's when I started taking classes in that business. Local night classes, and also going to Oregon State periodically to learn more about the waste water business.

M.O'R.: I see. So that was your college experience, it was focused on your need for the specific knowledge, then?

G.K.: Yeah, That's right. I did that here when I was with Hillsboro, and then when I was at Walla Walla, I continued that at Washington State University, where we would periodically go up to WSU and learn more about the business.

M.O'R.: Now, I guess you said that your brother Cal took over the farm in '54?

G.K.: I think '54. I think, yeah.

M.O'R.: Was there ...

G.K.: Yeah, I'm pretty sure that's right, because I know we - my parents and I lived in Cornelius for a short period of time while they were building their new home on that ten-acre pieces, adjacent to the farm.

M.O'R.: Adjacent to the - right. I see. And Cal sort of became the farmer in the family as a result of just being the eldest or -?

G.K.: That's right. Yes, that was - hereditary? I'm not sure that's the right term, but in the German culture the oldest son was given the opportunity to take over the farm, if they were farmers. And of course if he chose not to do that, then the second oldest son was given the opportunity.

M.O'R.: And that would have been Robert?

G.K.: Robert, right. But he never had the opportunity, because Cal knew that he was going to take over. So Robert and I never had the opportunity to get involved in agriculture, although my parents put Robert through school, and he knew what he wanted to devote his life to, forestry. Me, I was uncertain. My dad offered to set me up in the nursery business, but I didn't have enough intelligence at that time to recognize that would have been an awfully good thing. So I ended up the way I did, you know.

M.O'R.: So that would have been a farming operation, too, then?

G.K.: Right. Right. But I decided that that wasn't what I wanted to do, although I enjoy that kind of stuff, but I wasn't ready to settle down at that time.

M.O'R.: So it sounds like it wasn't necessarily a big issue with you that Cal got the farm, then, either?

G.K.: No. No. No, it wasn't.

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, this is probably as good a place as any to pause here.

G.K.: All right.

M.O'R.: Thank you very much ...

G.K.: Sure. You bet.

M.O'R.: ... for a wonderful interview.

G.K.: Well, thank you. I enjoyed it.

[end of tape]