Interview with Oscar Krieg

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Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection

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Interviewed by Timothy Nolan

Nolan: Today's date is Thursday, March 30, 1978. The Benton County Historical Society is interviewing Mr. Oscar Krieg, a resident of the Sauk Rapids area for nearly 73 years. He started the Okay Insurance and Loan Agency, and filed income tax returns for 51 years. He has been involved in a number of community organizations and recalls much of the history of Sauk Rapids. The interview is taking place in Mr. Krieg's home in Sauk Rapids and the interviewer is Timothy Nolan of the Society's Research staff.

Nolan: Mr. Krieg, where and when were you born?

Krieg: I was born May 8, 1898 in Beaker Township, Sevens County in western Minnesota – midway between Johnson and Chisago, Minnesota.

Nolan: When and why did you come to Benton County?

Krieg: We came to Benton County in October of 1905, and the reason we came to Sauk Rapids was that my father had trade. He was a miller. And when he came to this country, he settled on a farm in western Minnesota, but as long as I could remember as a boy, he was looking for mills and when the place showed up that appealed to him, he purchased it and we moved to Sauk Rapids in 1905.

Nolan: You mean the mill was open then?

Krieg: The mill was open. It was closed – it had been built in 1898 and in those seven years, about seven different firms had tried to run it, but never succeeded. I imagine most of the them were without experience because knowing the names I hear afterwards there were no millers in the family, and evidently, they hired a miller and hiring somebody to run your business, in most cases, just doesn't work out because it was too small a business for too many people to make a living out of this business.

Nolan: So that's the main reason your father came here?

Krieg: He came here because the mill was closed at that time.

Nolan: Could you tell me something about your father, his background, where he came from?

Krieg: My father was born near Lodz, Poland and he came to America in May 1890 with a group of about 25, and most of them came directly to Minnesota. My father and one of his friends landed near Nicollet and they hired out as farm help for a year, for the first year. He had a contract for three years, and stayed one year, but long before the first year was up, he already notified the farmer that he was employed by that he was on Halloween. When he asked them why he wasn't satisfied, he said he was well satisfied, but he wanted to get somewhere where he could learn the language. These people were Germans, their predominant language was German. They almost all spoke German, Polish, and Russian. He wanted to learn the language. But he said he stayed about three or four more months longer than he had contracted for before he finally got certain. The relationship was very tragic then and very good. Then he and his friend hired out to, they went to St. Peter, and they also got hired out to farmers in Rice and they couldn't speak any German and he said that didn't work out at all. He said they were real good at fishing, but he couldn't learn the English as fast as they wanted us to learn. That didn't work out,

so by that time, they two of them had enough money to buy a horse. They rode to Stevens County. They rode horseback to Stevens County. The reason they went there is one of their group came over and entered the seminary at New Ulm. It was a Lutheran Seminary at the time and he had already competed his horse, and he had become a clergyman near Johnson, Mn. So that's how they came to that area. Father took up a tree claim that the other man had dropped, and the other man took a homestead, and they farmed in front of each other. So they cleared down the pine trees so they could farm. The tree claim had a claim to a certain number of trees, to acquire that claim and to keep it.

Nolan: Then he came here and sold it.

Krieg: In 1905, 1906.

Nolan: What about your mother, where did she come from?

Krieg: My mother was born in Madison, Wisconsin.

Nolan: What was her maiden name?

Krieg: Gerdei. Her mother was also born in this country already, and I don't know exactly when but I know she was born in Wisconsin and I would imagine in the Durand area because I could often remember Mother and the aunts and uncles talking about the Durand area where they visited relatives and son and so forth. So I would imagine that's probably the area they were born, and also in western Minnesota, there were several of her uncles, they had a number of taxes complicated, also come out to the farm and that's how kept the rest in Minnesota.

Nolan: What about your grandparents? Did your dad ever tell stories about them or did you know them?

Krieg: On my father's side?

Nolan: Yes.

Krieg: Yes.

Nolan: On both sides, I mean.

Krieg: Well, I'll take my father's side first. In 1892, my grandfather and three of his sons came to the United States to take in the World Fair. Father and son of the others from western Minnesota also took in the Fair. But before they went to the Fair, Father came from western Minnesota, when Father was living at that time, and he looked over a section of land that was for sale, but he and the owner couldn't get together. But he said 'If you come down to my price—. He gave him instructions to an office to write to in New York, and he told him 'If you come to my price, write to this office and maybe we can do business.' That's the way they left it. And they went to the World's Fair, and at the World Fair after they had taken in as much of the Fair as they planned, they departed. Father and brothers said good-bye, and they were going back to Russia. Also, one other brother of my father's came over in the original group. He was also a good guy. Grandfather had said that they had a number of days to take in the sights of New York, and then they were taking the trip- they had a round-trip ticket – back to Russia. And the next time we heard of them, he informed them that he had cashed in his round-trip ticket, and he had cabled his brother to sell everything he had over there and ship his family over here. And after he had done that, he went to the office where he had instructed this farmer to write if he was interested in meeting his price and there was letter from a state agent would sell at that price. So he came back to Minnesota and brought the farm. We never went back. My grandmother and the

rest of the family came then. She went back a number of times to Russia with Father, but Grandpa never went back.

Nolan: Then they just went and farmed then?

Krieg: He farmed in western Minnesota until he retired in 1912. And then they moved to Sauk Rapids. They owned the home that's at the present time that's the Deeser --. Is that on all the time?

Nolan: What was the funeral home now?

Krieg: That's the Veeser-Dingmann Funeral Home.

Nolan: Will you talk a little bit now about your family life – about the way things were then, how you grew up, and maybe the effect the mill had on the life? If there were any family traditions or special social activities that there were.

Krieg: Well, things in those years were entirely different. All transportations was by horsepower. When we came to Sauk Rapids, the village was still very primitive as the streetcar was connected to Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud and Waite Park. Sauk Rapids ran along 2nd Avenue through about 8th Street North. When we arrived at Sauk Rapids, the only people that had electric lights outside of the business district, was along the streetcar line. Power, at that time, was such that you could always tell by the lights when the streetcar was stopping or starting. When the streetcar would stop, the lights would flicker a little whiter, and when it started, the lights would flicker a little dimmer. That went on for quite a number of years, before they began to --.

Nolan: Did you have electricity yourself, then?

Krieg: Not when we first came to Sauk Rapids, but the mill did, but not in the home. We didn't live on 2nd Avenue, we lived about a block away from 2nd Avenue. But it didn't take very many years when they began to run their lines to various sections of the village. They developed, when we first came here, there was mostly trails outside of one block on Main Street, there were wooden sidewalks. The roads hadn't been cut down, there were no roads. Just the way the land originated, and the ponds. Most of the trails, you could go along with the horses. Along the trails the hazel nut bushes lifted up against single trees and popple trees, and the rigs. And in those years, the children could go out and pick hazel nuts, and they would put them on the roast and dry them. There were families that picked as much as a bushel of hazel nuts at a certain time. After a number of years, certain worms began to strike, and there were so many wormy nuts.

Nolan: Was there an abundance before that?

Krieg: There were lots of them. Everyone would go out and pick hazel nuts, that is the majority. There wasn't much else to do. Conditions were different than they are today. There were no feeders, no recreation like we have it today, no radio no television, very few telephones. I doubt if there were more than a dozen telephones in the city outside of the business district. See, the country was just developing.

Nolan: What was the size of your family?

Krieg: There were nine children in the family. I had four brothers and four sisters.

Nolan: So, besides picking hazel nuts, what other things did you do with your time?

Krieg: Well, you'd get together and play. In those years you knew your friends and neighbors. In the churches, people were much closer, and you knew everyone in the area because there was

nowhere else to go. People would get together much oftener, and their relationships were much closer than they are today because that was the only thing you could is be with people, and if you didn't get together with your friends and relatives, it meant it was a great distance, and there was no way to get there.

Nolan: Can you go into your educational background – when you started school, and the various stages of it?

Krieg: Well, I attempted part of the year in a schoolhouse in western Minnesota – a rural district school. That was maybe about four miles or so. That was another reason the folks left that area. At that time, out there, German was the predominant language. I didn't know there was another language until I entered the district school. Then, I found out there was another language. The first two words I learned was c-a-t, cat, and r-a-t, rat. However, this Portugan met my mother who quite American school with her mother, and Mother's brothers and sisters told me that when she married Dad, she didn't practically know German. But they made her so German out of her that in her letters, she wrote, she used the German language. Of course, she finished American school which was quite an advantage in our day because so many of them, that talked German had a hard time with the English language.

Nolan: So you learned mostly English from your mother.

Krieg: From my mother. I was at home. At home, instead of insisting on speaking German at home. That's what you had the condition here, too. You had the Swedish Hill, and Swedish people spoke Swedish. Polishmen came to Sauk Rapids. Polish people spoke Polish. And the German would speak German.

Nolan: You mean they would speak it in the community?

Krieg: Especially when you were by yourself, you could go downtown and hear various groups speaking their language. And for many years, until about the time of World War I, 1918, people began to learn the English language.

Nolan: Did people know English, besides their languages, though?

Krieg: Most of them. You'd have to know some, but you could go to--. St. Cloud especially was very German in those years, Stearns County. You can still hear them speak German there, but it's not a very good German today.

Nolan: Well, then, going back to your education, when you got to Sauk Rapids, where did you go to high school? What education did you continue?

Krieg: I went to Trinity School until the sixth grade – through the sixth grade – and then I went to seventh grade in a public school, and then I entered Concordia College in St. Paul – Concordia High School and then Concordia Community College.

Nolan: Oh, they had a prep school right in with it. Did you graduate then?

Krieg: Yes, from Junior College.

Nolan: Did you have some kind of degree or something then?

Krieg: In those years, the practice of degree wasn't as troubling then as it is today. Very seldom that you heard of anyone having to get a degree. In 1918, I went to northern Wisconsin to sell books. I sold 350 sets of books during summer vacation at three dollars a set. So I made enough money on 1918 to pay my entire school tuition for six years. A whole bunch of them went out. quite a group went out from Concordia, quite a group came from Hamline University, a group from the University of Minnesota, and from Carlton College a group came.

Nolan: Went to where?

Krieg: Selling books. This particular publication, wherever the published sent them, they determined where they were going.

Nolan: You mean in the country?

Krieg: In the country, where you put it in, we put it in. I didn't order all the books I had ordered for an edition that was ordered because I thought 'Well, some people do, and you can talk them down,' and I thought 'Maybe some of them when the time comes will take them.' So I ordered these 300 sets and when they came to the depot, they came to the depot in three boxes, and they told me that the freight weight was a ton and a half. That would have been a thousand pounds for every 100 books. That was, of course, with the crates. The crates must have been quite heavy, and also the packing. I remember one of the big fellows was quite angry with the weight of the books, and he said to me 'How much money did you take down?' I said 'I didn't take down any.' He said 'Most of these packagers don't get their money because people don't pay their bills.' But it went well and when I got to the end of the territory, I found that I needed the additional books that I'd ordered for, and I ordered them, and the morning that I needed them, they were at the depot in Crandon, Wisconsin.

Nolan: What kind of books were they?

Krieg: It was a library. A Medical, Protein and Veterinary Library.

Nolan: You must have been a good seller.

Krieg: I got an award – the Zebra Tongue Sigma Award or whatever you call that, for salesmanship. Anybody that made over $1,000 got that little service. There was, one of them I

remember, from Hamline, Walter Nicholson, who later became publisher of the New Ulm paper and another small paper. Then there was a St. Paul girl who was for many years a judge in Minneapolis, from the University of Minnesota. Then there's Art F.E. Coat, he was an uncle to, I think it was, Don Coat, of St. Paul. I asked him if he knew Art E. Coat. He said 'Yes, I gave him a contribution for the University of Minnesota.' But there weren't too many of them that got lucky in selling.

Nolan: It was a good area.

Krieg: The only thing was, the others were mostly college juniors, and I happened to be a college freshman. I was a lot younger than the others.

Nolan: Enthusiastic, huh?

Krieg: Maybe lucky, I don't know.

Nolan: Yes, that could be true.

Krieg: You could be lucky and have a better territory, too. It's very possible to win you had an extra better territory to go on, I don't know.

Nolan: It must have been. Well, what about your occupational background? After you got out of this school--?

Krieg: I sold another half summer in 1919, and then I got the flu. 1918 was when the flu epidemic was so bad. People died by the thousands.

Nolan: There was a flu? Do you know what kind of a flu, or was there a name for the flu?

Krieg: The Spanish Flu, if I remember correctly. People died by the thousands. I got it in the summer of 1919, very lightly, and I came home for my grandfather's funeral. My grandfather died, but they had celebrated their golden wedding anniversary earlier. On the way home, I got the flu. I thought it was very light, but I laid in bed and it didn't bother me at all, but the minute you raised your head, everything was blurred and dizzy. I got it too soon. I had a good summer up until that time, but after that things didn't go so well. I was in bad, mental condition for awhile, so I took to contracting for a number of years, and then I took a horse at the county and got a grand in the fall of 1926 – in January of 1926.

Nolan: You were in construction?

Krieg: I was in construction.

Nolan: What kind of construction?

Krieg: Welding.

Nolan: Welding.

Krieg: Welding and other types of building.

Nolan: You did that for what – 5 years?

Krieg: From 1920 to '25. I worked for a contractor. I wasn't the contractor.

Nolan: And then you got into banking. Why did you do that?

Krieg: Construction, in those years, wasn't paid well. The season was too short. If you were already on the job, except on some small job, by the beginning of May, you were lucky, and if you were still busy by the end of October, you were also lucky because the season was very

short. Today, construction companies work throughout the year. But when I went into banking, Saturdays were extremely low, it was still a good move.

Nolan: You had taken accounting and gone into banking?

Krieg: When I started?

Nolan: Yes.

Krieg: You mean the idea with the conditions of the bank in those years. The head of the bank, at that time, was only getting $2100 a year. The competing bank, I think, he was getting $2250. So, see, that's how it was in those days. Of course, it changed as the years went on. Those things changed, but everything else is the same.

Nolan: Well, then you worked between 1926 and 1938 in the bank?

Krieg: 1926 through '38.

Nolan: Now, during that time, of course--.

Krieg: What happened--. All right.

Nolan: Okay.

Krieg: I started in the Citizen State Bank the second of January 1926. In April 1928, the two banks consolidated, and there were three employees in the Citizen State Bank and four in the Benton County State Bank. One of the head men dropped out right away when the two banks consolidated, and the bank would drop out three more, but before they got that far, the consolidated bank told us on the fourth of October, 1928 that it was falling. And, at that time, there were hundreds of banks all over, closing.

Nolan: Is this because of the Depression?

Krieg: Because of the conditions of the Depression. We had a recession. After World War I, in the early '20s, people were buying up farms. People from Iowa were coming up here and paying too much for farms, and it was that way all over the country. They wouldn't make too much of a down payment and then they would lose their farms. Thousands and thousands of people lost their farms that way. Banks had made money loans on those farms, and couldn't collect, and that's what happened. When the bank closed – I took care of the insurance business and also in the two banks combined, I started taking care of the insurance for both of the banks that combined business, and when the banks closed, the bills for the month of September hadn't been paid, and nobody wanted the business, so the company then came to me and wanted to know whether I would take care of the insurance for the bills that were against it. I said 'Yes.' And then the man that was the appointed receiver for the bank was willing to keep me here to get information on various things on the closed banks, and he was a total stranger, and I got a free room there. When the Union Western Company came in here to organize the new bank, that company organized the new bank, and I went in second place then. I was cashier, but I moved up. It also sold the insurance agency. There were doing the work of the agency. By that time, I had paid up all the bills. I told them at the time I took over, that I would operate it without taking any money out of the business until it was fully paid for. So, I sold two insurance agencies in my life. Then in 1929, when the bank opened on the eighteenth of May, and they were then, one of the banks that the Union Western Company, they operate 32 banks in the states of Minnesota – 32 or 33. In October, they sold out to Northwest Bank Corporation, the Northwest Grant Corporation. The First Bank stock had organized not too long before, and they were both acquiring rural banks, and forming bank unions. The Northwest Bank Corporation wrote out the

entire union investment group in October of that year. Then shortly after that had happened, the Crash came. The Crash came, I think it was the twentieth of October 1929. The stock market went to pieces. Then things went really bad for a few years.

Nolan: Did your bank have to close or anything?

Krieg: The Bank Holiday came along on the fourth of March in 1933. That was the day that Roosevelt was inaugurated. That was the last time that a President was inaugurated in March. After that, they changed the law so they were inaugurated in January. The day he was inaugurated, he closed all banks. They were closed for about ten days, something like that, there was no business, no banking business of any kind, and the reason he had to do that is because the banks all over the country were failing so fast that something had to be done or the entire structure probably would have collapsed. Then the banks that were sound, were permitted to open – we opened up with 100% - our bank is still very new. Two of the St. Cloud banks opened up with 100%, one opened up with 50%, and another opened up with 35%. There were four banks in St. Cloud at that time. They all worked out good, but conditions were so bad and investments were tied up in new places of approaching assets that things were just a mess.

Nolan: When did things started getting better then or really improving?

Krieg: Gradually, they got better. You had, of course, then the Depression came in ’34, ’35, and ’36, the drought years, and everything went. Before they ever brought anything in those years, after they rode them around the ring and punched them, belted them and everything else, they’d probably get five or six dollars. And there were actually cows that didn’t sell for more than two or three hundred – real good cows, they might go up to get 35 or 36, but that was it. There were getting much less than they could get if they shipped to the market in St. Paul, but if they did,

they couldn't sell their other critters because there no market for them. That was because of the financial conditions. Everybody was holding onto their money – they were buying nothing. The country was just down, depressed. The Depression was the worst time, And also, it was so dry in '35, it was so dry and hot – either in '35 or '36 – that for almost a week, and that was the highest temperature ever recorded in Minnesota. The temperature never went under 108. I remember, we would go out and sleep on the lawn. We had a hard girl at that time. My wife wasn't so well. The oldest girl, just a pee wee then, she would say 'Let's go out and sleep under the moon, and spread out sheets out in the yard.' There were no bugs, no gnats, nothing, and you wouldn't even get damp from the ground. That's how dry it was. You laid on the grass and it just crinkled like laying on straw. After '36, things got to be a little better. The farmers were really hit. Everyone was hit, conditions were tough. Thousands of people out of work. That's when they had the public works program, and the government provided all kids of projects for hundreds and hundreds of people to work. Work – made jobs. Then from then on, things got to be better again, and a lot of property for sale, but no buyers.

Nolan: During those drought years, was there quite a bit of shortages of water for personal needs – drinking, washing and things like that? Were there rations of this?

Krieg: Yes. Some wells went dry. A lot of tress dried. A lot of trees dried right up throughout the country. But after the next year, when the conditions came back in 1937, things greened up very readily, and that was when people would say 'Meadows and lawns and nothing will come back.' Just as soon as there was moisture, they came back.

Nolan: What about, was there any rationing at that time with water to put people on that?

Krieg: It wasn't really that. The condition was different than now. We also were stilled when the wells were out. You were restricted to sprinkling – they didn't let you sprinkle because they were afraid of shortages. And they couldn't pump it fast enough from the tank here at Sauk Rapids, just had a small tank at that time. And they were warned not to use it for long stretches. They were afraid it might be, but it never got that far.

Nolan: So, then, carrying on now, right after the banking, you went into your own insurance business. What started that?

Krieg: Well, I went into the insurance and loan, see.

Nolan: And then you started your own?

Krieg: Then I started my first office. I continued my income tax work. I do income tax every year during the income tax season. I was ready in 1941 when the income tax came down. Practically everyone--. If I remember correctly, there was a 5% surtax on all incomes in 1944 for the 1943 tax. There was very few people that could do income tax. Most accountants wouldn't fool with it. Before that, there were two few because a man and wife were exempt $3500 and $250 for each child. And in those years, salaries were still low. As I said bankers were getting around $22-$2300 a year, and there weren't too many that were up in the income tax pay bracket. I made out probably two or three dozen returns the year before they got heavy. Then they got so heavy then. I got them all over town because there weren't many people that were acquainted with it. They first sent men around trying to instruct people what to do and how to do it, but you don't train them in a couple hours for something entirely new.

Nolan: Were you an accountant then--a certified accountant?

Krieg: No, not certified. I did accounting. I learned it at the bank. I had a very competent wife who helped me out with my returns.

Nolan: What originally was the reason you got out of banking and went into strictly insurance and loaning?

Krieg: I had a disagreement with the supervisor. They had supervisors in those years, and the first trip that he made through here, he and I didn't like it together working on a job.

Nolan: Were there any financial reasons? Maybe you saw a market or something like that?

Krieg: No. It was the disagreement, but it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

Nolan: Now, it was named the Okay Insurance. What was the reason for that?

Krieg: Well, that's my music.

Nolan: Oh, there you go.

Krieg: That's my creed.

Nolan: Very nice.

Krieg: You aren't the first man to ever say that. One of my insurance companies, there was a field man who came through for years and years and years, and he finally came in and said 'I never could figure out how you got that.' I looked all over the country and couldn't find it any other place.' He says 'This morning when I looked up, it came to me.'

Nolan: It's too obvious. What kind of insurances were you selling? What was your main stress?

Krieg: Property and automobile liability, workmen's compensation.

Nolan: Life?

Krieg: Some life. When I started out, some life, but I dropped that afterwards because I had too many other things. I was making a lot of loans and things like that. Life is really a specialty in itself. You find most life men, they take only life, and, in some cases, only certain phases of life insurance because other have different people selling different types of life because of really differences, and you've got to know your business or your life didn't sell. So, after a couple years, I dropped the life insurance business.

Nolan: It was just too much.

Krieg: Because that was a specialty in the other companies. You can't have too many--

Nolan: --too many things going at once. What was the market like for insurance? Was it plentiful? Was it as much as you wanted?

Krieg: Well, in those years, you had to sell it. Today, everybody wants it. Your values in those years were small, too. When I bought this house in 1933, I paid $2,000 for it, this property. So, you couldn't insure it for more than that. Of course, I put additions to it, is all. I kept it up, but in those years, you could buy property cheap, but you had to because the sellers were cheap – the low ones.

Nolan: Why did you start filing income tax?

Krieg: Why?

Nolan: Yes, why?

Krieg: The first year I was in the bank, the few people that needed income taxes made out couldn't find anybody. They would go from place to place. Already, the first year when I was in the bank, those that came in would first go to the cashier and then they'd go to the assistant cashier. Well, I had just gotten in the bank then and they'd come to me and I'd say 'No.' But the second year, I said 'Bring in your stuff and well see what we can do.' I was always willing to try something, see. From then no, I made them up.

Nolan: So there was really a market for them?

Krieg: There was a market for them. They were looking for people, but there were so few that most people wouldn't do them.

Nolan: Were they any special changed in the jobs where you sold the insurance until 1972, and the loan agency till 1977?

Krieg: Insurance – what did you say?

Nolan: You ran insurance until 1972, is that true?

Krieg: Insurance business in '72 – till May 1972.

Nolan: And the loan agency until 1977?

Krieg: The loan agency I closed in December. The last loan was paid in 1977.

Nolan: Now, during that time, was there any special changes due to the economy or due to the market that stick out in your mind? I'm sure there was a lot, but just some that really stick out?

Krieg: When I started, insurance was a very simple thing. Beginning with they had only fire insurance and wind stormage. No other coverages were insured. You insured them separate. You

couldn't combine them. As time came on, you had the homeowners policy which today, they really give you a good coverage. They didn't come in until sometime after the '50's. They were very simple policies. And your automobile was the same way.

Nolan: Were there other things that really stick out in your mind as being important to business, changes in the market or things like that? For instance, when did the automobile really start coming in?

Krieg: Well, I started writing automobile insurance just as soon as I got in the bank. When the two banks consolidated, we had a lot of the automobile insurance, and the other bank had practically nothing. They had been asleep. They were the first bank, and they had most of the property insurance, and when the two banks got together, the insurance business was about the same. But the two years and four months that I had been there, I had written a lot of automobile insurance, and they weren't aware of that, see. I went out to drive by foot. I had salesmanship experience and when we consolidated, the agencies of the two banks were just about the same. The other bank figured that we couldn't possibly have much because they had all the property – most of the property – insurance because they had been in business so much longer, and, as a rule, if you've got property, insured property, in most cases, if you treat the people right, you can hold onto them for a long time. More so, in those days than you can today. Today, you've got a lot of changes, a lot of changed ownerships and usually when there's an ownership change, there's also a chance for change in the insurance coverage because with your loans today, every goes to a different place for loans and that's where the insurance goes up, really. And then, also, your coverages are so much higher. They have to be because the values are much higher – they're inflated – compared to those years.

Nolan: That's for sure. About tax, about your business of filling tax returns, were there any significant changes that you can note the two places meant?

Krieg: First, they were very, very simple. Like everything else, it gets more involved, and many more exceptions. Today, you've got a lot of exceptions and advantages for certain businesses with certain conditions and so on and so forth. Today, it's very complicated. It's gotten very complicated. This year, today, this year, as a certified accountant. I wouldn't like it.

Nolan: It's just gotten too complicated?

Krieg: It's gotten complicated and involved. And I don't care who the man is, there are so many different conditions and situations under different conditions, that no matter how well you're your income tax, you're going to miss something, I don't care who you are. And I thought nonsense with other people while they're visiting and say 'Oh. I slipped up on something.' Well, you know how that is.

Nolan: Right. Did you ever find any real problem with the government in that respect?

Krieg: No. We were questioned on about ten or twelve on the average year, but we were making around 12-1300 returns a year. So, I would say, about 1%. As far as I know, I don't know of any of them that got into any real serious difficulty because we always advised them to give us the facts and we reported it. We were so strong on that, but it didn't give us the fact that a fellow would never come back and tell us about it.

Nolan: How many people do you have working in your agency?

Krieg: I run a one-man agency.

Nolan: Oh, really.

Krieg: My wife helps me with the agency. During income tax time, she was here almost steady. When I'd go out and collect, she usually came down. We're not a licensed--. I'm about two and a half weeks she'd be down this way because those were the heavy days, and then real estate taxes, I collected real estate taxes for the area, and she'd be there a good part of the last month of the real estate tax period always. The odd things was that everything jumped into the income period. Every-thing that I did, I didn't have two things that would come together. I had a couple that did, and then the laws were changed, so just like if I had ordered it.

Nolan: Everything worked pretty good. Was there anything else you wanted to add about your occupation?

Krieg: No.

Nolan: Well then, why don't we switch the subject a little bit. During your time, besides all the work you were doing and things, you were involved in a lot of community activities, community organizations and things. You were, for instance, you were a member of the school board for 30 years.

Krieg: '31 to '61.

Nolan: How did you get into that? And you can maybe talk about that a little bit.

Krieg: Well, the taxes were terrifically high and the public, as a whole, they were up in the air because of the high taxes and things. I and another man, who since passed away, sort of, if with help, tried to reduce the taxes. We got on the board and found that it was the board didn't make any difference what salesman came in there, he would sell them a bill of goods. A lot of things that weren't needed. We were successful in doing it, we got the taxes reduced. I think the mill

rate was, if I remember correctly, about 76 or 77 when we got on the school board, and at one time, we had it down to the minimum which was 32. Of course, when you can succeed in doing that, you had no trouble getting re-elected.

Nolan: Right, and that's how you were re-elected.

Krieg: That's how we were re-elected. A lot of people make promises, but they don't keep them, and the man that went in with me, he was a doctor, always supported me and we were successful and we got one or two others to get in to be our successors. Held them down until times and conditions changed, but there you couldn't help it because conditions were a lot different and circumstances are entirely different because conditions were always changing. Also, in some instances, the education has deteriorated. So much in our rural area here as it does in the large cities when you build a large city, and hear the difficulties they have. For example, in California just a year ago, that my son called me and said they just passed a law over there now no one can pass from high school, or get a high school diploma, unless you can read. You've got the same thing in large schools. When you watch the papers, it shouldn't be the condition that you've got today where each year the public schools are losing an enormous amount to the parochial schools. The parochial schools haven't got room for them and the reason there going there is because at the present time, well, maybe I should put it this way, I think the teachers union has gotten so strong, it's got a lot of teachers in the teaching profession that shouldn't be there. I don't know what you remember when you went to school, but there's people in there, when we went to junior high, you had dedicated teachers that pit in long hours each day. Today, there are too many of them that interested in how much they get for how little. And my honest opinion is that a teacher that isn't dedicated to serve the youth, shouldn't be there.

Nolan: I agree with you.

Krieg: We've got lots of them today.

Nolan: I agree.

Krieg: Now last spring, I saw in the Minneapolis paper where about a third of the graduates that would have been ready to enter junior high, just before graduation, were told they couldn't graduate. They hadn't been told during the year. Now isn't that a sad thing. They should have been told during the year. Where was someone. Somebody was there. I was going to tell you down in the cities, I was told that some of the parochial schools had these long lists of parents that want their children in parochial school. When we checked up who they were, many of them are supervisors and principals in public schools. They're trying to get their children in parochial schools because they themselves don't know what to do. And that's sad.

Nolan: That's very sad.

Krieg: That's sad. And with as strong as the union is today, look at the various lawsuits that've got. You can only discharge a teacher for a reason. And it all has to be public and in most cases, they come along and they prove to you that that isn't it. And I've been watching that as it goes along and by that I don't mean that you should start teaching your kid, I don't mean that.

Nolan: Is that the reason you had gotten out of the school board – the changes?

Krieg: No, I thought I didn't get home enough. The first meeting after I had, was elected to the tenth term, I told the board 'Now this is it. When my term's up, I'm not running anymore.' When they asked me why, I said 'If I've done my duty, that should be plenty, and if I haven't done my duty, I should have been off long ago.' I said 'Now, if that isn't enough reason--' In those years,

you no charges. The only people on the school board that drew in a salary was the Clerk and the Treasurer. None of the other ones got a salary. That again was the conditions – those years, too, the people that ran were dedicated. When you're working for nothing, you're to not run. Today, you've got people that, I'm sure, that on the school board that are getting in there for the monetary part. Their salaries are poor.

Nolan: Right. I agree with you. It's a loss of dedication. Well, you were also in that time, the Treasurer – City Treasurer?

Krieg: I got that by writing.

Nolan: By--?

Krieg: --writing.

Nolan: Really?

Krieg: Yah. I hadn't filed and I hadn't run, and I was elected and I took it.

Nolan: Well, was it because of all your experience with the Council?

Krieg: I can't remember now. No one filed and some people wrote it some. I just don't remember. It's a long time ago. But after the term was up, I didn't file, and I had reason because the Clerk was a fellow that had gone to drinking and I was just sick and tired of it, and I had plenty to do with my own business, and, of course, I issued all the city checks, and I usually wouldn't get the list until about six in the evening and the next morning, there were supposed to be all ready, see. I just couldn't do that, and then a year, what was it, maybe six or seven months after I was off, he died. And then they really found the shortage. About two years before that the Council didn't trust him because he'd gone to drinking. He drank pretty hard. And so they had an

audit, and the audit found nothing on the Clerk, but he criticized a lot of the action of the Council. And after that he really must have gone because they found the shortage, and I don't know how he got away with that much. But I was lucky. Everything that, you see, in those years, people could pay the Treasurer or the Clerk. Everything that they paid me, I made deposit slips and deposited it directly in the back, and then kept my copies, and the copies, see. So everything that was involved with me, when the auditors came, I had --

Nolan: --records of it.

Krieg: Really, I don't see, and I knew the man well, how in that short time, he got away with what he did. It took a lot of money to drink. If it hadn't been for that condition, maybe I'd have taken another term.

Nolan: It was probably that reason.

Krieg: I just didn't want it under those conditions. There could be times when you've got other times for that particular life, and you just had to get the checks out to people. Make sure they're the right ones. Sometimes, it was the longest, sometimes you'd stay until after midnight.

Nolan: So it's pretty busy then. You also, amongst all those other things, helped organize the Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce. When was that?

Krieg: Maybe about fifteen years ago.

Nolan: What stimulated that?

Krieg: Well, they needed a Chamber here. Before this, the Lions took care of many of the things that came into the sphere of the Chamber. And when you get to be the size of Sauk Rapids, you

need a Chamber. And it worked well for many years. I'm not so satisfied with the way it's working right now. I hope it perks up again.

Nolan: Was the public really interested at the time of getting a Chamber?

Krieg: People were. The public was. They got things going, and some wonderful parades. We have Indian Days once a year. It's a big public occasion. It's done a lot for the city.

Nolan: And also, the Lions Club for 45 years. Were you actively involved in that very much? How long had the Lions Club been going in Sauk Rapids?

Krieg: They were organized in about September 1929.

Nolan: And you were in shortly after that.

Krieg: Shortly after that. The time they organized, the head of the bank was a member of the Lions and it was impossible for two of them to join because there only three of them in the bank at that time, so it was pretty small. They weren't involved the way they are today. Banking back then was comparatively simple. You didn't have all computers and so on. You didn't have the volume of business that you've got today when you see the check that are written today. It's entirely different. I could see that with the Council. It was simple.

Nolan: I would think so. And you began in simplicity. Is there something special you can mention about the lives or anything that sticks out in your mind as being relevant?

Krieg: Well, there are service organizations and they certainly do a lot of things. We're the instigators of the Eye Bank, you know that.

Nolan: No, I don't.

Krieg: The eye bank. You know what an eye bank is, don't you?

Nolan: No, I don't.

Krieg: When a person passes away, they can take the cornea and plant it on the bank for people's eyes ad it enables them to see.

Nolan: Oh yah?

Krieg: Yah, but it has to be done within a certain time limit. The Lions were the ones that kept this going, and then also working at it. They've got this big eye bank clinic down in the cities. The undertakers in certain areas, this one here is licensed and qualified, they can take out the eye. Of course, the person that passes on has to stipulate that so that they know they can do that. Now in my case, I can't do it. Your wife can give permission. Somebody has to give permission. I've got three children and all three children will have to give permission. Two of them are in California and they'd never get in touch with all three in time to do that.

Nolan: Right.

Krieg: Out in California, they passed a law in California, if you have that on your driver's license, they can go right ahead. As far as I know in Minnesota, you can't do a thing like that unless it came recently. Their nearest of kin has to give permission.

Nolan: When did the Lions Club instigate this?

Krieg: Oh, maybe about two years ago or so. They supply glasses and hearing aids. Seems to me they put out around $800 for hearing aids for poor people that were in no position to get their own.

Nolan: They do a lot of public service.

Krieg: A lot of public service for disadvantaged individuals. A big money-raising project is the bingo stand at the county fair. It seems to me the last one was around last year at the Benton County fairgrounds. It seems to me they made $5800 from that bingo stand. It's a big building there. It's all under shelter. I can't tell you how many can play at once.

Nolan: Some of the actual history of Sauk Rapids of some of the businesses and things like that. For instance, the flour mill. You said your father, way back then, first got started in the flour mill. Can you tell me something about the mill itself? About where it was?

Krieg: It was right straight downhill there. Right at the corner of 1st street and Broadway on the southwest intersection. In fact, the street runs there where the flour mill was. When the new bridge was built, and that was under construction when World War II came along, because of the high voltage power line construction there, they were too close to the highway. They would have moved the highway to the north, but I think they wanted $100,000 or something to move that. And, at that time, the mill was no longer in operation so the county, the state and the Village bought the mill and dismantled it, so that they could run the highway. There's a little jog there yet. They're in the process of getting a little corner of Coborn's parking lot straighten that out.

Nolan: When was this?

Krieg: Just before World War II, and World War II came in December, it was Pearl Harbor, December 8, 1941.

Nolan: So it was in '41?

Krieg: Just prior to ’41 that the mill was dismantled. The bridge at that time was under construction, and the government took the bridge, and then the bridge wasn’t completed until about, I think about 1948, I think. The war was over in ’45. The contractor who had given the bid for the bridge refused to complete it because he couldn’t complete it for what he bid on it. You could readily understand that. Nobody blamed him for that because prices had really spiraled. Everybody said ‘You can’t hold the contract,’ and he finally went to court to find out that there was really no real dissent there, but to find out just what they could do. The county commissioners could not come along and say we’re going to give you what you want now. They had to decide how it was going to be handled legally and it was finally settled, and finally, he completed the bridge. It cost a good deal more, and he was entitled to it because prices had gone up. There was no way that the man could have completed that for the bids that he had given them that time. And then that was completed and the road was moved over.

Nolan: That’s why there’s that little jog there.

Krieg: They’re trying now to straighten that out because if it came through it’d hit that corner, see?

Nolan: Yah, right.

Krieg: It’s over quite a ways.

Nolan: So the reason it was there really, is because of the flour mill.

Krieg: Well, the flour mill wasn’t finished in those years, but you see, the road had a curve in it. It should never had that curve. Northern States come right up next to it. There’s a – transformer

there or whatever they've got – they got right up next to it. After it was there, how are you going to make it move?

Nolan: Yah, right. What about, you mentioned before something about a brewery. What can you tell me about that?

Krieg: I don't know anything about it. It was already burned down when we came to Sauk Rapids. The foundation, the brewery was at the corner where the Standard gasoline station is on Highway 10, two blocks to the left and down. Right on that corner.

Nolan: Do you know the name of the kind of beer or anything? Or it was all destroyed?

Krieg: It was destroyed. The foundation stood there until shortly before that station was built, many, many years. It must have been there thirty, forty years.

Nolan: It's interesting that there was a brewery.

Krieg: But then you got that all over. St. Cloud had two breweries, too. They had two flour mills.

Nolan: They only had one here.

Krieg: One flour mill. Then there's another one right across the river.

Nolan: oh yah? Right directly across?

Krieg: That was the feed mill.

Nolan: What about a creamery? Something about an original creamery?

Krieg: Creamery. Right by the fire station. That was a creamery.

Nolan: You mean that's been the original creamery?

Krieg: That was the original creamery. That was the Farmers Co-op Creamery.

Nolan: Was there something in the late 1800s? When did the creamery start, do you know that?

Krieg: The creamery was here when we came to town. But, at that time, they were located on Broadway just north of the Municipal Liquor Store – that's in St. Cloud. That's where the creamery was. Then the farmers bought it out and moved it to where it is today, and rebuilt it. It was only a frame building. I don't know if they couldn't get it if they put up a solid brick building, I don't remember anymore, but they moved the building up there first and either bricked it or put up a brick building. Then there was a cheese factory here, but I don't know where that was. I heard old-timers talk about it.

Nolan: Oh, did you? What were some things you heard them say? Just that there was a cheese factory?

Krieg: That there was cheese factory in Sauk Rapids.

Nolan: They didn't tell you when or anything like that?

Krieg: There was no cheese factory here anymore when we came here. I just heard them talk about it.

Nolan: What about a sawmill? Was the sawmill here?

Krieg: Yes, the sawmill was here. That I can remember. The sawmill was right straight down north of where the transformer is, that whole area. And the training mill was across the street and

down towards, just on the other side of the creek is where the training mill was. The base and the stream engine are still there. They never moved that because that is cement.

Nolan: When did that go out of business?

Krieg: I would say that, it was operated by the Neils Lumber Company, and that's spelled N-e-i-l-s, and they sold out in about 1912 to the Cooks Lumber Company, and the reason the Cooks Lumber Company brought it is because they had forest fires. Lumber that they wanted to saw. They operated it for another two years, and then they dismantled it.

Nolan: Also, were the quarries quite active when you were here? Before and during – what were they quarrying – granite?

Krieg: Granite.

Nolan: Were they doing anything with it here or were they shipping it out?

Krieg: Most of it was shipped out. They also had quarries that they mined streetcars. Streetcars are a little box maybe about eight inches long and about four by four that they used to put between the seats of the car rails so they could seat six. Where do you live? Where was your home?

Nolan: In Milwaukee?

Krieg: Oh, well, Milwaukee. I imagine--

Nolan: You probably had the same old cobblestone kind of thing.

Krieg: Yah, only these were granite.

Nolan: Yah, I think I know. I've seen them.

Krieg: Then they put these streetcars back and roll them along the outside and they were shipped by the carloads and carloads out of here. They had one big quarry right up here where the high school is now, and then some further out. But this one up here, as far as I know, all they ever mined was old streetcars. The little streetcars they unloaded.

Nolan: What about stone sheds? What were stone sheds?

Krieg: Stone shed. The Sauk Rapids Granite Shed is, you know where the Kosloske Motor Shed is, right across that, that building there--

Nolan: Benton Drive.

Krieg: And to the north of that, that was an immense frame building. That was all Sauk Rapids Granite Shed. They operated it for years. The big building burned down in about 1964, thereabouts. That was a big building. It was a big enough building so the cars and trains backed right into it.

Nolan: When did these quarries really stop producing or sort of die out?

Krieg: As time went on and granite give out—

Nolan: Was that the reason then? The supply?

Krieg: I'm sure some of the quarries gave out. They used to have a spur track running out of here into Sauk Rapids Township. There were a number of quarries out in there. They used to mine granite and bring it in and sell it and ship it. And some of it was also finished here in St.

Cloud. And, of course, in the St. Cloud area, there are still quite a few quarries. We've still got the Rex Granite Company which I believe is the biggest of any of them in this area in St. Cloud.

Nolan: Oh yah. That's still the biggest around.

Krieg: As far as I know, the most in mine quarries. That's quite a big operation.

Nolan: Can you go back to the kind of fuel and things that was used? When you came here, was it generally coal?

Krieg: Coal and wood.

Nolan: Coal and wood. Now, the coal came from, obviously--

Krieg: --shipped in.

Nolan: Shipped in, right. But did the wood come from this area?

Krieg: A lot of it. Farmers were clearing the land. When we came here, there was still a lot of wooded area. The land had to be cleared and they would cut cord wood and bring it to town and a few dealers would handle wood for the few people that needed wood, but most of the dealers handled coal.

Nolan: There was dealers though.

Krieg: In St. Cloud, the market was where the fire department is now. That was the big hay and wood market. They came through here, they'd probably stopped in Sauk Rapids and if there was no market for it, they would go to St. Cloud. There was the leading market for wood and hay.

Nolan: So that was really used for the power, the energy sources. When did electricity really start pushing those other things away?

Krieg: What do you mean – for heat?

Nolan: Well, for heat and --

Krieg: Well, electricity isn't so much for heat yet. Fuel oil came in about--

Nolan: Okay. Fuel oil first.

Krieg: Fuel oil came in the '30s. I put my fuel oil in in '34. I think I was the second one in town. The granite man had his fuel oil in a couple years before that. I was the second one to put it in. At least, I was the second on that I knew of. I didn't know of anyone that put in fuel oil.

Nolan: And that started gradually replacing the coal?

Krieg: That gradually replaced mostly the coal. You weren't too successful in firing a furnace with wood because wood doesn't hold the firs overnight. In their kitchen stoves, people would use wood, but in their heaters, they would use coal because coal, if you bank it right, it would hold you over night.

Nolan: To go on, are there any big names or prominent people that stick out in your mind as being important in the development of Sauk Rapids or the development of the county in general? Of people you feel should be mentioned in history? Could you mention some of those names and their importance?

Krieg: There was an old attorney that was an outstanding individual. He had to change to keep people on the right track. He was always around. If you thought something was wrong, he didn't care who stood with him or who didn't. He was right there to set them right.

Nolan: What was his name?

Krieg: Sen. John Sen. John B. Sen.

Nolan: Sin. As in s-i-n?

Krieg: S-e-n.

Nolan: S-e-n.

Krieg: He was a Swiss.

Nolan: When was he around?

Krieg: He died in about 1934, '35?

Nolan: What about some more people maybe? Anybody, I'm sure there's a lot, but anything that really sticks out in your mind.

Krieg: Well, there was a Lutheran clergyman, Agither. He came here and said he was a linguist, and that's the reason Trinity Church got to be where it was. Because of the congregation. He put in 36 years here.

Nolan: Agither. Just building Trinity Church?

Krieg: Well, originally, he was from the company members of his denomination for Benton, Sherburne, and southern Morrisson. And he finally got to Sauk Rapids. The St. Cloud

congregation was one of his – the original congregation over there – was one of his and he had that at one time, together with Sauk Rapids and the Popple Creek congregation, originally. He ended up here at Sauk Rapids until he passed on, but he was here for 36 years. The conditions of the Trinity, they've had four clergyman in 86 years.

Nolan: Gees, long stays.

Krieg: The man that's there now is there I think he's going on his eleventh year now. There's two of them there now, see. But he, because of linguistic abilities, when he died, he preached in three languages. He originally, he only preached German and Polish. I told you, he had them separate. And when the war came along – even before that he had already tried to preach in the English language and later on he did. He had to preach, sometimes three sermons a Sunday, not always. Afterwards, they got it where they would switch. One Sunday, they'd have Polish/German. Another Sunday, they had German/English and another Sunday English/Polish, and they kept it that way. But he put in a lot of hard work, I'm sure.

Nolan: Is there some more things you can maybe say about – you've been a member of Trinity Church, what--?

Krieg: Since 1905.

Nolan: Since you came here.

Krieg: See, he was a first cousin of my father's.

Nolan: He was?

Krieg: His mother was my grandfather's sister

Nolan: Agither's?

Krieg: Yah. My grandfather's sister was his mother. But many of the people that are here today, he was the man that got around, got them interested in the area. The area was just developing. I know lots of letters he wrote. Because he and my father were together a lot, I can remember often telling that so and so had written so and so and afterwards some people had moved in here. And a lot of people that came here, came because he had written.

Nolan: You've been involved through the years in the Church's State Board, the Trinity School Board, President of the Congregation, things like that. What were some of the events or things or some of the history of Trinity Church that you know of?

Krieg: Well, it's always been growing congregation.

Nolan: Any important events or public things that it's done? It's just a continuous growth.

Krieg: It's a continuous growth.

Nolan: Did it involve itself with a lot of other churches at all?

Krieg: Well yes, some of the other churches from around here, they helped me get started. Like the Faith Lutheran Church in East St. Cloud, and other churches. To get a start, the members that are in that area, they sort of encouraged them to join the Lutherans. Of course, you can't tell them where to go, but they can encourage them, those that were in the area to join.

Nolan: What about, you mentioned before something about a French Catholic Church. What was that about?

Krieg: They were there before the Trinity acquired the property. The property was acquired from the people in charge of the French part of the property.

Nolan: Did they acquire a church along with it or just the property?

Krieg: I don't think so. I think that was a log church. The first church that I saw was no longer on the site when we came here. This church has been enlarged. This is only about half the size it is now when we came here. The addition that's on there, was built in 1937. Unless you know it, you can't tell where the addition is. On the inside there are certain places where you can tell, but not on the outside. That's the only way you can tell. The frame church that was there was moved to another site and has long since been torn down.

Nolan: Where was that other site? You said it was moved to another site?

Krieg: Yah. The site was where the – it was used for a school. he old frame church, the first Lutheran Church was where the Trinity school gymnasium is now. That's where that building was. Then when the front part of the Trinity School was built, the part was torn down, it was dismantled. But there's also another church in town that was torn down and that's the Evangelical Church that's diagonally across the road from, say across the corner, Community school. There was an Evangelical church there at one time.

Nolan: When was that?

Krieg: Quite some time prior to my coming here.

Nolan: Do you know the name of it at all?

Krieg: I could probably find it. I've seen it. That house there was a church at one time.

Nolan: Now where is this?

Krieg: Diagonally across from Trinity School. There's a corner house, and the house right next to the corner house on the east side of St. Cloud on 3rd Avenue.

Nolan: Do you remember any history, if they told any history of the French Catholic Church? Was that the name of it – the French Catholic Church?

Krieg: Well, I don't know what the name of the church. Chances are they had a French name 'cause they were French.

Nolan: But it was a log church? You said it was a log church.

Krieg: That's what I suppose. It was a log building, and that's understandable because if it was built a long time before we came here, the sawmill, I don't know when the sawmill got here, chances are they built before sawmills had come in. and, naturally, they had logs. They didn't have the small sawmill in those years yet. That all developed as time went on.

Nolan: To get to some events in the history of Sauk Rapids, you talked a little bit about the drought and that there was something you mentioned before about a blizzard on April 25th, 1924.

Krieg: Yah, but that was over the whole state.

Nolan: What was so big about that? What was--?

Krieg: Everything was tied up for days. The blizzard came on a Friday and on Saturday there were snow drifts like this. The snow has come and gone, and the farmers were already out on the field. That's great! In the process of time, I don't think any of them finished yet. There were

drifts like that. The Highway Department in those years didn't have the equipment they have today, and they would grease it up and put it away. They'd already put it away and never brought it out. They let the sun take care of it. It was about, I would say, a Tuesday afternoon the following week, the traffic started to move and things began to go through. Everything was tied up.

Nolan: You say that's the worst blizzard you remember?

Krieg: That's the worst blizzard that I can remember. I can't ever remember the trains and cars and trucks and buses, they were ever off the trail that long. Of course, you also have to remember, today we have entirely different equipment. They didn't have the equipment. That also had to develop.

Nolan: That's right. Had you ever heard any stories or anything specific about the 1886 cyclone?

Krieg: At that time, Sauk Rapids was young with the railroad. Your turntable was just on this side of where the creek is up there. It's on this side of the creek. Also, there's a spur that ran halfway into the river next to that large mill that was in the river that was taken out by the cyclone. That was the cyclone. Foundations were here – but the time we came, they were there yet for many, many years. They were there yet after the bridge was completed. It was after that that the Maverick Construction Company got in there for the man that bought the property, and bulldozed that all down. Those were immense – well, those walls were about that wide, foundations. I've never seen any foundations like that. That would be about five to six feet wide, something like that. In those years, of course, your process was entirely different. They used the old millstones. You probably read about millstones or heard about millstones. The Bible is a place where it says about the millstones.

Nolan: Right.

Krieg: "It would be better if a man had a millstone around his neck." Boy, if a man had one of those around his neck, he wouldn't do much swimming, I can tell you that. Those millstones were about that far across. They're round and probably about that high.

Nolan: Several feet across?

Krieg: Several feet across. I would say about this far – the center was here – about that far across that would be about two and a half feet in diameter and I imagine, that there were a lot of them. It's too bad that some of them weren't saved because they would certainly be worthwhile for people, for future generations to see. The grain evidently, came down in the center and then they worked through the corregation fashion. I imagine the grain came there and there was a press stone on the bottom and they revolved and evidently, the grain, as it was being grounded, moved to the outside and there you had a sort of valley and there again it was some process so that it'd flow around in another and then be elevated up and then down. That's the way mills worked. I can't tell you the whole process, but I went through that many many a time, see. I was interested probably more than most people because Father had another mill, but that was entirely different. Those were steam rolls or steel rolls, I'm sure that probably the way it still does today. Although, I've never been in a recent mill that's been built. I know that previously done, there was also, and how they've got hammermills. I've never seen how a hammermill works, but they say a hammermill grinds your much finer and better than the roll mills did, so maybe mills have a different process today, too, I don't know.

Nolan: But you were more involved in it?

Krieg: I was more involved. I've never been in any recent mill, but I always used to go down there and wonder just what an immense thing that must have been. The railroad, the old spur track was still there where the cars backed up next to the mill, where evidently, they brought in the grain. Because, at that time, I'm sure there wasn't enough granaries here to be milled there. And then I'm sure, the manufactured parts again was taken out and I'm sure they couldn't sell it all here in that area. In years gone by, in the Glenwood area, some farmers told me how they came up here with oxen to the mill and also in the New Ulm and Fairfax area, it was down there in the '20's where people told me, mentioned where some of the old-timers said how they came up here with oxen and brought grain and took flour back. I also heard that they did the same thing up towards Moorhead, they would come down here. It was the only mill in the area in those first years. Now whether that was older than the big mills in Minneapolis or not, I wouldn't know, but I know that those people from those areas came here because I met people there.

Nolan: You meet a lot of people.

Krieg: I met people that went with oxen before the days of the horse. I can only remember, I've seen oxen, I've see oxen go and oxen would go for a mile and a half. In an hour's time, an oxen would go from an hour and a half, will go a mile and a half to two and a half. That's their rate. It's much slower than a man walks.

Nolan: Yah, right. Nice and easy.

Krieg: If you have a pair, they can walk about three and half miles an hour – three and a quarter.

Nolan: When were oxen prominent?

Krieg: Well, in the early days. You had the oxcarts and the oxcart used to travel the route that the present railroad had. The railroad was built on the old oxcart, trail and then after the oxen were through, they had the stagecoaches came through here, and I'll tell, you, where the Sauk Rapids park is in the north end, they used to have big stables. That's where they used to change horses, some of the old-timers told me.

Nolan: Where was this?

Krieg: Where the Sauk Rapids Municipal Park is. That's where they had the stables where they would change horses on the stagecoaches.

Nolan: Oh yah? Do you know when that was at all or --?

Krieg: Previous to the railroad.

Nolan: Previous to the railroad.

Krieg: When the railroad came in here, you'd have to look that up. The railroad was here in 1886 when the cyclone came along. I don't imagine it was here too many years yet.

Nolan: Probably in the '70's came the stagecoaches – '60s.

Krieg: Maybe the seventies.

Nolan: The courthouse change was a big incident in the history of Sauk Rapids or Benton County. Can you remember specific things about that or stories about that?

Krieg: It was already moved when I came.

Nolan: It was moved when you came.

Krieg: Yah, that was already in 1905. I think they moved around 1903 or something like that. The old courthouse was still here and the old courthouse was located where the tennis courts are down there, across from Morrey's. Do you where that is?

Nolan: Yah.

Krieg: That's where the courthouse was. That burned about 1960.

Nolan: It was right across from Morrey's. Okay. You came here then shortly after it had moved. That whole process had happened. But can you remember some of the feelings of the time about that, you being a Sauk Rapids resident?

Krieg: Well, they were rather heated. They say a man by the name of Foley, founded Foley. He first tried to build up Foley. He got Great Northern to put in a stop with a coal change and also to change the water in the engines. And after that, he went up to the courthouse and they tell me that after the election that beer kegs were all over the country and supplied everybody with beer. That is what they did, that's the way they did it in those years. Brought a lot of votes that way. Of course, when it comes right down to it, Foley in those years, was well centered and well located. Sauk Rapids was only a small place and St. Cloud was only a small place. It was small when we came here. Now look at the population of Sauk Rapids. Then it was a thousand or so, I'm sure that's a pretty good size. East St. Cloud not that big at the time.

Nolan: Do you remember some of the feelings at the time because of the incident? Was there hostility or something?

Krieg: Oh, you've always got some of that. There still is. Well, it isn't like--there was some high fever.

Nolan: Okay, then, we've covered pretty much what I had in mind. Is there some things you feel are important or some things that you'd like to about or say that, either development of the county or Sauk Rapids.

Krieg: Well, Father was a miller by trade, and bread baked by, from his flour, two years in succession won the State Baking Contest.

Nolan: Oh yah? Well, that's interesting.

Krieg: Two years in succession. I can't tell you – I think it was both '15 and '16, yah, it must have been '15 and '16. It probably would have been a third year. The teacher under whom these youngsters got their training, when this girl was ready, she said that if she didn't win that something unforeseen would have to happen if she didn't win because here record she said was so much better than the other two. Everything went fine. They got down there. The night before the baking contest, one of the big Minneapolis mills came in and offered her a big amount of money is she'd use their flour. They said you know you can't take flour from that area. Of course, she didn't win the contest, but they still came there because they weren't selling very much flour in this area. So the girl didn't win. There's no way of knowing whether she would have, but the teachers kept saying that because of her record, there's no way she could lose unless something unforeseen, something radical, happened, and it did happen.

Nolan: Did you say she used the other flour?

Krieg: She used the other flour the night beforehand. The night before, they got in there with a bunch of money and their flour.

Nolan: Did she win, did you say?

Krieg: She didn't win.

Nolan: She didn't.

Krieg: You can't take another flour night before the contest. Now, what all they told her, I don't know, but it was quite an amount of money in those years. I don't know if I'd blame her.

Nolan: But your Father's flour had won. Who cooked that then – the local baker?

Krieg: Two girls from the local high school the two previous years. This girl was also from the local high school at the time. The teacher said that her record was so much better than the other two. They'd been saying all the time 'That girl just can't lose unless something terrible happen.

Nolan: And something happened.

Krieg: But the way they tell this --

Nolan: Get a story out of it. Well, was there anything else?

Krieg: Oh, I'm sure there's lots of other things yet.

Nolan: Nothing right now?

Krieg: Well, your river would, each spring or during the summer would fill up with water. They floated logs down here. I don't know if anybody told you that.

Nolan: Yah, right.

Krieg: Did they tell you that?

Nolan: Go ahead. Go into it.

Krieg: It would fill up to the point where things would be so dammed up. The jumpers would crawl across there on logs, see. That's how bad things were. And the log drivers would come through and release them and in some cases, they only had to release certain logs and things would go again.

Nolan: What about the rapids? Is that where they would clog up?

Krieg: That's where they almost always clogged up. Below that very few would clog up. Some of them did. And also, there were a lot of deadheads that would sink during the flow down. I don't remember just how far they were taken down the river, but they were taken down to some sawmill. But oh, some deadheads would sink as time went on, and then in the '20's, a small sawmill was set up near Wilson Park and they sawed for several seasons. They had fellows that took the boats in the river and they dug out all these deadheads and sawed them up. Sawed up a lot of lumber. Enormous amount of deadheads were deposited in that river.

Nolan: A lot of wood.

Krieg: Yah.

Nolan: Well, that's about it, and that concludes our interview today with Mr. Krieg.

Krieg: I don't know what else to say.

Nolan: Well, maybe in the future some things will come up.

Krieg: Yah, if something come up, or if you've got any questions--.

Nolan: Thanks.

This concludes this interview.