JIM KEBLER

Wayne: This is July the 19th, 2022. I'm Wayne Summers, along with Myrna VanEpps, and today we are interviewing **Jim [James R.] Kebler** at his [Michigan] Sesquicentennial Farm near Eagle. Why don't you start out by telling us where you were born?

Jim: I was born in a Lansing hospital but right down the road, about two miles, Mom and Dad [**Robert E. and Winifred (Patterson) Kebler)** brought me home to her great Uncle **Otis Ely**'s place while Mother and Dad was remodeling this house. It was an old granary. Mother and Dad remodeled this house in 1947. It was my Mother's Uncle Otie, called him "Otie," and the house was probably no bigger than an outhouse. When Dad got out [of the US Army], he had nothing. He acquired 350 acres by milking 20 cows over here. I'd go up in the silo, throw the silage down and--. Dad said, "Go out and throw silage down. The silo's still setting there, and I says, "Boy, this fork's too heavy, Dad, too much for me." He said, "Throw down 40 forkfuls." I said, "They're too heavy." He says, "Take a small fork and throw down 80!" I never forgot that. I was about six, seven years old. I was gonna show you the picture of the farm, but I don't have it.

Anyway, about Eagle Twp., my great-grandfather, **Adam Kebler**, lived two miles down the road and my great-great-grandfather, **Christian Kebler**--You know where the Speedway Gas Station is? [NW corner M-100 & Grand River]. That's where the Kebler's all started, right there. There was 13 of them. That's where my great-great-grandfather and my grandfather--so I didn't get very far from one of the Keblers, was right here.

Wayne: All in this area.

Jim: Yeah. Yeah.

Wayne: When did the family originally come to this area?

Jim: I don't know. I just showed you that sesquicentennial-- but that was when my grandfather's grandfather acquired this place and it was 1868, I think, when he acquired it, my grandfather's grandfather, which his name was **Richards**. I don't know how it went down there, how it worked. I went through all this with this genealogy trying to get this sesquicentennial farm sign, so I had to read up pretty much on it.

Wayne: What school did you go to?

Jim: Eagle School one mile over here.

Wayne: Did you have the **[Mary & Helen] McCrumb** sisters?

Jim: Oh yeah, Mary and Helen. Why are you guys laughing?

Wayne: Because they were there forever.

Jim: Oh yeah, Mary and Helen.

Wayne: What kind of stories can you tell us about the school there?

Jim: About the Eagle school? Dad set the farm over into Grand Ledge. Eagle is next to Portland so the last year Dad says, "Drive the truck to school." So I drove it down on the corner and walked down to Eagle school 'cause he says, "I'm too busy milking cows. I can't." So I drove the truck to school in the seventh grade.

Wayne: Seventh grade?

Jim: Drove it over to Eagle to the restaurant right across from Eagle Inn, my cousin and I did, get a hamburger. State trooper came in, says, "You old enough to drive that truck?" I said, "No, but I got a pillow. I can see over the over the steering wheel." You know, Dad didn't think that was very funny. Dave, my cousin and I, we laughed like heck, but Dad, he didn't think it was that funny. I had to go in front of **Timothy Green** when I was probably 14 years old. He made me write a 300-word essay on safe driving. Yeah, I had Mary and Helen.

Wayne: Do you have any particular memories of them or school there?

Jim: Yeah. It was a story about, I was fighting during noon hour, and the kid walked by and I nailed him right in the back and Helen, she taught kindergarten through 4th. So she grabbed me and took a willow strip. Boy, she spanked! I walked right home, went out to the barn, started doing chores. I didn't say I got in trouble at school. We had an anniversary over to Eagle School a number of years later and I brought a willow limb and had a ribbon tied around it and gave it to Helen. I said, "See, here's your present back for whipping me then." Helen and Mary, yeah. Those were good times.

Wayne: You went to high school in Grand Ledge then?

Jim: Yeah, 8th through the 12th 'cause, like I said, Dad had this farm set over in the Grand Ledge District because Mother and Dad both went to graduate out of Grand Ledge so Dad wanted my brother and I--

Wayne: He had a choice of which district he was gonna be in then?

Jim: Yeah right. We had a tragedy down here. My brother [**Jeffery Kebler**] was murdered down the road here. You remember?

Wayne: Yeah. I think I remember hearing about that.

Jim: That was in August of 2015.

Wayne: That was quite a shock.

Jim: Oh shock! He worked for the Clark farms and the next year **Pete [Clark]** hung himself. You remember that, don't you? Jeff was working for Pete and Pete called me up. I was working on a baler right here, baling straw. Pete called and says, "Jeff didn't show up for work." So I went up; his pickup sat there. I went up there and walked in the house and found him laying there. They got all the guys. They're all in prison right now. Three guys and one girl. But that's a terrible thing to find your brother

like that. All the years I farmed, I always thought, what's happening if I'm out here in the woods and find a body but I'll be a son of a gun, I ended up finding my brother. You never forget something like that.

Myrna: They were robbing, after money?

Jim: Yeah. We never locked the doors around here. Now everybody on State Road locks their doors all the time but Jeff left the door open. He was sleeping in a La-Z-Boy and they went in there and two of 'em grabbed him. They had to tell all this before they was sentenced 'cause the one girl turned against them. There was three girls and one guy. That was terrible.

Wayne: Bit of a shock maybe that there were three girls.

Jim: No, one girl, three guys. Yeah, that was terrible day.

Wayne: The huge metropolis of Eagle, what can you tell me about how it's changed over the years?

Myrna: Where was the post office?

Jim: One time the post office was right across from –you know where the grocery store is? Right there on the corner, there used to be a post office and that was an old hotel in Eagle years and years ago. Then it's where it is now. Bob VanDriesen had that store years and years ago. Bob VanDriesen's was a locker plant too. The locker plant--heck, I used to ride my bicycle over there and get groceries when I was about seven years old. Dad said, "You ain't driving the truck into Eagle. You can drive it as far as the corner down there but you can't drive it into Eagle." I had a good dad. He got shot real bad in the Battle of the Bulge and I got his helmet with a hole still there where he got shot in the Battle of the Bulge. He come home here and bought this from his father, **Nathan Kebler,** and Nathan bought it from Richards earlier. Like I said, it goes back to 1887.

Wayne: Before you lived here, you lived someplace else then in this area?

Jim: I lived in Fort Knox for two years. Uncle Sam had something to do with that and then I moved over to my grandmother's house over on Howe Road. Ever heard of the **Norm Huhn**, Huhn farms over there? See, there are a lot of Howes in Eagle Twp. too. Howes and Keblers kind of was a monopoly in Eagle Twp.

Wayne: I think there was a Kebler School.

Jim: **Alta [Rosetta (Howe)] Kebler,** my grandmother, taught at Kebler School. Howe Road was named after my great-great-grandfather.

Myrna: What was his name?

Jim: On the Howe side, my grandmother's side, he was **Fred Howe**. Years ago when they used to put hay in the barn and they had slings and stuff, I got a pulley in there that belonged to him and there's two more pulleys in that barn. That barn was built in about 1910 and I got a pulley in my family room from my great-great-grandfather on the Howe side.

Myrna: Do you know who built the barn?

Jim: Nope. I couldn't find out. Everybody I'd ask now are all dead. You probably know **Geneva [(Kebler) Wiskemann**], don't you?

Myrna: I know who she is.

Jim: See Geneva's father and my great-grandfather, **Will Kebler** and **Adam Kebler--** My great-grandfather was Adam and his brother was Will. Geneva married my grandmother's brother; brother and sister married brother and sister. I get that confused up but that's why I said the house--

Myrna: Geneva married Wiskemann, right?

Jim: That was her only husband, **George [Wiskemann]**, but her father was Will Kebler, brother to my great-grandfather, Adam, that lived right down here in the big brick house on Tallman Road is still right there where Adam Kebler-- Fact is, my dad and uncle bought it from their Aunt Liddy [**Lydia Kebler**]. She was a nurse at Lansing. She never married. She was a nurse. When I was in high school, Dad and Howard said, "You buy this farm and keep it in the Kebler family." Well, when you're 16 in high school, you don't care about buying a farm. You chase the girls. That's what you're thinking about. Am I saying too many things on that thing?

Wayne: This farm has been in the family for over 150 years, and you've had this farm for how many years?

Jim: Since I inherited from my mother? It belongs to me and my sister-in-law since 2000 when my mother passed. Dad had actually passed it to Mom and then Mom passed it to her boys. Jeff is dead so **Jane [Kebler]** and I own this together. This is 120 and I own half of that. Then across the road that belongs to Jane, which is an 80 and down the next mile it's my farm, which is a 100. We call it the ? farm, the ? farm and the home farm**.** I've been driving tractor on this farm all my life.

Wayne: After high school you went into the service, correct?

Jim: Yeah, '66-'68.

Wayne: Did you serve in Vietnam during that time?

Jim: You know, that was a rough time, right during '66 and '68, but I didn't have to go. You've heard of these armored personnel carriers? Our company trained drivers to learn how to drive these APC's, armored personnel carriers. "113" is what they used to call them and a lot of them guys went to Vietnam. I went to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Ever hear of that? How old are you?

Wayne: Well, I'm a little bit younger than you. I was born in '51.

Jim: '51. Jeff was born in 53. So, you're 60--

Wayne: I'm 71.

Jim: They'll be Interviewing you in a little bit.

Wayne: After you got out of the service, is that when you went into farming?

Jim: I was farming before I went into service. When I was 14, I rented my first farm right over here, 40 acres, when I was 14. Then as soon as I got out of the service, I did more trucking than anything. I've hauled hay and straw for years, supplied MSU. My uncle and I supplied MSU and all roadside mulching jobs. My living was more trucking hay and straw and Christmas trees, hauled plastic for John Henry [Company]. I did a lot more of that than I did with my farm. I like to drive truck . You don't see people if you're sitting on that tractor all day.

Wayne: What kind of crops have you grown over the years?

Jim: Corn, beans, wheat, and hay, mainly hay, sold a lot of hay.

Wayne: And you still do?

Jim: I do 21 acres of hay to put up and I'll bale probably a couple thousand bales of straw. Each year I do a little less and each year I say, "I gonna quit." This is the time I say, "You can take the boy outta the country but you can't take the country outta the boy." You've heard that before.

Myrna: How many cuttings of hay can you get in a year?

Jim: Well, I only get about two or three, but these dairy farmers that take a crop off and spread that cow manure on, they'll get up to four to five cuttings. Yeah, they get a lot of it.

Wayne: Who do you sell your hay to now?

Jim: Just to just a few local horse people. Somebody will come and want two or three bales for a goat or a --

Wayne: It's kind of small.

Jim: I like it that way 'cause I meet people all the time and they'll come back and get a few bales. I sold all my hay right outta the field this year, sold 600 bales right outta the field. That way you don't have to double handle it. They come and get the wagon and take it. See those are the type of wagons I have. You ever see them kind of hay wagons? They're called a basket wagon.

Wayne: I used to have to do about two days of hay a year and that's all I ever wanted to do. We had a neighbor--we were required to go over and help him with some of his hay and I hated that job 'cause it was always like it is today, hot and dusty, and you're having to haul that stuff up to the top of the barn.

Jim: I'm getting a little sick of it, little tired of it. What hay and straw I do put up, I don't hardly handle them. I get kids. I can still find a couple kids that still wanna work. It's hard to find them anymore. You know, they don't want to get out and work too much.

Wayne: Going back to, to Eagle, can you describe what the town looked like, what kind of stores and establishments that were there when you were young?

Jim: When [US] 96 went through, Eagle had four gas stations because Grand River was the main artery from Grand Rapids to Detroit and they had four gas stations. When 96 went down, the last gas station we turned into a bar. Everybody will come and drink. They won't get gas, but they'll drink. Eagle hasn't changed all that much. All the fathers over there, they was gonna put sewer system in there through Eagle and they didn't want to. Eagle isn't grown up like Fowler and Westphalia. Eagle never really got a heck of a lot different.

Myrna: What about the park? Did you have anything to do with the park?

Jim: I was on the board when we started it. We started 1973, **Fred Catlin** and **Don Edgecomb**. Don Edgecomb owned the party store in Eagle and Fred had the bar. I did a lot of work out there, a lot of stuff. I think it was about '73 or '74 we started. We had it downtown for about three years before we bought the property from **Vernon Abbott** and built it back there. It was right downtown Eagle.

Wayne: When it was downtown, how was it different then? I mean, obviously you didn't have the track.

Jim: We didn't have the track. We didn't have no buildings. We had to put up all tents and everything else. It was a lot of work back then but we made sure we had a beer tent.

Myrna: That's for Eagle Days, right?

Jim: For on Eagle Days. Yeah.

Wayne: The original Eagle Days, did you have rides, amusements that you brought in, or was it just basically tents?

Jim: Yeah, we had a couple rides downtown but see, Eagle Fair used to be right where Grange Road and 96 is. That was our property right there. They closed that when the expressway-- that was in 1956. I was 10 years old. We was gonna lose the money. We had so much money built up the state was gonna take the money away, so we says, "We gotta do something, have Eagle Days." So we bought the property and started Eagle Days in '73. How many years has that been, '73 to now?

Wayne: Almost 50 years, 49 years.

Jim: It's changed a lot though. It's ain't the same. They do a lot of demolition derby. Well, it's a different generation. When I was on the board, I was 25 years old. Now that's the age the ones on the board now. I just bowed out. I said, "I don't want this stuff anymore. I'll just go back and watch."

Wayne: Once you moved to the new fairgrounds, what were they like? What kind of activities? What kind of events did you have?

Jim: We had started out with big tractor pulls. You ever hear of **E. J. Potter**? He was a big tractor puller and he come over there. We had a couple rodeos. A couple years in a row we had rodeos. It's changed you know. After 50 years, it's not gonna be the same anymore.

Myrna: How have your tractors changed that you've had?

Jim: I got four tractors in the barn right now and I started out with an old 1946 H International, raking, like I'm doing next week, raking with that same tractor. That was manufactured the same time I was manufactured in 1946.

Wayne: I spent a lot of time on an H. I know exactly what you're talking about.

Jim: I got a M and a 400 and an H and a Massey-Harris and a Ford out in the basement of the barn.

Wayne: The things last forever.

Jim: I just pulled them in there and drained the radiator out and let them set. See what that sign says? Can you read that? "Farming's not a job, it's just a way life." All them tractors and stuff through there.

Wayne: Earlier you started talking about the Eagle Inn and that you're responsible for building or making that. Why don't you tell that story?

Jim: Well, about all I can say is, it belonged to this Shep. Ever hear of Shep's Motorcycle? He owned the building and then Fred got it from him. I went by the corner with a tractor-- **Paul Edgecomb** was a builder. He's the one built this house. I went around the corner and Fred's got a tape measure out. I said, "What the heck are you doing?" "I'm gonna turn this Standard Gas Station into a bar, call it the Eagle Inn." And from then, all us guys--I was going with my wife and that was in '70. I got married in '71. All us guys pitched in to help and built that bar. What did we say, 50 years? We're talking '71 and we're talking 51 years ago, right? Yeah.

Wayne It's still there.

Jim: Still there. Yeah, I frequent it once in a while.

Wayne: Got to make sure they're keeping the standards up.

Jim: I helped build it so I figure I might as well patronize it.

Wayne: Did they give you a discount?

Jim: Oh yeah! Once Fabianos took it over, it's not much of a bar. It's all restaurant now. You know, everybody at bars are going to food. They're not going to drink. They're going to food 'cause of the laws.

Myrna: Do you remember any bad accidents down here on the corner of M-100 and Grand River?

Jim: I can't remember, but Geneva [Wiskemann] Kebler, her brother, **Vaughn [Kebler]** was killed right there. See the Keblers over there--remember that Wooden Crate [produce store] was there? Do you remember that? The Keblers lived right in a big house. It's now gone now, but **Vaughn** broke away from his sister's hand and run across there and was killed [26 Jun 1930]. The Hazens, their farm is right beside mine down on Hinman Road. **Hiram Hazen,** him and his father [**Myron E. Hazen**] pulled in the

drive and his father was killed right in front yard [9 May 1930]. Hiram Hazen's the big house right in Eagle, just before you go into Eagle there.

Myrna: Seems like they used to have bad accidents on that corner.

Jim: Oh yeah. There's about four or five of us old retirees go to coffee up to McDonald's there and we'll be watching. Every once in a while somebody will go right through there. They got the big light and they got four stop signs and they'll still go through there. A few years ago, three young girls got killed there.

Myrna: Yeah, and then they put up a light or something.

Jim: Still won't stop them all the time.

Wayne: Get distracted. Was there a house originally on this site that was replaced with this house?

Jim: Yeah, the house that burnt in the winter of '62--it was an old granary. Mom and Dad remodeled it and everything and two of my buddies, we went to Eagle for a hamburg and we was painting the old Michigan basement, painting it for New Year's Eve party. We're coming down the road and Butch says, "Jim, look at that snow blowing off the roof." It wasn't snow. It was smoke. It burned this house right to the ground. You know who burned it down?

Wayne: You did?

Jim: Accidentally. Remember the old stoves that had a deep well deal where you cooked in, with the deep, deep bottom? Probably don't, anyway, I was talking to a girl in Portland. I was playing with the stove and when I got back, that hot stove caught that curtain afire, went right up into the attic. I didn't tell Dad for a few years that I burnt the house down. I waited a few years to tell. I didn't do it purposely. It was just kids playing around. It was an accident, but I didn't tell Dad about that for a few years.

Wayne: When you did tell him, what was his reaction?

Jim: After waiting about 10, 15 years, he didn't get too mad. We built this house, like I said, the summer of '62 we built it. It burned in the winter of '62. We built it the summer of year '64. We had the graduation party. We had a lot of help. That's in days when farmers would get out and people would help one another with tragedy like that. So we built that with a lot of good friends.

Wayne: Was there insurance then to cover the other house or was it just a loss?

Jim: Dad had his picture in the Farm Bureau magazine shaking hands with John Lintz, the agent. In the background was the house that burnt and insurance paid $25,000 and Dad had to borrow 25, cost $50,000 to build this house in summer of '63. Now it cost probably five times that, three times that.

Wayne: Were there other things that you really cared about that were destroyed in the fire?

Jim: My brother and I, we had bedrooms upstairs in the house that burned and we didn't have nothing but our clothes on our back. Everything upstairs burned but my dad, he had a good friend that was

gonna move to Florida so Dad bought all his rifles, replaced all my rifles. I had to get a set of clothes from my buddy 'cause we didn't have nothing. We saved a lot of Dad and Ma's furniture, everything downstairs. We carried it all out, got everything outta the house. In fact, a couple of the old chairs in there, they're all reupholstered. They come from the old house. Mother had 'em reupholstered. There was a upholstery over in Pewamo.

Wayne: Yeah. Probably Millers over there.

Jim: That's right. So we do know something of the same families.

Wayne: Oh, I know the Miller family.

Jim: Yeah. That was a bank for a while.

Wayne: The old bank.

Jim: Then it was apartments upstairs. We had a guy named **Don Hoppes**, worked for my dad for years. He stayed in that apartment upstairs.

Wayne: When the fire started, it started upstairs then, so you were able to get things out from downstairs?

Jim: Oh yeah, because that curtain burned. It went right into the attic. My brother's and my bedrooms was on the other part of the house and destroyed everything. The house still stood, so when it come time to build this one here, he had to go down Grand Ledge and get a fire permit to burn the whole house down because it still stood.

Wayne: The structure was still--

Jim: Had to get a permit to bury it. The old house is right in the front yard. This house is where the well was. The well's in the front of this house and it was in back of the old house. The old house set right in the front yard.

Wayne: Just basically moved it back a little bit.

Jim: Correct.

Wayne: So it was always quite a ways from the barn.

Jim: Dad and I walked out-- It's things you remember when you were little. We're coming back from milking cows, coming to the house and I says, "What's all that over that way, Dad?" Well, it was the northern lights and he had to explain it to me, but something you never forget. It was 70 years ago and I can remember him telling me that.

Wayne: You don't always get to see them here, less so today with all the light pollution.

Myrna: Do you haul any grain over that [ADM] elevator in Grand Ledge on M-100?

Jim: I don't, but I hire Pete Clark's son, **Jake Clark.** He took over the farming when his dad died and I hire Jake to combine my wheat and haul my wheat and then take it over to the big elevator. It'll probably be there tomorrow or the next day. Where Pete's father is, old **Leon Clark**, my uncle, **Howard [Kebler],** used to work that farm. We've always been real close with the Clarks. They always worked our land.

Myrna: They've been there forever.

Jim: **Leon and Fran[ces Clark**]. Fact is, the Clarks are close over there too. Leon and Fran's place, one of their daughters lives there, **Nancy [Clark],** and then **Patty [Clark]** lives across the road and then Jake is-- All them are real close just kind of like us. I mean, Jane's son's right here on this farm. My son's on the other farm and both our sons are right on the two farms. I got a daughter but she's in Lansing.

Wayne: Is your son going to take this over at some point?

Jim: Not with his business. He owns C & K Plumbing. You heard of that? He owns that. He traded his hay hook in for a pipe wrench. He's smarter than Dad was. I got it in a living trust bank. I says, "When I go, don't let this farm go." He said, "No, I won't, Dad."

Wayne: He's gonna keep it in the family anyway, even if he rents out the farmland or whatever.

Jim: Sure, he'll have Clark keep it. I'm positive he will never sell it out. Well, it's been this long, I hope it keeps a lot going.

Wayne: You've made 150 years. It'd be nice to hit 200.

Jim: That's what I'm saying. Let's make it 200.

Wayne: You're far enough away here that you're not likely to have people wanting to build subdivisions here or things like that.

Jim: No.

Wayne: Besides we need farmland.

Jim: How it worked was, when my dad passed in '88, this house was too big for my mother. So I says, "I'll build you a house and take over this big one." So I built her that house where my sister-in-law and Jeff lived. Then my boys built a house over on Hinman Road. They built two houses. We do have a couple houses but it's all been in the family. It doesn't get out for anybody else.

Wayne: Are there any stories about Eagle that took place there, infamous things, robberies?

Jim: There was a Kebler boy that was over there one night to the Eagle Inn. An older Kebler boy, that one you're talking to, he had a load of Christmas trees to go to Cleveland, Ohio. This limo driver, he had this Kebler kid's pickup blocked in the bar. So that Kebler kid said, "Well, I'll just drive that limo over to my truck. So I took the limo, brought it over here and jumped in the semi. Well, my wife, when I called her from Cleveland, she wasn't too happy. Bobby B(?) , a good friend of mine-- The driver says, "My

limo's gone!" Bobby says, "Is there a green pickup still sitting there?" He said, "Yeah." They says, "We think we might know where that limo is."

You know, my semi, the last one I had, I unhooked the trailer, backed it up the barn hill there and it didn't have a shut-off, so I put it in ninth gear and stalled the motor. Well, I'll be a son of a gun. I went out and that rolled down the hill and started and I'm chasing that semi through the cornfield. It was funny! Then I'd stop and start laughing; then I'd chase it a little farther. It got over in the alfalfa field and I said, "Boy, I'll catch her now." Well, it made a little turn, went right into a tree in them woods. That's funny to stand there and watch your semi run right in the tree.

Wayne: Was there a lot of damage?

Jim: Totaled it out! I mean, my God! Yes, a lot of damage!

Wayne: How fast it was going at the time?

Jim: I thought once I got outta that corn stubble, I could catch it, but I still couldn't catch it. Well, I could have if only it went to the woods. I thought it'd come out and I'd get it. I'd laugh. I said, "Boy, this ought to be on *Candid Camera*. This ought to be on television."

Wayne: How much woods do you own back there then?

Jim: There's 120; about 15 is woods. My wife and I was married 29 years, and Judy, she died of cancer. She fought cancer for four years. She had pancreatic cancer and she'd delivered a load of hay with one of them wagons and she'd come home. I says, "I got in a little trouble. My semi, chased it through the--." She went to barn and she couldn't stop laughing. When the semi took off, the farm tractor rolled down a hill and run into a wagon. I had a gosh-darned mess that day! I told you I could tell you a few stories.

Myrna: What did your insurance man say about that?

Jim: We didn't say nothing. We didn't tell. We just kept silent.

Wayne: Do you do some hunting back in the woods back there?

Jim: My son and nephews hunt back there. I don't want to anymore.

Wayne: I just wonder if you have quite a few deer around here.

Jim: Jane's brother and her son and my son, they all get a deer every year back there. They put them cameras up and everything else and they got a dozen deer stands back there, so they all get a deer there every year. Good hunting with the [Grand] River. See the river goes the whole length of the farm east and west, from that boundary to that boundary.

Myrna: How has the river changed? Has it changed, deeper, slower, faster?

Jim: It's a lot cleaner than it was 20 years ago. You know, they made Lansing quit dumping raw sewage in it, and now it's clean. It don't look good now cause the water is down so much. Now there's weeds,

but it's in good shape. Fact is, the kids, my brother and my nephew, they built a nice place back here. They got a cabin back here, keep it all mowed, a lawn. Kids go back here all the time. You see cars go back there about every day, go back there, go fishing or just go back here to party. They like to go back there to party but Jane and I make sure they don't leave the farm. Once they're back here partying, nobody leaves the farm. Yeah. It's really nice back there. I used to ride my horse down there to get the cows.

Wayne: When did you have horses?

Jim: I only had one pony, a white pony. Leon Clark gave me that white pony. I rode him to school too. Trigger was his name.

Wayne: So you just tied him up during the school day?

Jim: Yeah, I only rode him over a couple times. I tied him out in the woods. **Mary Huhn**, we was out there playing . One of them guys a little older and little bigger than me said, "We'll hold Mary down and you kiss her." So I kissed her, and the damn bell rang and the guys left and she knocked the shit out of me. Mary Huhn. Did you ever hear any of the Huhns?

Wayne: Well, I know Huhns, yes.

Jim: Which Huhns do you know?

Wayne: The ones in the Westphalia area?

Jim: I didn't know there was any in Westphalia. That grocery store used to be owned by a Huhn years back.

Wayne: It's probably all part of the same family if you go back enough generations.

Jim: You might know **Carl Huhn.** You don't know Carl Huhn? All the Huhns are gone too. Yeah Mary, she swatted the heck out or me. Things like that you don't forget.

Wayne: So you didn't try that again. How old were you at that time?

Jim: Oh heck, I don't know. I know whatever it was, she's tougher me, knocked the hell out of me. I know that part. That wasn't as bad as chasing that semi, or that limo. Those are pretty good, but I could probably tell you some more. I don't know. I think I told you enough. We was baling hay over on the **-?-** farm over there and Butch and Don come along. "Can Jim quit handling them bales? We gotta go play ball?" Dad says, "Oh hell, if he wants to go, let him go." Butch says, "Dad, you know it's a church team." Dad says, "Get back on the wagon. You can't go on a church team the way you act." But I did go . I didn't play sports 'cause I didn't care about it. I'd rather work on the farm, you know? Kids are into everything now.

Myrna: What did you do all winter?

Jim: Hauled hay and straw. I bought from farmers and sold to farmers. I bought a lot of hay all over to northern part of Michigan, McBain, Clare. I never went across the bridge but hauled hay all over and then hauled straw all over. We hauled straw to strawberry farmers down to Benton Harbor for years. One year, back then, between my uncle and I, we had 40 semi loads. That's 24,000 bales in six weeks. I told them people down there at Benton Harbor area, I mean they just called em "straw "[sic] until them Keblers started hauling. Then they started calling 'em "strawberries." They didn't know. They're just berries until Kebler started hauling straw to 'em and they probably didn't know that. That could be a little stretch of it too. I'm not stretching about the limo or the semi. Those are true stories. We used to haul a couple semi loads a day. I'm talking 1200 bales. Now it takes me all summer to do 600 bales. Semis was 13' in the air and we tied them up with chains and I'd go right up them chains. Now, if I gotta load a pickup load, I have to put a bale down to get up on the tailgate. That's what I mean. That's age for you.

Myrna: Is wheat shorter now so there isn't so much straw?

Jim: Yeah. Why the stalk is shorter is so it don't go down. We want the straw and when Jake does my wheat, I tell him to cut it right down to the ground 'cause I want the straw.

Myrna: They shave the field almost.

Jim: Yeah, because I want the straw. But you're right, it's shorter. It used to be tall and in the wind it'll blow down and then it'll mold and stuff. We used to have special deals on the combine that had little forks and they'd pick it up and stuff. Raised wheat all my life too because I always wanted to straw.

Wayne: You ever raise any other grains or just wheat?

Jim: Just wheat, corn, and beans. I quit raising corn because at the time I should be planting corn, I was hauling straw to the strawberry farms, so I'd get the corn in late. Then I'd pay a big drying charge so I quit raising it and went to soybeans. You get soybeans in quite a bit later so I just went to planting soybeans.

Wayne: Well, thanks a lot for sharing your thoughts.

Jim: Very much enjoyed it.