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Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Traeger, German immigrants, in Wilmington, Delaware, November 5, 1973, by Steven Schoenherr. Mr. Traeger's responses are indicated by "A"; Mrs. Traeger's are indicated by "B".

Q And you were born over here?
A Um hmm. And this is our son, Uolygon (sp?).

Q How old are you?
C Nine.

Q O.K. So, both of you can talk at the same time...you can interject of add anything...but basically, what we'd like to do is know your personal history...where you were born in Germany--in your case...

B Well, I was born in a little village Eckartshausen--that's in Hessen about an hour's ride away from Frankfurt.

Q How do you spell the name of that town?
B Frankfurt--or Eckartshausen, the little village? It's E-c-k-a-r-t-s-h-a-u-s-e-n.

Q Where is that relatively located to Frankfurt?
B North of Frankfurt.

Q About how many miles or kilometers?
A About 35 miles.

B 35 miles? It takes about an hour's drive. And that's where I was born and then we moved away from there to a little town when I was eight years old, and that's where I lived until I came over to the States in 1953--right?--I came over, yes.

Q Can you tell me about your parents?
B Well, my mother is over here, living over here, and I have three sisters living over here, too. My father is missing in Russia from World War II. And I don't know what else you would want to...

Q Were you a farming family?
B No, my father was an insurance agent. He had his own insurance agency, but was working again for a larger...for Aulyuns (sp?) Insurance--it was the main office in Frankfurt, and then he had his own agency...he was--what do you call it--a substation. And my grandfather was working for that same agency. And then I was 10 years old when he went to the war. So I really don't know that much about him, or...I can't remember that much about my father.

Q Did the war affect your life in any way--except for your father
in the army?

B No. We didn't have it too bad since we were living more or less in the country. And foodwise and all this—everything was rationed, of course, but there was always potatoes—we always had enough to eat. And I had a great grandmother—she had a good way with some of the farmers, and she always would come and bring some extra eggs or things like this. And so we really didn't starve. We maybe didn't get the right food to eat, but we didn't starve.

Q Can you remember your first impressions of America, or when you first...

B I loved it.

Q Before you came over...how did you learn about America...was it in school, or did your relatives talk about it...

B No, it was when the Americans...over there they are called the "Amies"...when they came, you know, into Germany. I don't really recall anything...I know we didn't have it in school...we didn't learn about America in school. I wasn't that poor then. So, really, I learned about America, then, later on when I met Americans over there...I was in American families...was acquainted with American families, and that's how I...I had an aunt living over here. Well, that's actually how I came over here...an aunt and uncle...they were living in New Castle. And I came and stayed with them.

Q What were conditions like right after the war...before you came over?

B Again, in our case it wasn't too bad, when foodwise we had, like I said, enough so we wouldn't go hungry. Otherwise, like clothing and everything was rationed, too. It was a little harder, then. And then about two years after the war, I think, was when my aunt started to send packages over there, and then we had quite a bit of...she sent clothing and care packages plus other packages. We weren't too bad off...against some other people.

Q So your aunt wrote you and invited you over to this country?

B Yes. Well, yes, more or less, I went to visit—I mean, to come to live with them.

Q Did you come to visit first?

B No, I came right away.

Q We're interested in the process of how you came over—the red tape and so on.

B Yeah. Well, I met an American over there, and I was supposed to marry him. We were engaged for three years. And then he went back here and we broke up. But my papers already were in process. So I came over anyway, and I just liked it, and I stayed.

Q Did you come over by ship?
B Yeah. I came over on the New Amsterdam, I came over.

Q And where did you land, in New York?

B In New York, um hmm. I left from Rotterdam and landed in New York.

Q Was the ship crowded on the way over, or...were there many other people from Germany immigrating at that time?

B Well, the cabin I had I shared with two other Germans. I would say the ship was pretty much...I mean, the passage was pretty much sold out.

Q Was there any difficulty when you first arrived in America?

B Yeah, with the customs. I had all my silver along. Over in Germany it's a custom that the girls they get from little on, birthdays and Christmasses, mostly, from their godparents, silver--I mean the silverware. Even if it's just a fork, or it's just a knife, that's how the girls collect their silver. The godparents pick the pattern and then they add to it for every occasion. So I had my full set of silver, and of course I brought that along, you know, as hand luggage. And the customs officials, they just wouldn't believe me that I had some of that stuff ever since I was little--some of it...some of it was of course...some pieces I bought at the last minute to make the set complete. But they wouldn't believe that, and I really had to argue with them. So that was the only trouble I had. My aunt had to pay, I think eight dollars they had to pay...dues, import dues. But I really had to argue with that man. I think he was kind of grouchy.

A He was doing his job, honey.

B I know that...but otherwise I didn't have any trouble.

Q When you first arrived, what were your first impressions...this was apparently the second time...or the first time you visited?

B No, this was my first time over here. Well, my first impression was that the men were walking with umbrellas. You didn't see that over there, in Germany.

A The German man is looked upon as a sissy if he goes around with an umbrella...that's the way I remember it.

B That's how it was during the war. And that was one thing that I noticed. And then I think it was a week after I arrived here some friends who lived in Virginia came up here to pick me up and take me home to their place. And driving through Baltimore the colored section, you know, that was the run-down section of Baltimore, the colored section, it impressed me quite a bit...I remember. But these are the only two things I remember.

Q How old were you at the time?

B 23.
Q: Did you have any trouble with the language?
B: No, I had it in school. I mean, I learned it in school over there, and then knowing Americans, I was already...

Q: So by the time you came here, you could understand it pretty well.
B: Yeah. I didn't have any trouble. I had trouble when I first started working. I worked as a salesgirl at Wanamaker's, and they put me into the men's toiletries, and I had trouble there with all these strange names of toothpastes and shaving lotions and colognes and all that stuff. I had trouble until I learned that. And I couldn't understand people on the telephone. I always had to get somebody else in the beginning. But I didn't have much trouble.

Q: So you went... from New York you went to Philadelphia?
B: No right to New Castle.

Q: Right to New Castle. And you worked in Wanamaker's?
B: Yeah. Well, for three months I loafed. My aunt and uncle didn't want me to work, but then I was getting restless and I wanted to go to work, so I worked then at Wanamaker's. And I worked there until I got pregnant—that was the end. And I met him—was it a week or two weeks after I came to the States?

A: Well, the first Saturday after you had gotten here.

B: And then we...well, we were dating for about nine months and then we got married.

Q: Now, your parents were born in Germany, Mr. Traeger?
A: My parents were born in Germany, and they came to this country and myself and sister were born here. I was born in Philadelphia and my sister was born in Wilmington. And when I was one year old... two years old, my sister was one year old... my parents went back to Berlin and this was where I was raised, then... mostly in Berlin, which is now the eastern part of Berlin... it's a suburb... I would say it's about the size of Newport... little bit larger than Newport is. And when my parents went back, that was in 1931, and I didn't come back to the United States until January of 1947. I was raised in Berlin up 'til I was about 12 years old, and then my... the schools that I attended were moved into the countryside to be away from the bombing attacks on Berlin, so that the school children wouldn't have to live through those bombing raids. And, like I said, I finished my schooling in Germany, and I started my plumbing apprenticeship after the war was over. I had two years in when I came to this country. And I went in this service, and I served four years in the service. I then started my apprenticeship back up over here to finish it, and made my apprenticeship papers, and I've been busy ever since at plumbing and mechanical trade. And that's about my history.

Q: Are your parents still in Germany— are they still living?
A My father is dead. My mother is living in Wilmington...outside of Wilmington, and my sister is also living. And would you...you would rather hear from the German side, instead of over here, wouldn't you?

Q Well, basically both. If we could...why did they return to Germany after they were over here?

A Well, there was two reasons. There were two reasons. They were living in Wilmington at the time. No, they weren't either--they were living in Newark on the farm which was donated to the University of Delaware, and the owner of that farm was--Polly Drummond Hill, the first farmer on Polly Drummond Hill--the owner was Judge Morris. When he died he donated the farm to the University of Delaware. And my parents...the reason that my parents went back to Germany were twofold. First of all, my grandmother was pretty sick. And they thought that she was gonna die, and of course my father wanted to see her. The second reason was the unemployment in 1929-30, and so forth. He had it pretty rough trying to keep a job. He was a plumber by trade, and these were the two reasons why they went back to Germany. And when they got back, they I guess never had the desire to come back to the United States. I think one of the good things that happened for my sister and myself was that on the arrival in Berlin--whenever you go from one place to another in Germany you always clear with the police district that you live in. In other words you let that police district know where you are going to move to next. And when you arrive at that place you register at that town or city wherever you move to.

Q Now, was this true of Nazi Germany, or is that still true today?

B You are registered still. You have to register over there...

A That's right. And this is the way they always know where you're located. And when the police sargeant inquired about the birth of my sister and myself, my mother told me that my father supposedly had said that we were American citizens but that the German police sargeant had mentioned that due to the fact that our parents were German, he recognized us not as American citizens but as German citizens. And by him making a slight mistake like that we were carried through all our life while we were living there as German citizens. And when the war had been finished, I received...my mother received a letter inquiring if my sister and I would like to come back to the United States. And at that time I asked my mother, I says to her, "Well, how come that the General Consul wants to know if I want to come back to the United States?" And she says, "Well, here's your United States citizenship paper, which I've been safekeeping, and you are a United States citizen." And that was the first time that I really came to know that I was a citizen of America. And we of course agreed wholeheartedly to come back. And it was in '46 when we first were notified, and it took about a year to get all the papers straightened out, and the red tape. And in '47, like I said, '47 January I turned 26, so I came over here on a troop transport...my mother and my sister and myself. The General Consul inquired if we didn't want our mother to
come along. I was 17 at the time, my sister 16. And when we told them that we wanted very much to have her along, they said then, well you would have to wait a long period of time before you could go back to the States, because the next ship that would have left would have been within about ten days. But he said, "If you want your mother to go along then we have to process her papers, and it will probably take us six to eight weeks." So I told them that we wouldn't mind waiting, and that is the way my mother came over with us together. And we moved to Philadelphia at first because relatives of my--sisters of my mother lived in Philadelphia. And we stayed over there at first. But then my mother moved to Wilmington, and like I said, I went in the service and I came back to Wilmington at that time. That was in '52.

Q When did you go in the service?
A In '48.

Q As soon as you came here?
A Well, it was a year. I was a year here. I came here in January of '47 and I joined in June of '48. And the year in between I went to work for Linton's Restaurant in Philadelphia, and I started washing glasses, because I couldn't speak any English. And after a year I accumulated enough English--I always wanted to go to the Navy. And I went to the Navy Recruiting Station, and of course I had a written report to fill out, and some questions...and most of the language in there I couldn't understand. And so the Chief told me, he said, "I think you ought to go back and try and read and understand the language better before you apply." So I was kind of heartbroken. I walked out of the door, and as I closed the door and turned around, there was another door right across the road from me, and it said, "Army Recruiting Office." And I said, well maybe they'll take me over there. So I went in there, and they gave me trouble too, but I guess they needed men more than the Navy did, and they took me in in '48. And I was four years in the service. And like I said, after I came out of the service I started my apprenticeship again in plumbing and finished that up in about five years. And I took...I went and changed firms at that time, and I've been with that same firm ever since...16 years now.

Q So when did you move to Delaware...to Wilmington?
A In '52, after I came out of the service.

Q Why did you come to Delaware?
A Because my mother was living here. She remarried in the meantime, and they were living at 930 Wilmington Avenue, which is known as Dautel's Delicatessen Store.

Q Which delicatessen?
A Dautel's. It's on the corner, one block off the light, on the right side. That was my dad's store. In fact, we built this store here
because his store originally was on Madison Street, between Fourth and Fifth on Madison Street. So then we built this store and he made out real well there. And that's how I came to live in Delaware. Cause my stepfather, as soon as I returned from the service, told me that I was welcome in his house, and that's how I got to stay there. And that's how we got married, and that's where we lived our first year together--free rent because Mom and Dad wanted to go to Germany for a three-month's period. And this is one of the reasons why we got married a little sooner, because she wanted to be a June bride, but Mom and Pop wanted to go to Germany in April, so I had a lot of talking to do to convince her otherwise, to get married a little earlier, then they didn't have to worry about the house being empty. We lived in the house that way. And that's how we got to live in their home for a year, and then we bought this house.

Q Well, what were your first impressions of America?

A Great. Great. The first thing I saw...I didn't even know that we were coming into the Hudson Bay...I guess it's the Hudson Bay...

Q New York Harbor...no, no.

A Well, it's New York Harbor then...the first thing I saw was nothing but fog. And all of a sudden I could see an arm sticking out of the fog. And then I realized that it must be the Statue of Liberty. And as we came closer to the port, of course the statue came more to be, and you could see the tops of the skyscrapers--you couldn't see any...like the streets...you couldn't see anything. And it was a real good sight, because...well, I felt real good about it. And when we finally docked and we got our suitcase, and I stepped off the plank, I said to myself, "This is going to be one man that's not going to be without butter anymore." Because I hadn't seen butter in about two or three years, and I said, "I swear to myself, if there's gonna be a butter shortage, I'm going to have myself butter, if I have to scratch for it, or steal for it, whatever." And that's the way it's been ever since. We had a real good...I had a real good impression of the United States, and I was very happy, because I came over here with a pair of pants and the shoes, and the jacket and shirt on my back--that's about all I came over with. Because at the time we left over there we just didn't have hardly anything. We were bombed out once. And living in the Russian Zone wasn't too pleasant. Like my wife said, she had enough to eat, living in the country the way she did. Well, us city slickers we had to go out into the country, and beg for food from the farmers, and we used to be glad when we could get a bag of potatoes together, and we'd treasure it like gold taking it back. And sometimes there were several bullies there, they were all tougher than you were, and you had your bag of potatoes, or onions, or carrots, whatever you had, and they took that away from you and you went home empty-handed. And foodwise was pretty tough right after the war.

Q Were you working--well, you weren't working, but was your father working?

A I was working too. In fact...yes, I started my apprenticeship in
the plumbing trade. My dad has his own store—had his own shop. And my grandfather had the shop, and my dad and his brother together and then I went into apprenticeship over there. And we worked. We started working anywhere around 7:30 and we worked 'til six, seven, eight o'clock in the evening. And the material that we would get together was...the material we would take out of bombed-out houses. We would take the waste pipes, or the sewer pipes. At that time they didn't use any copper; they used lead pipes for water or waste, and we would clean those up... faucets that we would take out, we would clean them and put repair kits in them and fix them up and sold them as new. That's where we got material. Sundays if you wanted to eat...this is after the war, now, I'm talking strictly after the war...if you wanted to eat Sunday, you would have to be at 8:00 at a designated street and you had to help clean up the rubble. And you worked from 8:00 'til 5:00 in the afternoon...in the evening. You may do one of several things...you either packed the bricks in wheelbarrows and wheeled them up toward the edge of the street where they had plans laid out and the chippers would be at work there. Now you yourself could be a chipper...what that was, you would knock the mortar, the cement that was still on the bricks, you would knock that off. And then you would stack...pile those bricks, and then somebody else would come and would then load them on a truck. This is how the material for the bricks for the buildings was established... gotten together. And the reason that you had to work their Sundays, if you didn't show up, you didn't get the ration card...you wouldn't get your ration card for the next week of food supply. So you got free labor for a certain amount of food supplies. And these things have been so far back that most of it you don't even think about. Bad things you seem to forget; the good things you remember. I had some good days over there. I had some wonderful days over there. During the war I was with a navy school in Germany. I wanted to always be with the navy, and with this navy school I got to travel through Germany quite a bit...the western part of Germany, the southern part of Germany...I got into the Alps.

Q Looking back on the history of your country...the first generation after the war, and trying to explain, you know, why Hitler came to power, what life was like under Hitler...is this something peculiar to Germany...is this the way the German people are...or was Hitler sort of an aberration...

A You have to remember one thing—I was a child at that time. I remember the name Hitler first when I was about six, seven years old. And I do remember my...I spent quite a great deal of time with my grandparents, since my grandfather had the plumbing shop and I associated quite a bit with him in that shop, as a child...and we used to sit sometimes in the evenings and the radio would be on, and Hitler and Goebbels, whoever—mostly it would be Hitler or Goebbels speaking (Goebbels was the propaganda chief of Germany) and my impression was that the older people sitting there at the table, around the table, they would be very very...well, they wouldn't say a word, they just would be so... they were taken by the words that came over the radio. And the older people—by that I'm talking about my grandparents and my father and my mother—that they were...nothing else would matter when either one of those two would speak...they would be taken in by everything
that was said. And I remember that my grandfather never much spoke about the Nazi regime...but my grandmother was very much taken in by it. And I remember my grandfather speaking to me about the bad times that he had gone through in the First World War and in the Depression over there...they had it just as bad over there as we did over here...and how he would say that "We really are having a good time. We have plenty of work, we have plenty of food. We have everything that we want, which is really good." And everybody seemed to be real happy and pleased. When the war broke out, my grandfather...up 'til the time the war broke out, my grandfather kept to himself and he did not belong to the Nazi party...he had contracts with munitions or weapons factories in Berlin, where he would take care of the plumbing and so forth, or repair work. And one day he came to take care of a job and they told him that for him to keep the job in this factory as a maintenance man, that he would have to join the Nazi party. Otherwise the contract would be pulled out from underneath him. And I remember that he said to me...well, he didn't say it to me, I overheard him saying it to the family...that it would probably be better if he would go in so that he would keep on working and so forth. And he always had work up to the end of the war, and after the war he had to go to the police station where in turn again he was doing repair work and remodeling and so forth on account of some of the bombs had fallen on this building...and he had gotten a call to go there, and he assumed it had something to do with working, and then he didn't come back, and my grandmother called and she was informed that he wasn't coming back anymore...that they'd kept him there. And he was put in a concentration camp, and after several years it was confirmed that he had died in the concentration camp. On account of my grandfather going into the Nazi party, and my father and his brother and his family...they did not have to go into the service because they worked in the business. His business had at one time been like twelve men working. And all the men had been drafted into the service, so the only two men that were left were the two sons of...were his two sons...and they worked in the shop together. And during the war years, we ate good, as far as I can remember. I heard my grandparents speak very highly of the good life that we were having. But as things got...as the war progressed, more and more I could detect that the tone of voice was starting to change. The radio wasn't on as often anymore...they wouldn't listen as much anymore like they would use to in the beginning. I guess maybe they started to realize that things weren't like they were promised at one time. And he had a very good job...had a very good business. He had his own truck, he had his own private car...and he had is own—he had an apartment house that he had bought and kept. My father was not in the service over there like I said. In fact, when the Russians came into Berlin they tried to draft my father and all the fellows in our neighborhood or town, they were marched farther east, and they were supposed to fight the Russians there...and he jumped on a trolley and hightailed it back to our part of the country. And that's where he stayed, and in fact that's where he was...and my parents...when the Russians came in. My mother told me that it was pretty rough when the Russians came. My sister was 15--14 at the time. She was...she still is a very pretty looking girl. And she didn't have it too easy over there. I myself wasn't in Berlin at the end of the war...I was on the Austrian border with the navy school...and that's where I met my first Americans.
They came...we were located on a lake, and one morning there was a motor launch came across the lake and it was an American lieutenant and sargeants. They laid on the pier and they asked us if we had any weapons, we told them no, and they asked if we wanted cigarettes or candy and we said yes. And then they set up...the Americans set up three trains for...we were like 200 boys, and we aged from 14 to 17...and they set up these three trains to see that the boys could get in the general direction of their homes. Then this is how we came back to the border...the Russian/American border...I came to the town of Magdeburg and I stayed there several weeks trying to cross, but I couldn't cross because the Russians wouldn't let anybody in. And one night I just decided I was gonna swim the Elbe River, and I did...and I almost drowned, but I made it across, and I walked 110 miles to Berlin, and of course I found that everybody was home and alive with the exception of my grandfather. As far as the navy school is concerned, I...at that time when you reach the age of 14, you can continue school or you can switch over. In this case, like I said, I went to navy school...I would have to go there for three years, and I could learn a trade as a machinist. And after that three years would have been over, you could have specialized in a certain field that you would want to get into. And this is how I decided that I wanted to go in the navy at that time as a youngster, and my parents just didn't want me to go. But I convinced them that it was better than being in school. And, really, it helped me...being in that navy school helped me a lot better than being in school, just a regular school, because at that point is where you put the practic (sic) and the theory together...spend four hours in the morning going into theory, and four hours in the afternoon you went through the practical work, and then the next week you would reverse the procedure--you would do the practical work in the morning and the theory in the afternoon. And shops would consist of machine shop, of welding shop, of blacksmith shop, or carpenter shop. That's about it. And that's when I really started to liven up and enjoy school. Up to that time I didn't care for school. And then I came to this country, and the first thing I was asked, what I did in Germany, and I said I was in the navy school and they gave me a funny look as if to say, what in the dickens do you want to...what were you as an American doing in a German navy school...but that's the way life goes, sometimes. It's odd how things turn sometimes.

Q Well, what are your impressions, basically, of Delaware?

A I don't particularly like Delaware because it's a flat land. I don't like flat land. If it was up to my wife, we probably would move out of Delaware tomorrow. But since I got such a good job, I don't know if I will have another good job like this...and since I'm physically not able to do real heavy work anymore, I'm kind of restraining myself from moving. I've always told my wife, I said if I had a chance to move somewhere in the United States, it would be Washington State or Oregon. I've been there, and I really love that country. It reminds me so much of Germany because of great big pine trees and the real mountainous regions and the clear water, not much industry to worry about...that's where I would like to live. But I guess I never
got in gear.

Q Would you agree with that—would you like to live in Washington or Oregon rather than here?

B I don't know this country out there.

Q You have not travelled?

B No. I have been as far down as Virginia and as far up as Canada... Pennsylvania, New York State and Canada... but I haven't been any... Ohio....

A Delaware is a nice state, but for someone that loves the mountain region, Delaware is not for that kind of person. I knew I was... when I came to Delaware I was really crazy about Delaware because we had the beach within two hours ride. This was new to me. I had never seen a beach before, you know. And every weekend I was at the beach... it was terrific. Now for the last ten years, my wife wants me to go to the beach, I could care less, because it's too hot out there, it's too sandy out there, there's too many people there... I just don't care for it anymore. But I guess I'll probably die in Delaware.

Q Did you have any first impressions of Wilmington, or Delaware, or Newark, when you first moved here?

A Well, the one impression I had about Wilmington, I said to myself, "This is a cleaner town than what Philadelphia is." Because, Philadelphia to me was the filthiest town in the States at that time... it was. I had never seen so much trash, and dilapidated houses in my life that I saw in Philadelphia. This was the first impression I had. But you're not used to it from the German side. You don't find the trash laying around. You don't find dilapidated buildings. You don't see any buildings that are ready to collapse. They live in buildings that maybe are 100 years old, or ten years old, or they may be 200 years old, and they upkeep them and they try to preserve them... they try to keep them in shape. Over here, I'm in the building trade, I see what's done over here... how they things are being slapped together and how people let things run down. It's a shame it is that way, but I guess in our society one man wants to get a dollar from the other guy regardless of what conditions he may live in, you know. It's a shame that it is that way, because with the facilities that we have, with the rich workers that we have in the building trade, I'm just speaking of the building trade, it's a shame that we have conditions the way we have them... run-down in this country. Of course, things seem to be improving, I guess. You see it in Wilmington, anyhow, that blocks are being torn down and being rebuilt. We just came back from a trip last week, or last month.

Q Where did you go?

A We went to Germany for three weeks, and had a real good time.

Q Did you see any friends or relatives when you were there?
A We generally go to my wife's relatives, and then we go on our own for a while.

B Just say hello there...I mean, I cannot go to Germany and not see just the closest relatives anyway. And it usually takes a week before we finish with the relatives and then we take off.

Q What do the relatives think about your moving to America? Do they say, you know, you should come back to Germany now that everything is better?

B Well, you get asked...I mean, they ask you over there wouldn't you want to come back again. I wouldn't mind maybe going back for a year just to see the difference now again in the living conditions, but I don't think I would want to go back for good...I don't think so.

A Living conditions are tremendous over there now. They have everything. In fact, the Germans are getting so lazy over there they don't want to do anything anymore. They employ so many Turks and Greeks and Yugoslavians to do their work for them. The building trades...the Germans just want to walk around with a tie and white shirt and a suit on...they don't want to do it anymore. They get...Germans never had much, like we have over here, in terms of cars. Germans had their Volkswagens, they had their Mercedes and so forth, fine. But how many people could afford a car? Now since the war is past, and the American help and the American money that has been shoveled in there...the economy has gone up so there...you don't see anymore bombed-out houses. Everything is rebuilt...and their building boom has been so tremendous, that they have so much money almost everybody can afford a car. And they live this up, now. They're like little children getting a big present under the Christmas tree--they're living this up now. They want to play with this toy that they have...they have a car, they got television...they got washing machines...this is something that we are accustomed to here over a period of twenty or thirty years or forty years as far as the cars go, and with the televisions and the washing machine and all that. But they sit back; they want the other guy to do the work now. In fact, we had quite a discussion last month when we were over there, and I pointed out to them that they're creating the same kind of problem over there with their immigrants from the other countries to do their work as what we have in a way between the blacks and the whites over here. I said, you always look on the American, white American...he hates the American (sic?). I said that is not so...that the white American hates the Negroes. I said, that is not so. I says, there are persons that hate blacks, there are blacks that hate whites. I said, but you're doing the same thing over here. You're importing these people to do your work for you, but you spit on them because they're not good enough for you to associate with. We had quite a discussion on that. And I said, you're gonna keep that up, you're gonna have problems on your hands. You have those automobiles, you have television, you have washing machines or whatever. I said, but you're getting lazy. I said, it's not the Germans that I remember from my younger days, when they used to work 15 hours a day...practically everybody worked that way at that time.

B They can afford vacations...it's amazing the trips they take. I mean,
how they can do it, and yet in comparison they make...like here somebody would make in dollars, over there they make it in marks, so in comparison it's about the same thing...and yet they can afford so much more than the average American.

A Well, because they are so socialized over there. They take off sick... if they don't take off sick, they don't feel good, because they get paid for it. I mean, the money just gets shoveled to them. It's out of this world. But I wouldn't want to live over there. I wouldn't want to live over there.

B And their insurance...their sickness insurance...this is a better setup too than over here.

A That's true.

B Their medicine's paid, they get all their doctors paid, all their dentistry, dentist work, they get it all paid...they just have to go and pay I think one or two marks...you go to that certain office and get yourself that slip of paper, and with that slip of paper you can go to the doctor, or to the dentist, whatever you need, you know, at the moment. So they're better off in that respect than what we are over here.

A We pay for everything ourselves, by paying into the insurance policies that we have and so forth. But over there it's a little different setup. And really to be precise I couldn't tell you anything really precise because I haven't been there long enough and haven't talked with the people enough to really understand what is going on over there.

B They do pay in, too. They pay like into insurances, too, but they get so much more out of it than what we get over here...the coverage is better.

Q Well, that's very interesting, it is, that your experiences here in America evidently have been on the whole, you would say, good.

A Definitely.

Q Have you run into...this hasn't applied too much with Germans that we've found... you know, people in Delaware looking on you as Germans or treating you as somewhat, you know, not quite Americans...discriminating against you because of your nationality.

A No, never. In fact, I have quite an accent. I can't get rid of it. But I'm not known as an American citizen. Wherever I go, people are... I mean, I'm always referred to as a German. They talk about me as a German..."See German Herman," see. And they don't seem to want to accept that I'm a U.S. citizen, you know.

Q Would you say that's because of your accent?

A Because of my accent, yes. And I do talk a lot about Germany, you
know, about the experiences that I had. I always...the apprentice boys or the mechanics I have working for me, I always tell them little incidents that happened to me in reference to something that happened over here, you know, a comparison...I try to show a comparison between one and the other country. And we kind of keep up German customs...we belong to the dance group...folk dancing...

Q Is that the German Club?

A We belong to the Delaware Saengerbund...the German Club in Ogletown, and we also belong to a folk dance group.

Q That's now the same thing...I've been trying to learn what organizations the Germans have. I've learned about the German Club...but what is this dance group, now?

B The dance group we formed about five years ago in connection with the Delaware Saengerbund. So all the members of the dance group have to be members of the Saengerbund. But my husband and I we meanwhile just continued going to that group...we are going to Redding now...we are associated with the Redding dance group...Redding, Pennsylvania.

A In fact, they're the ones that taught us the dances that we then taught the dance group here in Delaware. And like I said, through that we kind of keep German customs up.

Q Do you try to teach your children German customs?

A Oh, they are very much involved in dancing...we don't speak much German around here, and it makes it kind of hard on them. But my daughter...our daughter just started Conrad High School and she's taking German. And she comes in and she says, "Oh, this is so easy," and "It's so easy, it's so easy." And I said to her, "Well, maybe some of the things you've heard over the years now come back to you." But we really don't speak much German around the house. I think you speak more German than I do.

B Yeah...they understand everything...most everything, I'd say...Crystal does...even the little one does, too, but with talking...but she had to write now some letters over to Germany, some thank you notes, and so she came down for me to correct it, and it was quite a mish-mush. And I had to explain why and how, you know, because German is a hard language. And then I talked to her in German and I said what she should write in German. I said, "Do you understand that?" I mean, she understands it, you know, but she still cannot put it together, herself...because the grammar is very hard...and she only had a few weeks now...but I think she talked very nicely...when she was little she talked nicely.

A My wife and her went over to Germany for eight weeks and like my wife said, she was four years old. She never spoke German the way she did when she came back from Germany...that's eight weeks. The first two weeks, nothing but German around the house. She was
outside with her girlfriends, she'd be talking German to the kids, and all the kiddies are starting to talk German after about two weeks. It was so funny. And then finally she broke away from that. But I was amazed at the way that girl picked up the German language in those eight weeks. It was amazing.

END OF INTERVIEW