

NORTHERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER

History 497 Project: Farming and farm families in DeKalb Co.

Oral History Interview
with

BEV KUHN
November 7, 1986

Kuhn Family Farm
Claire, Illinois

by Terry Kuhn

OH 3.8

Deed Available

NORTHERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL HISTORY CENTER

FARMING AND FARM FAMILIES IN DEKALB COUNTY

General topic of interview: Farming on a mid-size, crop-intensified farm in DeKalb County, Illinois in the 1970s and 1980s.

Narrator: Bev Kuhn
November 7, 1986

Interviewer: Terry Kuhn
Kuhn Farm - Claire, Il.

Personal Data

Bev Kuhn grew-up in a small city in Australia. Both of her parents had farming backgrounds, and Bev has very fond memories of her childhood visits to the farm. She met Jack Kuhn, who was in the navy, in c. 1967. She immigrated to Canada and then to America to marry Jack. They lived in the Warrenville, Il. area, where Jack's family farmed, for the first years of their marriage. In 1974 they moved to DeKalb County, the farm on Butterfield Road having been sold to a developer. They have three teen-age sons, who are all very involved with the farm. Jack works as a plumber in addition to farming; his brother, who is his partner on the farm, also works off-farm. He is a carpenter. Bev does not work off-farm.

Interviewer's comments

Throughout the interview, Bev uses the word "we" when discussing the farm. She obviously views it as a joint project and enjoys her participation in it. Although we didn't spend a lot of time actually discussing her work per se, she mentions it throughout the tape. Bev seemed very knowledgeable about most of the farm operation - techniques as well as reasoning behind choices made.

Interview with Bev Kuhn
November 7, 1986
Terry Kuhn, interviewer

Index Side A or 1

000-009 Introduction

009-043 Personal background - Australia
Both parents had farm background
Parents moved to town for jobs

044-060 Parents' background

061-084 Description of father's family farm in Australia

085-120 Description of farm house in Australia

121-133 Livestock and climate in Australia

134-154 Small town in Australia

155-176 Social life in Australia

177-190 Father's work/Mother's work

191-213 Bev's motivation to immigrate

214-227 Jack Kuhn and Bev meet in Brisbon, Australia
Courtship

228-238 Bev's perception of Jack

239-251 Jack's background

252-265 Bev's preconceptions of America

266-279 Bev immigrates to Canada

280-297 Bev's impressions of Jack's family

298-316 Description of Kuhn family home in Warrenville, Il.

317-331 Angeline Kuhn's work/ Boys did the field work/no farm animals

332-334 Crops at Warrenville farm, 1969

335-346 Jack's work, 1969

347-365 Jack's siblings - out of six, only two are in farming

366-386 Move to the DeKalb County farm, 1974

387-395 Bev's feelings re: move to DeKalb farm

396-412 Description of DeKalb farm
Location/good, flat land/no trees

413-425 Description of the homestead
Bev's sons raise chickens and hogs

426-434 Heating the farm house

435-458 Acreage/crops/yield

459-478 Bev's work, house and field

479-486 Ear corn -techniques

487-499 Combining techniques

500-506 Book keeping - Jack and his brother Gary

507-532 Bev's housework, gardening and canning

533-535 Dick Kuhn (Jack's brother) - plumbing
Kevin Kuhn (Dick's son)- return to farming

536-549 Angeline Kuhn's work (Jack's mother)

550-560 Farm prices in the 1970s/ effects on present lifestyle

561-587 Bev's friendships and social activities

588-590 Bev's feelings regarding isolation

591-604 Typical Saturday during harvest

605-607 Typical Sunday

608-622 Social life/ vacations

624-655 Holidays in the Kuhn family

656-658 Importance of holiday get-togethers

659-687 Kuhn family picnic

688-700 Jack's military experience mentioned

701-706 Jack's friends

707-720 Neighbors work together

721-757 Soy beans

Side B or 2

001-012 Jack and Bev's boys
013-062 Schools in Malta, Il:Demographics/facilities/sports
063-074 Boys' activities
075-077 Boys' farm involvement
078-123 Plowing techniques and conservation
124-141 Boys' work on farm
142-150 Reason that men do the planting
151-193 Boys' farm projects with animals
FFA, educational opportunities
Feeding pigs
194-216 Chickens
Cleaning the chicken house (Bev comments that she helped
to clean the pig barn too)
217-253 Handling baby chicks/problems with chicks
254-257 Chickens belong to the boys
258-277 The orchard -more involvement for the boys
278-286 Boys work off-farm with Jack
287-303 Discipline
304-352 Church activities/religious education
353-369 Jack and Gary (brother) - off-farm labor
370-391 Plans for the future
392-401 Transportation needs
402-430 Appliances
431-443 Eating habits/shopping habits
444-492 Farm Bureau
Educational programs/programs for women/summer picnic
493-526 Farming techniques/choice of seeds
527-538 Fertilizers - education re: hazards

539-557 Dangers of chemicals and precautions
558-568 Applying fertilizers
569-578 Pesticides and pest identification
579-593 Cost to produce an acre of corn or soybeans
594-610 Machinery
611-616 Bev corrects 579-593
617-621 Bev comments re:source of problem in farming
622-625 "There's more to farming than farming..."
626-642 Hopes for the boys
643-654 Jack's schedule
655-663 Jack's relationship with Gary
664-677 Bev's relationship with Mary (Gary's wife)
Separate social life
678-703 Conclusion
Comments on over-expansion in the 1970s
Hopes for the family farm

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORIES OF FARM WOMEN: DEKALB COUNTY

NARRATOR: BEV KUHN

INTERVIEWER: TERRY KUHN

DATE: NOVEMBER 7, 1986

PLACE: CLARE, ILLINOIS

LENGTH OF TAPE: 90 MINUTES

NUMBER OF TAPES: 1

T. KUHN: This is Terry Kuhn. I'm talking with Bev Kuhn in Clare, Illinois. It's November 7th, 1986. We're talking about farming in DeKalb County. Bev is it alright if we tape this interview?

B. KUHN: Yeah.

T. KUHN: OK. Now before we get started on talking about farming in DeKalb County let's talk a little bit about your background. You were born in Australia. Can you tell me a little about your background there, a little bit about your family and the town itself?

B. KUHN: Sure. I'm one of six kids. We were born and raised in Brisbon, Queensland, Australia which is on the east coast. The town we lived in had about 20,000 people at that time. My mom and dad were both from farm families a little further north of Brisbon and moved to town after being married. We were born and raised in town, went to school in town, and worked in town.

T. KUHN: Why did your dad, why did both of them decide to move off the farm and in to town?

B. KUHN: I think because of the job opportunities. At that time farming was really primitive especially over there. The farm they came from was a dairy farm and they had oranges and pineapples mainly fruit. And I think in my dad's family there were three or four other brothers who probably were more interested in farming then he was. And I think for the job he moved to town.

T. KUHN: Among the brothers what position was he?

B. KUHN: He was third oldest.

T. KUHN: Third oldest. So did the older brothers stay on the land then?

B. KUHN: Yeah. The two older brothers stayed on the land.

T. KUHN: Are they still there as far as you know?

B. KUHN: One has died and the other one is still there.

T. KUHN: Then among your mother's family...

B. KUHN: OK. She was one of I believe four sisters who all moved to town and her mother stayed on the farm but had since sold the land and just lived in the house there.

T. KUHN: Had her father died?

B. KUHN: Yeah, when she was pretty young. I never knew him at all.

T. KUHN: Did you ever visit either of those farms?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, yeah. We used to go up on vacation.

T. KUHN: Could you describe your dad's farm? His family farm as much as you can.

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, that one I really enjoyed more than my mom's. It was... there was more to do you know with the dairy and then they milked by hand there was no machines or anything. Then we used to have and get the cows in the morning and the night with the dog. It was really a nice farm. I enjoyed it.

T. KUHN: When you say you when out to get the cows you went out into the pasture to get the cows. Could you describe the land there a little bit?

B. KUHN: OK, right there it was really hilly. And it was just mainly for pasture except for where they grew the oranges and pineapples there it was flatter but a little rolly. But there were creeks running through and there was... I have no idea how many acres or anything that they farmed.

T. KUHN: What about the house?

B. KUHN: The house was one story raised up off the ground a little bit, no basement. Really open, a big wide veranda all around the house. Probably three or four bedrooms, big kitchen just humongous kitchen.

T. KUHN: What was the kitchen like?

B. KUHN: There was a wood stove, that's how they cooked, with the wood stove. They had, I think, they didn't have a refrigerator for a long time. They used to keep it in like a little ice box thing. They used to get the ice blocks.

T. KUHN: How would they get the ice blocks?

B. KUHN: There was a guy that came around selling ice. Big table. No indoor plumbing. I just remembered that. We used to have to go out to the outhouse and to take a shower you would fill - this sounds really primitive - you would fill the bucket and stand under and that was your shower.

T. KUHN: Uh-huh. Cold shower?

B. KUHN: Yeah. Cold shower. You got done real quick. [laughter] Real quick.

T. KUHN: I'll bet, I'll bet.

B. KUHN: It was just different then living in town. I guess I really enjoyed it.

T. KUHN: What did they - in that cook stove - what did they burn for fuel?

B. KUHN: They burned wood.

T. KUHN: Was the - then the land was some what wooded?

B. KUHN: Oh yeah it was wooded and they used to cut their own wood.

T. KUHN: Did they raised - now with the...they had dairy - did they raised any crops?

B. KUHN: Just the fruit, the pineapples and oranges.

T. KUHN: So then the cattle or the cows would eat off the pasture.

B. KUHN: Yeah. It was just the pasture.

T. KUHN: OK. What about - what was the climate like there? Could they pasture them all winter?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh. Yeah. It never got really cold. Never got a frost really.

T. KUHN: What would you compare to in the United States?

B. KUHN: Probably California or Florida temperature wise, I would think.

T. KUHN: And you did... did you visit your mom's farm?

B. KUHN: Yeah but by then the land had gone and it was just the house. So there was... for a kid it was just nothing. You know the biggest thing was to walk uptown and get a loaf of bread. Cause the guy made the bread every morning.

T. KUHN: Oh really.

B. KUHN: Yeah. And that was the biggest deal.

T. KUHN: What else was in the town besides the baker?

B. KUHN: Not very many people. [laughter] In my dad's town his uncle had a general store more or less where he sold everything. We used to go down there and put the potatoes in the bag. That was a really nice thing to go down and work in the store. It was really neat. He sold everything in there. Besides that there was one bar I believe and the general store, probably the post office, train station, not much of a downtown area.

T. KUHN: Then when your dad moved in to the town, did he and your mom meet in town?

B. KUHN: I believe they met in Palmwoods where my dad's farm was. Cause they used to have a theater house there. And I think that was... cause she lived about ten miles further away from his place.

T. KUHN: When you say a theater house is that.. could you describe it?

- B. KUHN: Well it was just like a big barn where they used to do plays or movies or and I think and dances. I think that's probably where they meet. I really don't know for sure.
- T. KUHN: It's sounds as if it was more like what we would call a community center. I little bit of everything.
- B. KUHN: Uh-huh. Yeah. Right.
- T. KUHN: That was pretty typical on .. you know out on the frontier time. In the United States they called it a opera house but it was a multi-function unit. Well your dad... when he went into town what kind of a job did he get there?
- B. KUHN: He became a carpenter. I'd image the background came from the farm. Then he got his certificate or what ever you need to get.
- T. KUHN: And then what about your mom?
- B. KUHN: My mom was a housewife. She never really did any other work until the kids, us kids got older and in school. Then she started doing ironing for people. That's the first job I remember her having. And then after that she went into a restaurant being a waitress and I believe she is still doing that.
- T. KUHN: So you did have a lot of contact and good feelings about farming. And then what was your motivation to come here besides meeting Jack? If you hadn't have met Jack would you have probably stayed in Australia? Do you get what I meant?
- B. KUHN: Uh-huh. No I don't believe so cause my girlfriend was from Canada and her mother and family were born and raised in Canada and her grandma was still there and the whole time we were working in Australia, I worked with her for about four years, we had planned a trip somewhere and she more or less decided that we should go there because there was someone there we knew. If we're going to go that far from home better have somebody you know. So we had saved for years to go to Canada so I don't believe I would have stayed.
- T. KUHN: How was it then that you happened to meet Jack Kuhn?
- B. KUHN: OK, he was a sailor in the Navy and he was in Vietnam and they used to bring the sailors over to Australia for R & R leave and I met him in Brisbon. We went out for like three or four days that he was there. Then we wrote back and forth for a couple of years. Then I went to Canada and we continued writing. Then he came up to see me in Calgary where we were staying then I came down here and stayed here.
- T. KUHN: When you met Jack there were plenty of sailors to meet. What was it that appealed to you about Jack?
- B. KUHN: I don't know I think maybe just his honesty cause for four days your not going to fall in love well maybe some people do but for him he's a he had a girl back home and he told me that to begin with and he said

if we want to write that's fine. And it was good cause we got to know each other more through the letters than the four days.

T. KUHN: During that four days what did he tell you about his family?

B. KUHN: He told me where they lived, what they did for a living, brothers, sisters. Probably that's about it.

T. KUHN: How did you feel about the fact that he lived on a farm in the midwest?

B. KUHN: It sounded OK at that time. But then I was a city girl and if he lived on a farm fine. It really didn't make that big of a difference then.

T. KUHN: Did you feel that it had any particular appeal or was it just...

B. KUHN: Not really. No, no. Just hearing about the United States, the big country that everyone talks about where life is so great and I believe it now but then it was a big impression just to meet somebody from America.

T. KUHN: At that time before having been in America could you give me a, kind of a, nutshell description of what you thought it would be like here?

B. KUHN: Well, I don't know. Big cities I think is what I thought of probably first, lots of people, just a good life.

T. KUHN: Then you and your friend went to Canada and you continued to correspond with Jack. Then at some point you connected and talked more seriously about the future. And how did it come about then that you decided to come to DuPage County and settle down?

B. KUHN: The main reason was there was three of us in Canada at that time and my other two girlfriends were leaving and I kind of felt lonely and no place to go so that's mainly the reason I came.

T. KUHN: Did you go back to Australia or did you come right from Canada?

B. KUHN: No I came right from Canada.

T. KUHN: You came right from Canada. When you came to Jack's family what was your first impression or your early impressions of well let's start with the family?

B. KUHN: That they were very close knit. It was a very close family. Everybody sat down to dinner at one time which I wasn't used to at home because as I was growing up everybody was going to work and different things so we never really sat down and had a meal together except Sunday. That was the family day. So it was different life style. I was impressed with it. I really liked the closeness.

T. KUHN: As you recall, now that would have been, about what year was that?

B. KUHN: That would have been 69.

T. KUHN: OK. Could you describe the well first describe the farm itself, the location, and what the land looked like.

B. KUHN: OK. When Jack came to pick me up from the airport the first night we were driving home...

T. KUHN: That was what airport?

B. KUHN: O'Hare. When we got near Warrenville it was just all corn that's all I could see. It was just flat and just full of crops. And the house was pretty much the same as any other house I would think.

T. KUHN: Being... how would you describe it briefly?

B. KUHN: Just like the one floor, the basement impressed me because we're not used to basements. Pretty much average I would think.

T. KUHN: Big kitchen.

B. KUHN: Big kitchen, yeah, big kitchen, big living room, and the dining room, a couple of bedrooms downstairs and then the boy's bedrooms were upstairs.

T. KUHN: As you observed Jack's mother's work, could you comment just briefly on how you perceived Angeline to be doing at that time.

B. KUHN: I think mainly taking care of the house. I don't believe there was a lot of outside field work for her because of the boys. So I think her main job was the house and cooking and what you would typically think a woman's job would be.

T. KUHN: Did she have any animals like chickens or cattle?

B. KUHN: I think there was at one time but when I got there, no. There was a dog and there was I believe the dairy cattle had gone then too.

T. KUHN: So what were they raising on the farm then in 1969?

B. KUHN: Mainly crops.

T. KUHN: What type of crops?

B. KUHN: Corn and soybeans probably wheat maybe at that time.

T. KUHN: What was Jack's involvement on the farm at that time?

B. KUHN: His was light working with his dad out in the field bringing in the crops.

T. KUHN: Do you remember what kind of an arrangement they had for paying Jack?

B. KUHN: No, I really don't. No I have no idea.

T. KUHN: He was still living at home and been sustained in the family home.

B. KUHN: Yeah. That wasn't his only job. He was a plumber as well. He had gone to apprentice school and was a plumber. So during the day he worked at a job and then nights and weekends I imagine is when he farmed.

T. KUHN: How many other brothers were in the family or are in the family?

B. KUHN: That's three brothers, three other brothers.

T. KUHN: Three brothers. And we have Dick and he's a plumber.

B. KUHN: Right, has his own business in Oswego. Ron is next and he's in Naperville and doing what I don't know.

T. KUHN: I don't know either.

B. KUHN: I don't. And then Jack came next or is it Jack and then Ron? I think, Jack is, yeah, Dick, Jack, Ron and then Gary who is a partner with Jack now in farming out here.

T. KUHN: So and then we have two sisters, Marilyn and...

B. KUHN: Carol

T. KUHN: Did either of those girls marry farmers?

B. KUHN: No.

T. KUHN: So they're off the farm entirely.

B. KUHN: Right. Yes.

T. KUHN: Then so out of six children, two have stayed in farming.

B. KUHN: Uh-huh. Right.

T. KUHN: Now during the early 1970's DuPage County began to build up.

B. KUHN: Uh-huh.

T. KUHN: Can you tell me when you moved out to out here to DeKalb County and what is was that precipitated the move out here.

B. KUHN: OK, it was 1974 that we moved out. The year before Jack's mom and dad saw the population growth towards Warrenville and decided that they wanted to stay with the farm so they went further west to see what they could find. And they bought this place here and then the following year we moved out.

T. KUHN: And what happened to the land then in Warrenville?

B. KUHN: That was sold to some like a condominium complex type thing.

T. KUHN: Do you remember just roughly what they got for the land money wise?

- B. KUHN: I don't know. It sounded like an awfully big figure then but to be specific no I don't.
- T. KUHN: You were then in Warrentville, the Warrentville area probably about four years, five years before you moved out here. When you moved out here what were your feelings about moving out to what seemed like a much much more open area?
- B. KUHN: To me it felt good cause I didn't have a lot of experience on the farm in Warrentville. I never helped in the field or anything but I like the life and probably going back to childhood this area really impressed me as being open.
- T. KUHN: OK. Let's take just a few minutes now to describe the land, the location of the farm, and the land itself.
- B. KUHN: OK, the location is DeKalb County, Malta, north of Malta, south of Clare, about six miles west of DeKalb and about the same distance from Sycamore. We are about 10 miles from Rochelle, east of Rochelle. The land is pretty flat, good farm land. Other than that.
- T. KUHN: It seems that there are few trees, trees are sparse though. Most of the fields are wide open.
- B. KUHN: Yeah, most is farm land here. Yeah, there's not a lot of woods or anything around really.
- T. KUHN: And then when I drove up to the house I drove up a long lane and there was an orchard, a nice big orchard on the south side of the lane and I turned into the...how far up would that lane be? Several blocks.
- B. KUHN: It's about a quarter of a mile.
- T. KUHN: Yeah, several blocks. And then turned into the farm yard, there's a nice big house and you tell me what else.
- B. KUHN: OK. We have a tool shed where most of the machinery is kept. We have a couple of hog sheds that were brought in this summer for Brad's project. He raised some pigs this summer. We have a chicken house which the two younger boys fill in the summertime and raise chickens. And a garage, an old garage we call it because we have the new one on the house.
- T. KUHN: OK I saw when I drove in that you have a real big pile of firewood. What are you using that for?
- B. KUHN: We use that to heat the house mainly. We do have the furnace, a gas furnace, an LP gas furnace but we use the fireplace pretty much to heat the house and there is a blower on it so it blows into the other rooms.
- T. KUHN: Now let's go back outside just for a minute. How many acres do you and Gary farm?
- B. KUHN: There is about 560 all together in two different farms. This one here

and another one about 5 miles west of here at Creston that they farm.

T. KUHN: So the two men farm the lands together they don't have one separate from the other?

B. KUHN: No. It is all farmed together by both of them.

T. KUHN: What crops do they raise primarily?

B. KUHN: Corn and soybeans.

T. KUHN: And what would you say the yield is?

B. KUHN: For this year it wasn't as good as last year. This year I think the top yield was around 175 bushels to the acre for corn. Beans were I believe 40, 42.

T. KUHN: But that wasn't as good as last year.

B. KUHN: No, last year was exceptional. The corn was up around 200 bushel an acre for a top yield and beans were around 60.

T. KUHN: That's incredible.

B. KUHN: It is.

T. KUHN: Interestingly I think it was in the mid 50's the DeKalb Chronicle, which is their local paper there, was commenting upon the fact the corn crop was the largest in history and it was 53 bushel.

B. KUHN: Is that right.

T. KUHN: Yeah. That was in the mid 50's.

B. KUHN: That's hard to believe.

T. KUHN: It is. It's incredible what farmers can produce. Now we'll come back to that in a little while but, Bev, in terms of the operation of the farm and maintaining the household what do you see as your responsibilities?

B. KUHN: Mainly being in the house. In the spring I help outside as much as I can but with planting and the field work to do in the spring the two of them handle it pretty good. In the fall I work along with them the whole time. When they start harvesting till we put things away.

T. KUHN: Well describe then what you do in the fall.

B. KUHN: OK, with soybeans not as much it's mainly just unloading wagons and putting the beans away which isn't a lot because they have a lot help.

T. KUHN: How do they store the beans?

B. KUHN: We store them in the corn crib overhead in big bins. They're not dried at all they are just taken from the field and put up there. OK with the

corn that's different. That has to be dried through the dryer and then put into the bin down there or the corn crib for combine shell corn and for ear corn we fill the cribs at Creston and the one here at our place.

T. KUHN: Why do you still have ear corn?

B. KUHN: It's good storage. It's cheaper than drying corn, drying shell corn. We have the cribs and they are set up for it and they're in pretty good shape and we have the corn picker so it just seems natural to fill them.

T. KUHN: What do you do then later on when you are ready to sell the corn?

B. KUHN: That's on the ear?

T. KUHN: That's on the ear.

B. KUHN: OK.

T. KUHN: What is that process then?

B. KUHN: OK they bring in a corn sheller. There's a guy around here that goes from farm to farm and he shells corn which is quite a machine. They just put the corn into the sheller and it takes the husks off and shells the corn out into wagons or whatever you want.

T. KUHN: For the corn that goes in the bin then that you are going to dry does the combine... what process... what part of the job does the combine do?

B. KUHN: OK, you go out into the field with the combine and it takes the stalk off, takes the husks, and it shells the corn, and then it spits the husks out and the shell corn gets augured onto a wagon. So it does the whole process right there in that machine.

T. KUHN: The combine does the whole process.

B. KUHN: Yeah.

T. KUHN: Do you have.. oh you said you don't have any livestock.. that you yourself maintain.

B. KUHN: No.

T. KUHN: The boys have...

B. KUHN: Chicken and hogs.

T. KUHN: Chicken and hogs. Who does all the book work then?

B. KUHN: Gary and Jack do it. Mainly Gary he keeps the books up and then they get together once in a while and go over it and they take care of that.

T. KUHN: Do they do it all manually or...

B. KUHN: Uh-huh. All manually, yes.

T. KUHN: As far then as your work in the house can describe that a little bit?

B. KUHN: Mainly just cooking, keeping the house clean, buying the groceries.

T. KUHN: Do you have a garden?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh. Yes, we do.

T. KUHN: Is it something...Do you depend upon that produce?

B. KUHN: No, it's just kind of an extra. It's nice to be able to work out there in the garden. It is a lot of work but we enjoy the things that come from it. But it's nothing you couldn't buy in town. It just makes you feel a little bit prouder that you grew it, and you can cook it.

T. KUHN: If you have any extras what do you do with it?

B. KUHN: Well, I don't know. We seem to use it all up. We never seem to be able to give things away.

T. KUHN: Do you ever like freeze it or can it?

B. KUHN: Yes we do freeze like the green beans and things and can tomatoes.

T. KUHN: How did you learn how do to that - canning. Now freezing I can understand but canning seems like a big process. [laughter]

B. KUHN: Actually from Dick's wife, Anetta. We lived above her when we were first married in Aurora and she used to do a lot of canning and things cause she was a typical farm girl. And that's where I first really learned how to cook was from her and can and a lot of things.

T. KUHN: When you say that she was a typical farm girl now this is Dick Kuhn's wife, Anetta. Dick Kuhn is now a plumber. Do they also have farm land?

B. KUHN: No. Their son has since gone into farming this year.

T. KUHN: Really.

B. KUHN: Yeah. They themselves.... Yeah, Kevin is farming. But they themselves don't own farm land.

T. KUHN: When, when you were down in DuPage County did you ever observe Angeline do... what she did with her garden produce if she had...?

B. KUHN: Yeah. She mainly canned and froze things.

T. KUHN: Did she have... well would you say that she had a pretty good stock... a supply for the winter?

B. KUHN: Yes, she always kept a lot of things on hand.

T. KUHN: And where did she store those things?

B. KUHN: There was a big... well it wasn't a pantry type a thing that over a stairway going down the basement that she stored a lot of canned goods. Then they had two freezers I believe so she stored the frozen things in there.

T. KUHN: So we know that in the 1970s farm prices escalated a lot and now they have been dropping drastically. Have these changes in the economy affected your life at all?

B. KUHN: Our life personally I don't think so really. You think a little more when you spend money but drastically no.

T. KUHN: OK.

B. KUHN: No, we're comfortable. You know we seem to have what you need you don't go overboard. So you do think some, yeah.

T. KUHN: OK. In terms of your friendships in the neighborhood, Bev, how do you think you've come to know your own friends?

B. KUHN: Actually there's a couple that we first met I believe through Gary and Jack. He's a farmer also, Marlin Anderson and we knew him or we got to know him because Jack and Gary saw him and stopped and talked to him. That's how we first got to know them. And Ron and Judy Stark moved out here about the same year we did and I believe that was through Gary and Jack too that they got to talk to Ron.

T. KUHN: So when you say "we" you say your friends are your friends and Jack's friends. They are couple friends is what I'm saying.

B. KUHN: Yeah.

T. KUHN: How is it for you, just for you personally, separate from Jack?

B. KUHN: I think like you said the friends we have are couple's friends and what we do we do with them. Me personally for girlfriends I really don't have any separate friends.

T. KUHN: So your friends are the women from these couple friends?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh.

T. KUHN: When you get together with them separate from couples what kind of thing would you typically do?

B. KUHN: See that doesn't happen very often at all. You know when we do things it's mainly couples. There have been a few times where we have gone shopping just the women. But I'm not a shopper and I don't enjoy going away. I'm very much a home body I guess. I keep busy around here.

T. KUHN: So could you... so you feel... how do you feel about more or less being alone?

B. KUHN: I enjoy it. I like the quiet, I like where we live because it's not on a busy road at all. I do enjoy the quiet. It suits me fine.

T. KUHN: Could you describe for me a typical Saturday?

B. KUHN: A Saturday. [Laughter]

T. KUHN: If there is a typical Saturday.

B. KUHN: In the fall there isn't because there's always something to do. In the winter... what do we do on a typical Saturday? Probably just do whatever in the house. There always seems to be something to do and you kind of think Saturday as part of the weekend that you really don't want to work and that the end of a Saturday you think well we really blow that one. We did what we needed to do all day long. But there are times when you just sit around depending on the weather.

T. KUHN: What about... Oh you said Saturday's are different during in the fall. How are they different?

B. KUHN: Saturdays and Sundays it's just like a regular work day. And once again depending on the weather, you know, if the crops need to be in that's where you are.

T. KUHN: Outside of the harvest time then how about Sunday?

B. KUHN: Sunday we do just sit around pretty much of the time except in the summer then you're going swimming or whatever.

T. KUHN: Do you and let's get back to Saturday, Saturday nights. In some places that's a typical your know... maybe a Saturday night would be like date night. Do you and Jack go out alone on a Saturday night or with your couple friends on Saturday night?

B. KUHN: Yeah, we do more so in the winter or in the summer. We do go out for dinner or to a movie or whatever.

T. KUHN: OK. Do you ever plan for you and Jack just time for yourselves.

B. KUHN: No, we really don't plan it sometimes it happens.

T. KUHN: What kind of thing would you do?

B. KUHN: Probably just go for dinner.

T. KUHN: How bout vacations?

B. KUHN: Vacations we haven't had any for a couple of years. The biggest one we had was a few years ago when we went to Australia during the winter, over Christmas. But since then not to much. We take a couple days in the summer before the kids go back to school and that's about it.

T. KUHN: Could you describe like a typical Thanksgiving?

B. KUHN: That's quite a big deal in the Kuhn family.

T. KUHN: Yeah I know that's why I asked the question. [Laughter]

B. KUHN: Angeline's family we all get together and we take turns Easter and Thanksgiving. Everybody takes their turn. It's a big family get together.

T. KUHN: When you say Angeline's family let's clarify, that's Jack's mother.

B. KUHN: Yes.

T. KUHN: So when you say it's a big deal we all get together who would be here or at the festivities?

B. KUHN: OK. It'd be Angeline, Dick and Anetta and their three kids, ourselves and our three children, Gary and Mary, Marilyn and Dave, and Ron and Peg and their two kids, Carol is living in Colorado.

T. KUHN: You get together for Thanksgiving dinner for example that's a lot of people. How do you arrange all the food?

B. KUHN: OK. The person that has the dinner at their house has the turkey, the dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy and then everybody would bring in a vegetable or dessert. It's kind of divided up. Whoever has the dinner decides what everybody else should bring. So we all bring something.

T. KUHN: Then and how long does the festivity last? or is it you know, how long during the day.

B. KUHN: OK, dinner we usually try for 1:00 or so then it's usually 8 or 9 really before you pack up and go home.

T. KUHN: Has it ever happened now Thanksgiving can be still in the harvest season. Has it ever happened that you had to vary from your plans because of the fact that it was?

B. KUHN: No, I don't think so we have always made it but there has been times when you are been harvesting but you do take that Thursday off. It just seems to be the thing.

T. KUHN: You just do it. You just do it.

B. KUHN: Uh-huh. You just do it.

T. KUHN: Is the... are the holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter something that the family looks forward to doing?

B. KUHN: Yes. Because it's a chance to all get together. You know there aren't a lot of chances during the year because everybody's so busy so we do everybody plans on going that day.

T. KUHN: Is it a similar situation for Christmas then?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

T. KUHN: Is there anything during the summer where you might get together?

B. KUHN: There is a family picnic which is the whole Kuhn clan so it's not just the immediate family.

T. KUHN: That's what I thought that's why I asked you about it. Now it is a big deal and could you describe how that works?

B. KUHN: Well, all the aunts and uncles, all the cousin and their children, they all get together at at certain place.

T. KUHN: Now let's go back one step. Who would you say, who's the core couple? Who started this Kuhn family that you're referring to?

B. KUHN: I don't know about Grandma and Grandpa Kuhn but probably originally they started it. As they grew older then one of the daughters, Lorraine, I think took it over and at that there was a Christmas party also.

T. KUHN: So Grandma and Grandpa Kuhn, that's Ed and Agnes Kuhn. And Ed and Agnes Kuhn farmed on Butterfield Road in Warrenville. Right?

B. KUHN: Right. Yeah.

T. KUHN: And they had a big family and it was from those two, that couple then that this Kuhn clan that we are referring to came from so go ahead and describe then the family picnic.

B. KUHN: Then Leo and Lorraine took it over and then every year since they had been a picnic that I can remember since I came into the family where everybody gets together. You bring your own meat and drinks and a dish to pass and it's just like a potluck dinner.

T. KUHN: What about all the tables where does everybody sit?

B. KUHN: I think your suppose to bring your own table and chairs.

T. KUHN: It's really kind of neat to see all these pickups roll up with picnic tables on them.

B. KUHN: And all the food is usually on a hay racks.

T. KUHN: Yeah. That's right. Remember the year they had it in Grandpa Kuhn's barn?

B. KUHN: No, I don't remember that.

T. KUHN: It was raining out.

B. KUHN: Oh, yeah.

T. KUHN: Jack was in the Navy you said and he served during the Vietnamese War which would be during the late 60's

B. KUHN: Late 60's yeah.

- T. KUHN: OK. Do you know or have you observed, Bev, if that experience has had any particular effect on him that may not have been the case otherwise?
- B. KUHN: I really don't think so. The only thing that he said was that he wouldn't go back to Hawaii. He was based there for a certain time. And it didn't impress him at all. That's the only thing that I've really gotten out of it.
- T. KUHN: We know that...I know from the reading in that DeKalb Chronicle there are a lot of Vietnamese vets in the DeKalb area. Does Jack have any contact with those people at all?
- B. KUHN: No. Not at all.
- T. KUHN: In terms of Jack's closest friends, I think you did answer this for me but I'm going to ask you again. How would you say that they've gotten to know each other.
- B. KUHN: They were here when we came and he is a very out-going, friendly person and I think though just driving down the road and seeing somebody outside he would stop and say hi.
- T. KUHN: Could you describe how they help each other out if at all.
- B. KUHN: Marlin, we do work with when we do soybeans. He brings his combine here and we go down to his place. I think another way he met friends is because he's plumbing out here and he does get to see a lot of people in their house and probably through that also.
- T. KUHN: Does... when you said that Marlin brings his combine over and you then go over to his place, is that a reciprocal deal or is there any kind pay for that.
- B. KUHN: They keep track of how many acres or how many hours that each work and there is payment. At the end of the year they just all get together and decide who worked when and how long and that type of thing.
- T. KUHN: So it's mainly with Marlin Anderson and Jack and Gary work together. Are there any others who work together?
- B. KUHN: There is one other guy that helps with soybeans, Charlie Luxton. There is usually three combines in the field at one time.
- T. KUHN: Why do they think they need to help on the soybeans more so than on the corn?
- B. KUHN: OK, on the soybeans because when the moisture is right on the soybeans they need to be out of the field and if the weather is right. And with three combines working they do get done a lot quicker.
- T. KUHN: What would happen if they got beyond that stage, the beans?
- B. KUHN: Then they take on moisture quicker than corn would and its spoils. As

this year we had some warm, wet weather where some of the beans got moldy and they turned dark. Which spoils the crop.

- T. KUHN: Then what happens, is that just waste?
- B. KUHN: Well, no they can usually do something with them. We've never had a bad crop. This year was not as good as other years but it wasn't to the point where you wouldn't use them. You do still store them and use them.
- T. KUHN: How do you use them then?
- B. KUHN: We sell them to the elevator, and then they in turn would grade them and give you a price.
- T. KUHN: What elevator? How does that work?
- B. KUHN: They check prices mainly. A couple of elevators around, Topman Grain in Clare is one of the main ones we sell to. And then there's Creston Grain up at Creston.
- T. KUHN: So you then haul the beans to the elevator. Is that a coop elevator?
- B. KUHN: No. I don't believe so.
- T. KUHN: And then does he call.. does Jack call to find out the price on any particular day, is that what you said?
- B. KUHN: Right, yes, uh-huh.
- T. KUHN: And then he decides today's the day.
- B. KUHN: That's when we'll sell.
- T. KUHN: OK.
- B. KUHN: Or they can forward contract loads.
- T. KUHN: That was one thing I wanted to ask you. Does he trade on the commodities market at all?
- B. KUHN: No, they really don't.
- T. KUHN: Well how does the forward contracting work then?
- B. KUHN: Well, I guess if you say you want to sell your beans in May of next year then they will give you a price from the board that the May price would be. Then you store them till then and you fill the contract.
- T. KUHN: Do they charge anything to store it then till May?
- B. KUHN: No, we store them here at home if you did store them in an elevator yeah it would be so much per bushel. I really don't know.
- T. KUHN: About how much right right now are soybeans selling for? Do you

know?

B. KUHN: I think in the paper it's like five dollars. \$5.02.

T. KUHN: And how bout corn?

B. KUHN: Corn I believe I saw last night was \$1.75.

T. KUHN: It's gone up a little bit.

B. KUHN: A little bit, yeah.

T. KUHN: I wonder what they are blaming that on?

B. KUHN: I don't know. [laughter] I don't know.

T. KUHN: That's pretty good, that's a pretty good jump from a couple weeks ago. [END SIDE ONE]

[BEGIN SIDE TWO]

T. KUHN: Bev could you tell me what the names of your sons are and what their ages are and school?

B. KUHN: OK. They all go to Malta School. They're all in the high school this year. Junior High is combined with the high school here. Brad is the oldest, 16; Brian is 13 and Tim is 12. They're in 6th, I mean 7th, 8th, and junior years.

T. KUHN: The school then is in Malta. Is it a consolidated school? I mean do kids come from a wide area to attend that school?

B. KUHN: No. Well just like the farming area and the town itself.

T. KUHN: What would you say would be the, I guess you'd call it the radius, just roughly that draws the kids to that school?

B. KUHN: Well we are about four miles to the north and I think it goes maybe another one or two miles to the north. To the west it probably goes maybe six or seven miles. The east I don't believe it goes very far to the east and the south it would probably be five miles or so.

T. KUHN: OK. So probably 5 or 6 mile radius.

B. KUHN: Yeah, 5 or 6 mile radius.

T. KUHN: OK what kind of enrollment do they have? They're all in high school well junior high.

B. KUHN: OK, junior high and well I think the high school building which includes junior high is like 150 students. The grade school is probably 100, right around 100, very small.

T. KUHN: As far as the facilities of the school could you describe those for me?

B. KUHN: OK, as far as sports is concerned they have track and soccer and

basketball. They're the main...

T. KUHN: Football?

B. KUHN: No, no football because of the kids. There's only like 40, 45 high school boys which wouldn't make a football team. So football is out but the basketball, the soccer, and the track are the three main sports. The building itself is a one story, the high school, is a one story. They have just about every facility I would think that makes a good school. The grade school is in town. It's a two story building, an older two story building.

T. KUHN: As far as your boys are concerned themselves, what activities do they enjoy the most at school?

B. KUHN: Probably sports. Soccer is the big thing. They're all three into soccer and that is the big thing in the fall.

T. KUHN: What about their classes?

B. KUHN: Their classes. I think they all enjoy math. Brian really enjoys english but I think math is a big strong subject.

T. KUHN: Do the... do the boys have any involvement on the farm?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, very much so.

T. KUHN: OK, could you describe that for me?

B. KUHN: OK, in the fall there's a lot of field work to be done once the corn is off and the stalks have to be chopped or chisel plowed or plowed whatever. And then...

T. KUHN: Stop just a minute with that. I'm not real sure and I should know but what exactly is chisel plowing.

B. KUHN: OK, it's like... well there's knives kind of that go down to the.. that are the chisels that go into the ground which stirs up the ground but doesn't roll it over like a moulboard plow would. So it's good for conservation is the main thing they do it for.

T. KUHN: So the plow now I want to describe what I'm imaging it to be. The disc, the wheel part of it, does it have like little knives, not knives, but little spikes coming off it.

B. KUHN: No the disc itself is just a blade that cuts through the ground. And then behind the first row of discs blades there are two rows of like knives. This is on a soil saver chisel plow type of thing that cut through the ground.

T. KUHN: OK and then how is that different from the... is it Milbourn?

B. KUHN: Moulboard. A Moulboard plow turns over a whole slab of dirt which buries the husks and the trash that's on top the stalks. So when the wind comes in the winter and we get a lot of strong winds out here it

takes the soil off the top cause when it freezes it gets kind of real fine like on top and it blows a lot. Where as the chisel plow doesn't bury the stalks it buries some but leaves some on top too so when the wind blows the soil gets caught.

T. KUHN: Is that the most popular form of plowing in DeKalb County now the chisel plow?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, I think so. You see a lot more of it.

T. KUHN: So then in the spring if you've chisel plowed and that leaves some of the stalk then do you have to prepare the field any differently in the spring?

B. KUHN: No they go out with the field cultivator which is knives also and turn it over again and it leaves it pretty good then they plant.

T. KUHN: Do the boys do this chisel plowing? That's where we started off on this discussion. [laughter]

B. KUHN: Actually they chop the stalks first to shred them up and make them easier to bury them. The kids mainly take care of the chopping and then I think actually one of them did chisel plow for awhile this year.

T. KUHN: Do they ever do the planting?

B. KUHN: They help but not the actual planting. No.

T. KUHN: Do you.. why is that? Do you have any philosophy as to why? It seems that the men are the one who usually plant and that's why I'm asking that question.

B. KUHN: Right. I think mainly because they know what they are doing, what depth to set the seed at and how many seeds have to drop in a certain distance. Just know how, experience probably.

T. KUHN: And the fact perhaps too that it's so critical that it's done right.

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, yeah, right.

T. KUHN: No room for error on that one.

B. KUHN: No, that's right.

T. KUHN: The boys work in the field and you said that they had pigs and chickens so they're involved with 4-H.

B. KUHN: Well it's not really 4-H it's just their own person projects. They enjoy the livestock I think. And Brad is in FFA in the school and he had been studying the hog prices last year and knew that they were on the upswing so he decided to get into it this spring thinking that the prices would still be good for a year and it turned out just fine. He really did well.

T. KUHN: The young entrepreneur. [laughter]

B. KUHN: Yes so it does take a little insight and a little checking and tracking of prices.

T. KUHN: Did he... he bought the pigs.. he bought feeder pigs.

B. KUHN: Right. Yes.

T. KUHN: And when you buy a feeder pig about what weight are those?

B. KUHN: His were 20 pound maybe. There were just real small. He got them from Marlin Anderson who is a pretty big hog person. And he had some baby ones that he didn't have room for that were like 6 weeks old. So Brad bought 30 of them and kept them all summer and got rid of them.

T. KUHN: What did he feed them?

B. KUHN: Corn.

T. KUHN: He feeds them corn.

B. KUHN: Shelled corn and then you have to run it through a grinder to grind it up some. And he mixed the corn, the ground up corn with protein and feed them that.

T. KUHN: Does he have to buy the protein?

B. KUHN: Yes, he did.

T. KUHN: And then that's mixed in and feed that way?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh. And the corn he bought from Jack and Gary.

T. KUHN: So he had to do the whole process?

B. KUHN: Yeah. This was his...

T. KUHN: This was serious.

B. KUHN: Yeah, yeah he had to lay the money out and then when he sold them then that was his.

T. KUHN: And did he make a profit?

B. KUHN: Yes, he did. He made a pretty good profit.

T. KUHN: Good. [laughter] Probably see that again.

B. KUHN: He would like to.

T. KUHN: Sure.

B. KUHN: But the prices have gone down since then. But their still high compared to a couple of years ago.

T. KUHN: What about the chickens then?

B. KUHN: The chickens... the kids usually get like 150 and then we, they sell them to different people around that have bought chickens from us for years.

T. KUHN: They sell them dressed?

B. KUHN: Dressed, yeah. We take them from LaMoille which is near Mendota. And they dress them out and package.

T. KUHN: What's involved with the chicken process?

B. KUHN: A lot of work.

T. KUHN: Yeah!

B. KUHN: I think the worse thing is cleaning out the chicken house that has to be you know because I worked out there with them, in with Brad in the summer cleaning the manure out from the hogs and that was nothing compared to the chickens.

T. KUHN: Why?

B. KUHN: It was bad enough. [laughter] Chickens, they're in the house and they're outside some of the time but it's just the ammonia is just so strong that it's...

T. KUHN: How do you do it?

B. KUHN: Shovel.

T. KUHN: Just with a shovel?

B. KUHN: Yeah.

T. KUHN: 150 chickens.

B. KUHN: Make a mess.

T. KUHN: As far as the chicken process now. They get them when their little, little fuzzy balls.

B. KUHN: A day old.

T. KUHN: A day old. Can you just kind of run through the process real lightly?

B. KUHN: OK, when they're a day old they keep them in an incubator. Well it's like an incubator there's a light that keeps them warm and it's enclosed a little bit. Then in a couple of weeks they start to lose their fuzziness and get the pin feathers and from then on they're just ugly. [Laughter] As they grow older the roosters get wild and it's a pain to go in and feed them with the roosters coming at you trying to peak you.

T. KUHN: They are so mean.

B. KUHN: They are. They can get really mean.

T. KUHN: Are there any special problems with chickens when they are at that young stage?

B. KUHN: If they get cold they'll die. So they have to keep them enclosed for a couple of weeks like around 90-94 degrees I think it is.

T. KUHN: When they're a couple weeks old they do that?

B. KUHN: Yeah, when they're a couple weeks old then they start like coming out into the rest of the building.

T. KUHN: Do they have any particular social relations, these chickens? [laughter]

B. KUHN: Well, we used to have them debeaked because like the roosters would pick on the younger ones. The ones that weren't quite as big and get them so blood that they would just drop over.

T. KUHN: That's what I was getting at.

B. KUHN: So there are ones... and there are ones that eat first that come to the feeder first then if this is his feeder and there is somebody else there then there's a little stink.

T. KUHN: Little.

B. KUHN: So there are kings or more superior ones then others.

T. KUHN: Are all these chickens sold before they lay?

B. KUHN: Yeah. They are just broilers. We just keep them for... I think the longest we've kept them is twelve weeks.

T. KUHN: OK, and you get about 150 a year?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh.

T. KUHN: Who gets the money then from the chickens?

B. KUHN: The kids do. They buy the feed and take care of them and then they get the money for them.

T. KUHN: Good.

B. KUHN: So that's their project for the year, a little money maker.

T. KUHN: So besides the projects on the farm, the pigs and the chickens and helping Jack in the field and everything at school is there any other activities they're involved?

B. KUHN: Well the orchard. They sell the apples and get the money from that.

- T. KUHN: What's their involvement with the orchard then? What do they have to do?
- B. KUHN: Cutting the grass, keeping it clean around the trees, in the Spring when it's still cold they have to go out and trim them which is a lot of work.
- T. KUHN: How many trees do you have? It looked like quite a few.
- B. KUHN: Probably about 40 all apple trees.
- T. KUHN: Different variety?
- B. KUHN: Yeah. Ones that come in late or early. There's quite a few delicious trees out there, golden and red, jonathan, there's a greening.
- T. KUHN: Did you plant those trees?
- B. KUHN: No, they were here when we came here.
- T. KUHN: It sounds like the boys really have a lot to keep them busy and also a lot of real sound experience for life.
- B. KUHN: Yeah, they do keep busy. They really do because in the summer when there's projects like with Jack and Gary, Gary is a carpenter and Jack the plumber their helping with them also. So they do make money that way too.
- T. KUHN: As far as that's... This is a little bit off the subject of the... it is definitely off the subject of the kids and I don't want to forget to come back. I want to talk to you about Jack and Gary's work off the farm. But as far as the boys go how do you discipline them.
- B. KUHN: Well, I don't believe we've spanked them for years. Mostly talking, verbally. I think they're at the point now where they realize what is right and wrong and what we expect and sometimes we do expect to much.
- T. KUHN: Well when it comes to well when you say what's right and wrong. What is right and wrong? What would be an example of something they'd be punished for.
- B. KUHN: You know I really can't think right now. I really can't. It seems strange. I mean there are always things that disappoint you or you know. I have no example.
- T. KUHN: How do you feel, Bev, it's about church. Now if you do attend a church...
- B. KUHN: Uh-huh, which we do.
- T. KUHN: Which you do. Which church do you attend?
- B. KUHN: St. Mary's Catholic in DeKalb.

T. KUHN: It's in DeKalb?

B. KUHN: Yes.

T. KUHN: Besides the religious service itself what activities at the church are meaningful to the family and what are you involved in.

B. KUHN: We're involved in the CCD program.

T. KUHN: And what is that?

B. KUHN: OK it's like a catechism class, teaches about the church because we're not... they don't get go to a Catholic School so it teaches them about the church. And that's Sunday morning and Sunday evening. And in the Sunday morning classes we go in there and then I sit at the phone and take the messages while Tim's at class so we are involved that way. And in the evening Brian goes. Brad has since been confirmed so doesn't go anymore.

T. KUHN: Were you raised a Catholic?

B. KUHN: No, I was raised Anglican.

T. KUHN: Do you feel there is a strong similarity?

B. KUHN: I think there is. I wasn't a real church goer. That was not part of our family like it is here. Maybe being Catholic is that way. You know you feel the responsibility of going to church every Sunday.

T. KUHN: Do you feel that from whatever your experience with the Anglican Church was does that how does and that was let's see probably 25 years ago when you were a kid.

B. KUHN: Yeah.

T. KUHN: OK, do you perceive that over the years there's been any change in the way children are taught or do you feel that it's pretty much the same?

B. KUHN: I thinks it's more relaxed now. That they teach more down to earth things. They talk more to the kids rather than just preaching this is the way it is. I think the kids have a more involvement and they have more of a chance to bring questions up and their answered. I think twenty years from what Jack says, you know, things were taught this was cut and dry. There was no way about it.

T. KUHN: So it's sounds like you feel there's more openness now.

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, yeah, I do. More interesting.

T. KUHN: Now, OK, what I wanted to ask you about Jack and Gary's work off the farm... now Jack's a plumber, Gary's a carpenter. Do they do that at any particular time of the year more so than...

B. KUHN: More so in the summer when there is more time and the winter. There

is jobs then too.

T. KUHN: How do they find their jobs?

B. KUHN: Probably word of mouth I would think.

T. KUHN: Is there any particular reason that they do those extra jobs?

B. KUHN: To help with the income. I don't believe you could, we could live the way we do which is not high off the hog or anything but just staying comfortable without the plumbing income. That brings in quite a bit of money.

T. KUHN: The land that you farm now was owned by John and Angeline. And John died. So how is the land held now?

B. KUHN: OK, we're each buying into the farm is how it is.

T. KUHN: So how does that work?

B. KUHN: We would eventually own the farm that we are on and Gary would own the farm that he's on. So you just buy into it.

T. KUHN: Does Angeline still... who owns the farm?

B. KUHN: Angeline still owns the farm.

T. KUHN: OK and you're buying it?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh.

T. KUHN: How was that established how it would work out?

B. KUHN: I think before Jack's dad died they kind of planned the whole thing more or less.

T. KUHN: Then how are you planning for your future?

B. KUHN: I think probably just buying this farm and staying here would be it.

T. KUHN: At this time what do you feel, Bev, are your transportation needs?

B. KUHN: That we don't have now you mean?

T. KUHN: No, I mean... OK what do you need, what kind of vehicles do you have?

B. KUHN: Oh, OK.

T. KUHN: And what do you need that way?

B. KUHN: We have the car and Jack's pick up truck.

T. KUHN: What kind of a car do you have?

B. KUHN: We have a '79 Buick LaSabre and Jack has an '84 Ford pick up.

T. KUHN: OK, so you have two vehicles that you can use for on road transportation.

B. KUHN: Right, yeah.

T. KUHN: And then now the house, your house is all beautiful and modern and you've got all the conveniences. Can you describe what you feel now you really need for to keep your life comfortable the way you like it?

B. KUHN: Actually I don't believe that's anything other than we have that we really absolutely need. But you couldn't live without the refrigerator, the stove, the dishwasher, you could live without it but it would be tough. The microwave is an extra, TV, the radio, VCR.

T. KUHN: What's a VCR?

B. KUHN: Where we tape shows when we're working in the fall and we sit down and watch them Sundays.

T. KUHN: What does VCR mean?

B. KUHN: Video Cassette Recorder.

T. KUHN: OK, and how bout the, you got the, utility room?

B. KUHN: We've got the washer and dryer in the bathroom there which is nice.

T. KUHN: And a freezer?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh. Two freezers down the basement.

T. KUHN: And what do you use those for?

B. KUHN: We usually buy a half a beef at a time and just have it cut up so we have meat on hand. Chickens we store in there.

T. KUHN: Chickens from the...

B. KUHN: Yeah, we buy chickens from the kids.

T. KUHN: And pig?

B. KUHN: No, we didn't, the price was too high so we didn't buy from him.
[laughter]

T. KUHN: Oh boy!

B. KUHN: Not this year.

T. KUHN: What did he think about that?

B. KUHN: He sold it for a good price so he didn't care. And then just vegetables, bread, mainly things that... I'm not a shopper so I don't go in every

week so when I so go I just stock up so I don't have to go back for a few weeks.

T. KUHN: In terms in what you consume, food you consume within the family, how do you arrange that?

B. KUHN: I think we would eat beef a lot. We do eat quite a bit of pork. Chickens we do eat quite of bit of too. Fish once in a while.

T. KUHN: And then everything else, you've got your own beef, you've got your own chicken, chickens and you've got some of your vegetables from the garden you said and then everything else...

B. KUHN: Is bought in town.

T. KUHN: OK. For a few minutes let's talk about farm organizations.

B. KUHN: OK.

T. KUHN: Do you belong to any farm organizations in DeKalb County or any other county? [laughter]

B. KUHN: The farm bureau, we belong to.

T. KUHN: What does that do for you?

B. KUHN: It has different meetings throughout the year. They have chemical meetings where they explain the dangers of chemicals for in the spring. I believe they have like estate planning and stress management. Just about everything to do with farming. They have different meetings throughout the year.

T. KUHN: How bout for women?

B. KUHN: For women they have quite a few which I haven't been to. The one I did go to was pine cone wreath making or something like that which was interesting. And they do get a good turn out.

T. KUHN: Do they send you flyers to let you know what's going on?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh.

T. KUHN: Now if you can recall looking over the flyer what would be an example of the type of program they might offer for women in addition to the craft?

B. KUHN: I believe there's a safety program for working in the fall or during the farming year. When you're working you do things automatically and I think the stress comes into it there...

T. KUHN: emotional stress?

B. KUHN: Yeah and then the safety factor where you just get so tired that you have to quite.

T. KUHN: Are you referring to work outside?

B. KUHN: Yeah.

T. KUHN: Work outside, outside work not to over do it.

B. KUHN: Yeah. Because you do want to get things in when the weather is right and sometimes you just have to keep going as long as you can.

T. KUHN: And so that program gives you tips as to or reminds you.

B. KUHN: That's right, yeah. Reminds you of the safety factor and what can happen if you do get a bit lax.

T. KUHN: As far as the farm bureau then besides the educational services are there any other services that are offered.

B. KUHN: They do have a social rally day in the summer.

T. KUHN: And what's that?

B. KUHN: It's like a big picnic where they for a certain price you go in and you get your meal and then they have different activities going on that evening. It's just a one day thing.

T. KUHN: How do the people of the neighborhood respond to something like that?

B. KUHN: Pretty good they usually get a really good, a lot of people there. It's a big social event.

T. KUHN: In terms of the whole neighborhood what would your feeling be there's.. do they participate?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh most of them do yeah. Yeah, most of them do go to the...

T. KUHN: In addition to the picnic though.

B. KUHN: To the meetings?

T. KUHN: To the meetings.

B. KUHN: I think some of them do. Yeah, I wouldn't say all of them do.

T. KUHN: Are there any other organizations in the county that come to mind?

B. KUHN: Not really.

T. KUHN: So it's mainly the farm bureau?

B. KUHN: Mainly the farm bureau

T. KUHN: in DeKalb County? OK. Now just a few more questions on farming. That are real kind of particular questions. We talked a little bit about plowing and you prefer, Jack and Gary prefer the chisel plow. And

what about seed corn how to they decide... what kind do they choose?

B. KUHN: OK. Every year they plant a test plot where they have certain different varieties and they plant new ones also. Then they go from there to see which ones do the best yielded the best. And then they decide. There are certain ones they plant every year because they know they're good.

T. KUHN: Which ones would those be?

B. KUHN: There's a Pioneer number I believe that's pretty good. The number I don't really know off hand. But then there are some other Pioneer numbers that they've discontinued because the stalks have gone over.

T. KUHN: When you say numbers, Pioneer number, what does that mean?

B. KUHN: OK, there's a Pioneer 3780 and then different numbers. It's a different type of seed. Some is a long term seed some is a short term seed which would come in earlier. Some the stalks stand straighter or the ears are upright that they don't fall.

T. KUHN: And these qualities... would you call this number the indication of the hybrid.

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, uh-huh, yeah.

T. KUHN: So number 3737 might be breed to come in earlier rather than later.

B. KUHN: Or stand better or have not such a tall stalk.

T. KUHN: Do they usually choose one type of seed for the entire farm?

B. KUHN: No, they do plant different kinds, different varieties.

T. KUHN: What would be the reason for doing that?

B. KUHN: Probably one would come in a little dryer maybe then another or different time so they could start on one. Like they would plant the head lands maybe in a shorter term corn so they could get that out first and start the dryer and then get into the field.

T. KUHN: What are the head lands?

B. KUHN: They're the rows that go around the farm.

T. KUHN: So OK. I didn't know that. Ok then as far as the fertilizers and the pesticides how do you determine what you're going to need for that?

B. KUHN: I don't know how they do that. I think it's mainly some from advertising probably and some from experience. They know what works and what doesn't work.

T. KUHN: Does Jack ever go to those farm bureau meetings where they describe for example different, the effects of different pesticides?

- B. KUHN: Actually we got a letter in the mail the other day where there is a meeting coming up for that. And I think he will because you have to be certified in order to apply different chemicals.
- T. KUHN: So this meeting he'll go and learn about that and then what does he have to do to be certified?
- B. KUHN: I think they just give you a number there to say that were at the meeting and you understand the dangers of using the chemicals.
- T. KUHN: What kind of dangers do they tell you about?
- B. KUHN: There is one chemical that I can't think of right now that is a pesticide and when you breath it it gets into your system which is really dangerous so when your working with that you make sure you don't breath it.
- T. KUHN: Do they take any precautions?
- B. KUHN: Yeah, especially for spreading anhydrous ammonia which is a gas. You have wear the mask, the rubber gloves, long sleeved shirt, long sleeved pants which is really dangerous.
- T. KUHN: To get it on your skin.
- B. KUHN: To get it on your skin it burns instantly to get it in your eyes you could be blind, it's that dangerous. But it produces corn.
- T. KUHN: Well the same with the pesticides then do they take a precaution for that? The dry pesticides?
- B. KUHN: Yeah. I think mainly using gloves. Make sure you're not down wind of it when you're pouring it into something that your not breathing the chemical.
- T. KUHN: It is a problem.
- B. KUHN: It is a danger.
- T. KUHN: Anhydrous...
- B. KUHN: ammonia?
- T. KUHN: ammonia, that's a fertilizer. And that's liquid.
- B. KUHN: That's liquid, yeah.
- T. KUHN: And is that the main one they use for that?
- B. KUHN: Yeah, they do use a dry fertilizer also in the fall but in the spring they put on the ammonia.
- T. KUHN: Do they have a particular piece of machinery to do that? How do they do it with the liquid stuff?

- B. KUHN: OK, for the ammonia that comes out in a tank you get a tank and you pull that behind the tractor and then you can field cultivate it in or disc it in. The ammonia goes down through some tubes and the little knives into the ground so far down and then you work it in so it's not just in one spot you spread it all over.
- T. KUHN: And then pesticides what would be... you know, what's your main pest and what do you use to get rid of it? [laughter]
- B. KUHN: I imagine root worm and cut worm and that kind of thing. With that Jack usually puts the chemicals on. We have a big tank on the front of the tractor or behind the tractor actually that you put the dry in then you mix it so much water and then you spray it. It has a boom sprayer on the back that you spray it on the field and then you field cultivate afterwards.
- T. KUHN: What's a boom sprayer?
- B. KUHN: Well it's got like maybe 10 or 15 little nozzles and in this tank there is a pump or an activator that mixes up the chemicals and then pumps it out into this boom. It's like a long piece of pipe and then sprays it out on the field.
- T. KUHN: When it comes to OK now I'm curious about this.. the seed corn, the cost of the seed corn, the cost of the fertilizer, the cost of the pesticide, the cost of the gas to put it on the field. What do you figure roughly per acre it cost to put the crop in?
- B. KUHN: See I don't know for sure all I know is what I read in the paper. I really haven't heard any definite price from Jack or Gary. But they say it's over 2 dollars maybe 2.50 or whatever for an acre of corn and you're getting \$1.75 so.
- T. KUHN: It's two dollars per acre but you get \$1.75 per bushel.
- B. KUHN: Per bushel, yeah, right.
- T. KUHN: So you could be making... what is that per acre?
- B. KUHN: Well if it's two dollars per acre and I don't know I'm not real quick at math.
- T. KUHN: I'm not either.
- B. KUHN: I'm drawing a blank here.
- T. KUHN: Me too, OK. Now as far as the machinery goes what is Jack need for tractors?
- B. KUHN: OK, we have three or four tractors right now and they're good sized their not four wheel drive their two wheel drive but they're big enough for the machinery we pull. And they need everyone of them especially in the fall.
- T. KUHN: In the fall let's say you're out harvesting and how would the different

tractors be functioning, when would they use them for?

B. KUHN: OK, when the combines in the field you usually take a tractor and what we have is a grain cart which is a big cart that holds like 480 bushel so we take that into the field with one tractor. There could be another one chopping stalks, another chisel plowing.

T. KUHN: All this at the same time?

B. KUHN: Uh-huh, yeah, that's when the kids come in handy. You know you can combine and then follow up with the rest of the equipment. Get the field work done before the ground freezes. You know if it's a late fall. You know going back to those pieces it's seems like it's two dollars a bushel to put the corn in instead of an acre. That didn't sound right.

T. KUHN: Yeah, that didn't sound right either but I didn't. Yeah that's if you're paying that much and your getting \$1.75...

B. KUHN: To put the crop in, yeah, it doesn't make it that's why the prices are so bad. It's costing too much to put it in the ground for what you're getting at the end.

T. KUHN: Then all you're labor.

B. KUHN: Right, yeah, and the cultivating during the year you know it's not just planting and harvesting there's work while the crop is growing.

T. KUHN: Do plumbing.

B. KUHN: Yeah.

T. KUHN: There must be something more to farming then farming.

B. KUHN: I think just the attitude about where you want to be and where you want to live. It's a good life, it's a hard life. There's a lot of work to it but some people aren't cut out for it and others are I guess.

T. KUHN: What do you want for the boys for their future? What do expect for them after high school or want for them?

B. KUHN: What I really want is just for them to do what they want to do. To be happy with what they want to do. Not to do it just to please us. But Brian I think is more interested in the farm part.

T. KUHN: Now where does Brian come, number 2?

B. KUHN: He's the middle one.

T. KUHN: And he was the one who raised the pigs?

B. KUHN: No, the chickens.

T. KUHN: The chickens.

- B. KUHN: He is very willing... they're all really willing to help. I mean they all come home from school and they're ready to go. But he seems more interested maybe.
- T. KUHN: Education wise what do you want for them after high school?
- B. KUHN: After high school? I would like to see them go to Kish College which isn't far from here which is a two year college. Just to more or less decide what they want to do. Cause I don't think you really know exactly what you want and maybe after two years you still wouldn't really know.
- T. KUHN: Do they offer down there any agricultural programs?
- B. KUHN: Yes, it is a big ag school.
- T. KUHN: So that in it's self would be real helpful.
- B. KUHN: Yeah, right.
- T. KUHN: OK. Now you've given me a good description of what Jack's work is. Just as far as his daily routine goes about what time in the morning does he start, and does he come in for meals, you know? Is there any structure is what I'm kind of getting at?
- B. KUHN: There's really not a routine anytime of year probably not even in the winter because sometimes he's gone on a plumbing job all day so he takes his lunch. He would usually start around 7:00. I mean by the time you get up and get going and it's around 7:30 or 8 before he's on a job. In the fall it's a lot different because we dry corn all day and all night so Gary will stay with the dryer and unload or whatever until 2 in the morning and then Jack will go down from 2 till 6 and then they start their day again so it's a long time.
- T. KUHN: Jack and Gary they really work as a team it sounds like.
- B. KUHN: They do. They're very good friends too which I think it takes to be able to work all day every day with somebody like that.
- T. KUHN: When he talks about their childhood were they always as compatible?
- B. KUHN: I think they were always close, yeah more so than the others.
- T. KUHN: Interesting that they should end up...
- B. KUHN: Uh-huh, it is yeah.
- T. KUHN: The way they enmeshed their lives. What's your relationship with Mary?
- B. KUHN: She teaches school in Malta so we don't see each other a lot. But family functions and we visit once in a while.
- T. KUHN: Does she have children?

B. KUHN: No.

T. KUHN: I don't think I've heard that they did.

B. KUHN: No they don't.

T. KUHN: But as far as going back and forth...

B. KUHN: Not a lot, no, and socially they have their own friends and we have ours so their is not a real mix socially. There are some things that we end up together because of the friends.

T. KUHN: Interesting, the way that is. That is interesting. I would have thought that you would have gone with the same group.

B. KUHN: Yeah, no.

T. KUHN: How old is Gary now?

B. KUHN: Probably 32.

T. KUHN: And how old is Jack?

B. KUHN: Jack is 40.

T. KUHN: Oh, Jack's 40. He was born in what '45 or '46?

B. KUHN: '46

T. KUHN: OK, he was born in 1946 and when were you born?

B. KUHN: '48.

T. KUHN: '48, so you're..

B. KUHN: two years younger. I'll be 38 this year and he turned 40 this year.

T. KUHN: You've had an interesting life.

B. KUHN: Yeah. [laughter]

T. KUHN: OK, now I think we're just about done but I want to ask you that one last question and that is what would you like to tell the farmers, the readers, the historians of 2086 about farming in 1986 in DeKalb County?

B. KUHN: Well for me personally I think it's the best life. I mean in this part of the country. I'm sure there are other really nice parts of the country but this is still farm land, still very open. That's what I like about it. I would hope the economy is better, that the prices are better to keep more farmers in farming cause there are a lot that have gone out this year. People that we personally knew which really hits hard.

T. KUHN: Why did they go out?

- B. KUHN: I think some was mismanagement where they wanted more land and bought more land when the prices were so high and just are not getting the prices for the crops right now to make ends meet. So maybe a lot stems from management.
- T. KUHN: Did they buy that land during the '70s?
- B. KUHN: Uh-huh, yeah. When prices were up around \$3000 dollars or better per acre.
- T. KUHN: That's what I was going to ask you how much were they. What would you say they're going for now?
- B. KUHN: I would say around 1300, 1500 dollars an acre which is half of what it was.
- T. KUHN: So tell us...
- B. KUHN: What can I say. Only that I think it is good it is a good life. And I would hope the kids would get into it eventually but right now I don't see how they could because of the price and the economy. But I hope the family farm lives and does for a long time.
- T. KUHN: Sounds good.