

Interview with Jack Kersting

March 30, 2011

Conducted in the Kersting home, Offerle, Kansas

Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff, Kinsley Library

Joan: Jack, can you give us your full name?

Jack: Jack Francis Kersting.

Joan: Where do you currently reside?

Jack: At 10645 136 Road, rural Offerle.

Joan: When and where were you born?

Jack: I was born on a farm in rural Augusta, Kansas, June 22, 1930.

Joan: What were the names of your parents?

Jack: My dad's name was Henry Fred Kersting, and my mother's name was Frances Willa. Her maiden name was Shockey.

Joan: And the names of your grandparents on both sides.

Jack: Grandpa Kersting was Henry Kersting and Grandma Lena died in childbirth, so I didn't know her. Then on mother's side, it was William Shockey and Frances Clapham, maiden name was Clapham.

Joan: Can you describe the makeup of the household that you grew up in?

Jack: We had three brothers and actually had five, one of them died before I was born. We lived in rural Sedgwick County right outside of Derby. We all went to Spring Creek School, a rural country school. That school closed when my youngest brother was, I think, in the 8th grade. I was still in high school, and I graduated high school in '48. So, he went to Derby to school. My older brother, like myself, went to Wellington High School. We had an aunt that taught down there. At that time, they thought Wellington could provide a better education than Derby. Derby was just a small school. Fred is my oldest brother, Herman, the next brother, went to El Dorado and lived with an aunt and uncle in El Dorado.

Joan: So the brothers were...

Jack: Fred, Herman, Jack and Berton. The oldest brother, I only ever heard the name of Sonny. That's all. He was born in '26 and died in '29. I was born a year later.

Joan: What did he die of?

Jack: You know, I never asked the folks. I don't know. But my brother Herman was in the marines and he was in the process of an amphibian landing in California, close to L.A., at Camp Pendleton. His amphibian craft overturned, and he died.

Joan: So he was in training.

Jack: Well, he was just out of training and they were using him as an instructor. He had just graduated the previous May, so he wasn't 19 yet. Oh, he could have been 19, but was just six months out of high school.

Joan: That was tragic.

Jack: My mother never recovered. I know I always thought that she just never...well, that's hard for anybody.

Joan: And your dad was a farmer?

Jack: No, well he started out farming and the Depression caught up and that's when we moved to rural Derby. I was two years old. From then, he worked the WPA, he worked at Boeing, and then after the war, he was a handyman around town. He did all kinds of building work, roofing and adding rooms, things like that.

Joan: Do you know what he did for the WPA?

Jack: He worked at a school in, I think it was Garden Plain. He worked at Lake Afton, when they built Lake Afton. As a matter of fact, he took us three older boys with him one evening. Fred and I, he told us to stay out of the water, but you know, I think you know kids. We went in the water and they had a trench in the water. We fell off of into that trench. Herman ran down and told the people that, "They're in the water! They're in the water!" My dad couldn't swim, but he jumped in and pulled us out. After that, you couldn't take kids on your job. But he took us several places. We were also at a sand pit and we were fishing. A man caught a carp in the sand pipe when they were pumping, and they gave that to us. Oh, they couldn't have given us anything better. We went home and showed Mother our fish.

Joan: We heard from another interview that people ate carp at that time.

Jack: Oh yes, of course the folks warned us because they're bony. So we had to separate the bones.

Joan: And you were pretty young, so you probably don't remember a lot about the Depression, do you?

Jack: No, and you know, as I look back on it, it was some of the best years of my life. I didn't know things were hard. We got along. I'm sure if my folks were here, they could tell you the hardships. Some of the exciting things were, well I was old enough to remember the merchants in Derby got somebody to come in and show movies every Thursday evening or so. That was the highlight of the week! The folks always took us in to see the movies. Of course, it was all outside movies, and I remember one time the wind came up, and I remember the wind coming up, so I'm assuming they had to shut the whole thing down.

Joan: Describe an outside movie. This isn't a drive-in.

Jack: No, they put up a big screen and people just drove up and parked around it in their cars,

like they do at small town football games. The kids got out, and some of the parents did too, got out and they spread blankets out on the ground and sat there and watched the movie. Of course, he went from town to town to do that; that was how he made his living. I don't particularly remember any of the movies. I just remember the good times that we had, going to the movies.

Joan: What about World War II, do you have memories of that? You're getting a little older then.

Jack: Yes, I remember the Sunday the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Then I remember the stories that the newspaper covered: the Death March of Bataan. We had a Kinsley man in that. The paper would publish these stories that people would report or write up. I can't remember the man's name that was in Europe that was a G.I. that started the comic strip.

Rosetta: Mauldin. Bill Mauldin?

Jack: Yes. So those things I remember.

Joan: Do you remember any of the Victory gardens or the metal drives or any of that sort of thing?

Jack: Oh my yes. We were involved in that. We'd go out and take any metal we could find. We had our little filling station there in Derby. She collected stuff; people brought it in. Rubber tires, just anything. Grease! I think every family kept the grease.

Joan: You mean like bacon fat?

Jack: Yes, mainly bacon fat. Any grease from the cooking stove. It was used in making gun powder. In making explosives anyway, I'm not sure how it was used. But yes, and the ration stamps. We had so many. You could get so many gallons of gas a month. We had to haul our drinking water from the old Spring Creek School, which was a mile and a quarter away, and we used milk cans. We needed one milk can, and I remember Mother going into the office who controlled all this, and she begged them for a milk can. They said, "You're not producing milk. We can't give you one." I remember Mother saying, "You give me a milk can, and I'll put milk in it!" At that time, we were buying milk from a neighbor, but shortly after that our dad got a cow. But we got the milk can. I don't know if they felt sorry for her or whatever, but anyway, she got the milk can. We would put on the floor of the back seat three ten gallon cans and go up to the school and fill those 3 ten gallon cans. Pump it by hand. That would last us until it was gone, then we'd go back again. We had to do that during the war too, so that took gas. Of course, my dad worked at Boeing, and they carpooled a lot back then. There were two neighbors that rode with my dad, and back then the roads were mud. They had no sand on them, and those ruts would get so deep. I know one time, we traveled that mile to get to a rock road, which is named Rock Road in Wichita now. We wore out the clutch on the car, going that mile through that mud. We used to have snow storms, blizzards, and the roads were just full of snow. You couldn't go anywhere, and pretty soon, sometime a few days later, here would come this Cat with a snowplow on it. And you know, a Cat takes an hour to go a mile, I don't know how long. They were so slow, but the neighbor man ran it. He got out as quick as he could and opened the roads. After he pushed up those drifts, you could drive a car through them, and you couldn't see the car. It would be higher than the car. It was a good life; I just had a great time.

Joan: So, we've got you graduated from high school, I'm trying to think, that would have been

in about '48?

Jack: '48, from Wellington High School.

Joan: And then, are we up to your service years about?

Jack: No, I went to Wichita University from the fall of '48 until the spring of '51. I don't remember the courses I was taking. I had visions of maybe being a coach. I know I was taking some physical ed. classes.

Joan: So you were an athlete in high school?

Jack: Well, not really.

Joan: Now you're being modest.

Jack: Well, I tried, but I was a country boy that went to a school where I knew nobody and nobody knew me. The boys that were in that school grew up together. They'd known each other from birth. So, it was kind of hard to fit in. I know I was shy and never put myself forward. But I went out for football. I played in one game and got knocked down. They took me out, and I never played again. So, it was exciting. We followed the teams. We had everything. The last year, they put in baseball. I went out for baseball, but didn't make the team. You could go out for any of them, football, basketball, track...those were the main things.

Joan: So you went to Wichita U. in sort of liberal arts with maybe that idea?

Jack: Yes.

Joan: How were you paying for college?

Jack: Well, I worked through. I always worked. I worked for my uncle on the farm. As soon as I could drive a tractor, I was driving a tractor for him. Then, through the summers, when I was going to college, and on Saturdays, I worked with my dad. We got \$1 an hour, so I made \$8 a day on Saturday. That would carry me through until the next Saturday. I did buy a car. It was a '41 Oldsmobile with an automatic transmission, and I was king of the walk. But eventually, I was in the Navy and the front wheels of that car got into problems. It cost so much to fix it, and I took it around to the salvage yard. I think I got \$75 for it when I got rid of it because I was getting ready to go into the Navy.

Joan: So you were in college, and you made the decision to go into the Navy. Is that it.

Jack: I did. The decision was forced on me. I was either going into the Navy or I was going to be drafted. The draft board gave me the time off to enlist in the Navy, and the Navy took me. There were four of us local boys went to the Navy together.

Joan: And this was during the Korean War.

Jack: Right, this was during the Korean War. And I was a coward; I didn't want to go in the Army and get shot at, so I went into the Navy. I was never on board ship. Four years in the

Navy and I was never on board ship. But that was why the four of us decided we'd rather go in the Navy than in the Army.

Joan: So what did you do in the Navy while you were not on a ship?

Jack: I was in Communications. It was all...well, to get into that, you have to be approved by the FBI. You had to give references of folks at home and then they'd check with those people. I don't know what all they did, but I know that to get into that phase of the Navy, you had to be approved by the FBI. They checked you out.

So we were on Adak (*an Aleutian island, part of Alaska*); we were checking the Russian's radio. We were spying on their communications, which they were doing to us at the same time. They didn't tell us anything they'd find; it was all in Russian. But they trained a bunch of people, and my brother-in-law was one of them that they trained. They could type the Russian signal, whatever it was. I remember that the typewriters had Russian characters on them. Aafter they typed them, they were sent someplace and deciphered. I don't know if we ever found out any good information or not, but I'll tell you, we sure had a lot of antennas all over that island. We never missed a message, I don't think. But I have no idea if we did any good. But we got paid for it, and I wouldn't have missed it, the four years. I didn't like it, while I was there, a lot of it. But it was a great experience. I still communicate with one of the fellows I knew in the Navy. One of them just died here this past year, so I didn't realize it, but they're all getting old! But anyway, I had a good time. I got out and drove from Cheltenham, Maryland, home. I bought a car from one of the boys there that wanted to sell it; it was a '48 Ford Convertible. I drove it home and the next fall enrolled in K-State.

Joan: And then you were on the G.I. Bill?

Jack: Yes, I was on the G.I. Bill. So I was at K-State from '55 till the spring of '59. I met Marilyn in '58.

Joan: And she was attending K-State also?

Jack: Yes, and we were married in '59. We moved to the farm. We lived over at the *Beeler* Ranch, which is southwest of Kinsley.

Joan: Before we go on, did you graduate from K-State? And what was your degree in?

Jack: I was in crops and soil: agronomy.

Joan: So it was good to meet somebody who knew something about farming.

Jack: Well yes! But I didn't care what she was interested in; I was interested in her! And then I went on and got my masters because Marilyn had a year to go yet. And I was offered the position as...I know I got paid by the school for my master's work, which was in sorghum. Then I graduated the December after we were married. So I graduated in December of '59.

Joan: So you were at K-State one year after you were married?

Jack: Yes, well, yes we were married in June of '59...so yes it was a year, wasn't it? In June of '59, and I came here in December of '60. The snow year. There was more snow; I never saw so

much snow.

Marilyn: We would have come out here in December of '59, so maybe six month at school.

Jack: Yes, but Kalen was born in '60, and we were living with your folks when we came out here. So we came out here in...well, maybe it was December of '60, but it was...okay. You're right.

Joan: But you were married here, in the country here. Was it Zion?

Marilyn: Zion Lutheran Church.

Joan: So that was your home church.

Marilyn: Yes.

Joan: And then went back up to finish up, and you had to finish school, and you had to finish your masters. And then you came back.

Jack: We came out here, and Marilyn's dad had told me before, he said, "If you want to come out, you can farm this farm where we're living now." So I said, "We'll do that."

Joan: Was he ready to retire? Or did he have other land?

Jack: No, he had other land. I don't think Dad ever did retire; he just kept going. He was quite a gentleman. He was unique. I think I saw the man mad once. I don't remember if it was at me or who or what, but nothing really ruffled him. I'm sure he was concerned about things, but he...that was Harry Froetchner, he was a real gentleman. Anyway, Kermit (*Froetschner*), that's Marilyn's brother, planted the crop in the fall of '59, and we harvested it in the spring of '60, and that was our first crop. Then we used Harry's tractor and implements...

Joan: What kind of tractors and implements were you using at this time?

Jack: John Deere. Well, the combine was an International.

Joan: The tractor was open-cabbed?

Jack: Oh yes, we didn't have cabs on tractors until I bought a 4020. It was a '68 tractor. It was built in 1968, and I think I probably bought it in '75 or '76. But Dad's tractor was an 830 John Deere, and it had a hand clutch on it. Of course, my uncle had John Deere's and hand clutch too, but I'd never had any that big. So it was interesting.

Joan: About how much land were you farming, or helping to farm?

Jack: Let's see, there were 338 and 160 at that time, so almost 500 acres.

Joan: And the Froetchner family harvest together and all of that?

Jack: Oh yes, and for a number of years. Dad rented most of the ground that he planted, he

rented. So we cut that first. Then we cut...well, he bought land and had his other boys, they farmed that land. That was the Mathew Ranch, up north of Ardell. So they farmed that, and we farmed this, and Dad farmed his.

Joan: And the crop was wheat and...?

Jack: Wheat and corn. Dad had some irrigation that he put in back in the '30's. Real early. It wasn't much, but he used it for ensilage. He planted sorghum on it, and then they planted corn

Joan: But most of it was dry land in the '50's and '60's?

Jack: Most of it was dry land, everything was except for that maybe 30 acres that Dad had, which was irrigated by trench irrigation. Whatever needed done was done, whether it was 110 degrees and the sun was shining and the wind was blowing or whether it was cold. Whatever needed done, was done. And we only used Dad's tractor, so we had to work around each other. He was very generous and let us use it for a number of years until we bought one. Then, later on several years later, somebody wanted to sell a 151 International. It's what we used; it's what Dad had. Somebody had another one, so I bought it. So we had two combines there for a while. Then we went on to Masseys and wound up with John Deeres.

Joan: What were your yields in the '60'? I know it's a range, depending on the year.

Jack: I'm going to guess somewhere in the 30's (*bushels an acre*). Only one year do I remember a real crop failure. I can't tell you the year, but our wheat made 3 or 4. As a matter of fact, I was ready to give up on it, but Dad said, "No, you go ahead and cut it." And I know the Offerle Co-op talked about the wheat was so low, so short, the combines went down, and they would get cow manure in the wheat when they hauled it into the elevator. So it was a bad year. But I can't place the year. I know early, when we were married, I worked for the (it's the FSA now) but it was the agriculture office there in Kinsley, for the government, measuring crops. We had to measure, then go out with a chain and measure the chains on how big the fields were. You were very limited in the amount of wheat you could plant. If you got over it (there was a little give or take) but if you got much over they really landed hard on you.

Joan: And why was this?

Jack: Well, it was a law, basically.

Joan: There was too much wheat and they didn't want to have too much?

Jack: No, every farmer was allowed to have so many acres, regardless of what it made, you could plant that many acres. Of course you didn't have to plant that many, but you couldn't plant over that. We had to go out in the mud. I remember up on Joe Heinz's place, there right west of Ardell. He had big old mud holes, and we had to go out and measure out those mud holes, so he wouldn't get counted as wheat planted. So we did that wherever they were, but I just remember Joe Heinz's place up there.

Joan: But you don't know why you were limited?

Joe: Well, it was just a government law, the department of agriculture. But it's always been.

You've only got so many acres that you can plant. In these later years, it's been different, but for the biggest share of our farming, we were limited. We could plant so many acres of wheat, and if their records showed that we planted 160 acres of wheat, that was what your wheat allotment was based on for years and years. If you planted...I know one year I planted some oats. It was bad because that year they used those oats as part of my base...and oats is not a crop that you want to raise in this country. But I had planted oats, for whatever reason, and I had an oats base for years, and it was worthless as far as financial.

Joan: If you bought more land, it would depend on what that had been in wheat previously?

Jack: The history of that land. We bought this quarter down south of us from Marilyn's uncle, and I don't know what the base was on it, but it had a base of wheat on it, and that was what we could plant. But once you got that farm, you could combine the two farms. You could take that acreage and combine it with our farm and then we had that much more acreage we could plant. We had more choice of where to plant, but you still couldn't plant any more than that.

Joan: So you weren't irrigating in the '60's. How about fertilizer or pesticides? Were you using those?

Jack: You know, I don't remember. We used very little pesticides, but yes we used fertilizer, mainly dry nitrogen and phosphate. This country, at that time, didn't need any potassium. When I was going to college, anything west of '81, all the people talked about was nitrogen. It had everything else, but over the years we used it up, so now we have to add to it.

Joan: Did you do animals at all?

Jack: We had cattle; we had a cow herd. We would buy calves in the fall and feed them through. Sometimes we'd sell them in the spring and sometimes carry them through later to summer. A couple times we bought...we had several pens of cattle we put in the Ford County Feedyard. It was just two years. One times it was steers, and one time it was a bunch of heifers. It came out even or ahead, whatever it was we didn't lose money on it, so that was neat. But at that time, we didn't have much of a cow herd either, we only had a few.

Joan: About how many head are you talking?

Jack: We usually would try to have a 100 to 125 calves that we bought in the fall. One time we had about 40 cows.

Joan: And you were raising the ensilage or whatever to feed them through the winter.

Jack: Oh yes, we raised all of our feed. We got out of the cattle business in '85 or '86, when I went to work at Crustbuster. But in the late '60's or early '70's, we were in a hog program with Purina. We raised hogs for five or six years. I can remember selling hogs for \$13 a hundred. Just a few years after that, I can remember it went to \$55 a hundred.

Joan: How many hogs did you have when you were raising hogs?

Jack: Well, we had 20 sows, at two litters a year, we'd probably get. We didn't have real good luck with raising the baby pigs. We also would buy baby pigs or feeder pigs. I used to haul

from here to Great Bend because at Great Bend you could sell them grade and yield. I'd take them to Great Bend the same time that Dodge was having their hog sale. Invariably we beat Dodge by \$1.50 to \$2.50 a hundred. So we'd take ten hogs, which would average about 240 lbs. apiece to Great Bend. So we always thought it paid, and gas was 24 cents a gallon!

Joan: It makes a difference.

Jack: I used to take 55 gallon drums, take two of those and arrange them on a rack above the hogs and I'd fill them up in Great Bend for 24 cents a gallon.

Marilyn: At Pawnee Rock, they had the cheapest gas.

Jack: Lots of times we'd fill them right there in Pawnee Rock along the highway, they had a little station. So we took advantage. But we got out of the hogs in '73 or '74, somewhere along in there, and never raised them again. We had a few sheep at one time, and my daughter had horses while she was here. That herd grew, and finally she went her way and we had to get rid of the horses. We didn't have feed, and horses, as people are finding out now, they're not a money maker. So we got out of the horse business.

Joan: And you were having your children in the sixties. You had four children. Did you have a milk cow? Or did you not go that route?

Jack: When we were living at the Beeler Ranch, my dad quit milking. He and mother moved to town in '62, and he gave us his milk cows, which was three or four, maybe five. So we bought an electric milker and we milked cows and raised chickens and eggs and peddled them around Kinsley. So one time I sat down to figure out how much we were making on cream and milk. We had our own, so I didn't count that, but we were making about 10 cents a day. So we got out of the milking business. But my folks lived in Derby, and we'd go down to see them for two or three days, and then we had to have somebody milk the cows, and it always fell on Dad and Marilyn's brother. That was part of it, but the main thing was we were tied down twice a day and weren't making anything. I didn't mind milking; it was just the fact there wasn't any money involved with it. So, we quit that. When we moved over here, we had chickens for a while, but we got out of that too. Now we don't have anything but dogs. And we rent our pasture, that's why we don't use it.

Joan: Okay, and your children went to school in Offerle?

Jack: They all went to school in Offerle and then, of course, to Kinsley. Kalen started school in '66, and it was either '66 or '67 when they consolidated. But the grade school was left in Offerle, so all of our children went to grade school in Offerle.

Joan: So Marilyn, during the '60's you were a housewife?

Marilyn: Yes.

Joan: With four children, that would be enough. We're kind of interested in the consolidation process. Do you remember how that went?

Jack: Well, it didn't bother the kids any, I was sure of that. But it was just one of those things

they just accepted. But, to this day, there are people in this community who are unhappy. One of the main things is that the schools very seldom talk about Kinsley/Offerle. People in the Offerle area like to be acknowledged that their school is now in Kinsley. Similar to the school just east of Kinsley. There was friction here; there is friction there. Of course, back years ago, they played all these schools, Windthorst, Spearville, they played. There was pride in their own school, and animosity towards your opponent. Part of that still exists, but for the most part people....

Joan: Do you think it helped that they left the grade school in Offerle?

Jack: Oh yes, that made a world of difference in things. People basically still had their school. Every once in a while the high school would play their ball games in Offerle. So this all helped. Of course, I was an outsider really. It didn't bother me, and I don't think it....

Marilyn: It didn't bother me that much either. My kids were happy that they were in the system. They accepted it, and I did too. It was just like these little school now; they can't make it on their own. But we had the 50/50 league, which was three schools up on the north 50 Highway and three down here. We had Spearville, and Windthorst and Offerle and up north was Rozel, Burdett, and Hanston. So you know, we had a lot of close people we could play with our sports.

Joan: Before the consolidation?

Marilyn: Yes.

Jack: The people playing sports that close together. They knew, the kids knew the kids. It wasn't like people from Wichita coming out here to school, or myself going to Wellington. The kids knew each other. I always said that the kids never had any problems, but the adults sure did.

Joan: I'm trying to remember, were you on the board?

Jack: Yes, I was on the school board.

Joan: What years?

Jack: Well, I think I went on in '67, and I was on for eight years.

Joan: So you were on right after the consolidation?

Jack: Yes, right after. And you know, as I remember, there was talk about giving Offerle credit. Do it all Kinsley/Offerle, but it just...people accepted it. I had to accept. When I came out here, Offerle had two grocery stores, a lumber yard, a drug store, and one fellow put in a pet store. There were two filling stations. What was in the beauty shop? Was there a locker in there, where there's a beauty shop now? There was a hardware store, there was a café.

Marilyn: There was a barber, but I think that was before your time.

Jack: Yes, that's right, there was a barber.

Marilyn: There was the pool hall.

Jack: A pool hall, a liquor store.

Joan: This was the 1960's, this was the Offerle community?

Jack: Right around '60. Harry Brown put in the liquor store, whenever that was legal, he put that in. But that was originally the pool hall. And that was there when I moved out here.

Marilyn: The barbershop, that was probably gone when he came out.

Jack: But we lived close to Kinsley, and we did all our business in Kinsley. And I never really got acquainted with Offerle, because I would go into Offerle to the Co-op and the lumberyard, and then I lived over south of Kinsley.

Joan: Maybe you should tell us, exactly where south of Kinsley were you living?

Jack: Okay, Beeler Ranch was two miles west of Kinsley and three miles south, on the west side of the road.

Joan: And you were there until what year?

Jack: We moved here May 1, 1965. So we'd have been over there for five years.

Joan: And then when you came here, did you start to use the Offerle Co-op and that?

Jack: I always used the Offerle Co-op because we hauled our crops there. And Dad, Dad was on the board then which didn't make any difference to me, I didn't know any differences about co-ops then. But that's where we did our crops, bought our fuel and everything was at Offerle. That I knew, but I didn't have anything to do with the other businesses, the drug store...

Joan: So even when you were living south of Kinsley, the crops came here? Or did they go to Kinsley?

Jack: No, they went to Offerle.

Joan: All the crops came to Offerle, but your other business you were doing in Kinsley for your personal needs.

Jack: You know, groceries.

Marilyn: We rented the house.

Jack: It belonged to John Froetschner. We did our doctoring, our drug store, grocery store, it was all done in Kinsley.

Joan: Because it was closer.

Jack: And I didn't have connections with Offerle, Marilyn did. My connections were in Kinsley. I knew more people in Kinsley than probably I did in Offerle because I was just involved there.

Joan: Church, now, what church were you attending?

Marilyn: Zion, Lutheran.

Joan: So you still came over here to church.

Marilyn: Right.

Joan: What was the church like in the '60's?

Jack: Full. It was full. Everybody...the Kurth family had five children, and your family had four, and Dora's (*Froetschner Wetzel*) family had five, Carl (*Froetschner*) had four. That was just in our family! And then with all the Weiss' and Molitors...it was, I don't know, 100 to 180 people came every Sunday.

Marilyn: Lots of children in Sunday school. Now we're down to 40.

Joan: And you had a full time minister. There was never a school with Zion or earlier?

Jack: Years ago, there was.

Marilyn: Before my time.

Joan: Did the church provide some of your social life?

Jack: Oh yes, we'd have meeting there at the church.

Marilyn: Sunday school picnics.

Jack: A.A.L (*Aid Association for Lutherans*) meetings, which was an insurance company. They sponsored it, and we'd have the meetings. We'd have meals and refreshments at times. I don't remember much about Walther League, but the young people had the Walther League, which was a... there was a lot of activity in that church at that time. Weddings and funerals...

Joan: Services just on Sundays? Or did you have mid-week?

Marilyn: Just Sunday.

Joan: So, you were having children in the '60's, hospital? The Kinsley Hospital, or where were your children born?

Marilyn: They were born in Dodge.

Jack: At Trinity Hospital. We were living in Manhattan when Marilyn was pregnant with Kalen. They had a doctor up there that told us she wasn't pregnant, and that broke her heart. Then she found out she was. Dr. Baum was your mother's doctor? How did Dr. Baum...

Marilyn: I'm almost thinking that the doctor in Manhattan maybe recommended him.

Jack: Anyway, she started going to Dr. Baum, and he was such a delightful person to know, just as a person, and then as a doctor. And that's where her faith was as a baby doctor. I went most of my time to Dr. Atwood or Dr. Schnoebelen in Kinsley. Well, I was in the hospital once in Kinsley, other than that, well. Most of my health was taken care of in Kinsley.

Joan: And the kids were, after they were born?

Jack: Dr. Baum, in Dodge. We also doctored in Kinsley. Kalen was operated on by all three doctors: McKim, Atwood and Schnoebelen.

Marilyn: I guess we did take our kids, a lot of times, to Kinsley doctors. I think it was mostly my obstetrics and...

Jack: and when they were babies, take them up to get them checked out.

Joan: Let's see, what else do we want to know about Offerle?

Rosetta: You said the Mathew Ranch. Is that like Carol Mathew? That was her dad, and he had the cattle ranch.

Jack: Her father-in-law. Carol Mathew married Tom Mathew.

Rosetta: And they had the cattle?

Jack: Yes, he had Hereford cattle.

Rosetta: Okay, we have pictures of the Hereford cattle, but I wanted to make sure.

Jack: Yes, that's the same...

Joan: Were your kids involved in 4-H or anything? Or into farming?

Jack: They were in 4-H all their life.

Joan: What projects did they do? Animals?

Jack: Cooking...yes, it was kind of funny. I said, "Kids, let's get into cattle." So we bought steers and we picked steers out of the line. And that was quite an ordeal to teach a seven or eight hundred pound steer to lead. But they did a good job, and I had never done it. I didn't know. I remember, I probably embarrassed my kids to death. We needed halters, so I went to town and bought halters. Well, I bought horse halters. You don't put horse halters on cattle, but we even went to the 4-H show with them, and the judge said we really ought to get cattle halters for them. So anyway, but they did that. They did gardening, flowers, cooking, sewing...

Marilyn: I was trying to think if there were any of them in the art.

Jack: I don't remember any art, but Kalen was in horses. Just Kalen, was Laura? I don't think so, just Kalen.

Joan: Were any of you involved in 4-H as far as leading?

Jack: Yes, we both were.

Joan: What did you do?

Jack: I was gardening.

Marilyn: I think I was cooking, sewing probably. That's a long time ago.

Jack: We had a real good sewing, Mrs. Jerry Krumrey. She was an excellent teacher. But we had a lot of good ones. Wagoners were involved, and Mrs. Harold Katz was involved.

Joan: So it was a pretty big club. What was your club called?

Marilyn: The Trenton Workers. Does that name still exist today?

Jack: I think it still works.

Joan: Were there agricultural classes at the school? Do you remember? Or FFA?

Jack: There was in Kinsley, but there wasn't where I went to school. And we were trying to think of the man's name, it was Elson? He lived southeast of Kinsley and was their teacher in the '60's. I substituted a little bit and knew Keith Kirby, who taught Industrial Arts. He talked to the superintendent, so they asked me to substitute teach Ag because that's actually what I started with in K-State. They needed substitute teachers, and I told the superintendent, I said, "I do not have a teaching certificate." He said, "Let me take care of that." And that was the end of it. So I substituted during the '60's for several years.

Joan: Was this to supplement the farming income? Something to do in the winter.

Jack: Yes, we weren't rich, but we got along.

Marilyn: In fact, I think that when you did your measuring for the Ag Services, am I correct in that you got \$2 an hour, and that was good money.

Jack: Something like that.

Joan: What years were those?

Jack: Well, it had to be (because I was still living over there) so it had to be before 1965. Probably '60. I remember taking Kalen out and getting her to drive the pickup. She couldn't do it. I said, "Kalen, just stay in the middle of the road." She didn't want to.

Joan: How old was she then?

Jack: She couldn't have been over three or four. It didn't work out. But anyway, I thought if I'd take her and she could drive then I wouldn't have to walk back. Because we had to get out and walk, we had this chain thing that was 16.5 feet long, which measured an acre in half a mile. So

we'd measure out.

Joan: So you just kept moving that chain that was 16.5 feet.

Jack: Yes, we had little pegs that we'd run that stick peg in the ground and pull the chain through that peg.

Joan: That doesn't sound like a fun job.

Jack: Well, it wasn't much fun, but it paid.

Joan: Yes, two dollars an hour.

Marilyn: And it was pretty good wages.

Joan: So when did Offerle start to lose its businesses?

Jack: Well, the fire took out the drug store.

Joan: Do you know what year that was?

Jack: It had to have been in the '60's. And then... (*It was 1961*)

Marilyn: A lot of them just got older.

Joan: The proprietors were older and retired and nobody took over at that point?

Jack: Where the restaurant is now, used to be a hardware store. Oliphant's hardware. They sold out. I remember them selling out. Then the grocery on the south end, Basgall (Marilyn says it would be Bea Coats' family) I can't tell you for sure. I know that he died, and she ran it. I went in there, one time that I was in there, and she was running it. Then they sold out. She must have died, and they quit and had an auction. The Offerle Co-op sold their...they sold that in the '80's, their lumberyard, to Victor and Don Strong, Victor Kurth. Then in time, they moved to Kinsley and took everything to Kinsley. They bought the Ace Hardware over there and moved everything over there. Abner Offerle Store closed, and we used that for several years for consignment auctions. After Abner quit, Jerry Konrade ran the grocery store there for a while, and then we sold him out, and then we rented the building from Abner.

Joan: When did the grocery leave, about? Do you know what year?

Jack: Well, I started auctioneering in '77, so it had to be in the '80's that they closed, and that was the last grocery store. Then, Abner died and the family...we sold everything out of the basement for the Offerle family and sold the building. A fellow in Dodge bought the building and he had an antique store in there for a while. Then he sold the building to a fellow, I can't think of his name now (*Vic Bennett*). He married Mrs. Smith, anyway; he bought it.

Joan: So the declining starts in the '70's and by the early '80's and mid '80's you pretty much don't have any businesses left, except for the bank and the co-op.

Marilyn: The cafe has been wonderful. Charles Speck had it, he was real nice. And before that, A & V, Anne and Vincent Riggs had a real good restaurant with wonderful pies. Charles carried on that; he had good food and good pies. He moved, I guess is why, Charles quit.

Jack: Well, they sold it to Larry Leith. Rachel Leith, and she ran it for a while. It was closed off and on, and then these people that have it now, this Mexican family came from California and bought it. Nice people, we've eaten there a few times. We don't eat out much, but we've eaten there a few times. She buys our tomatoes and melons that we have. Just real wonderful people. Offerle is lucky to have people like that in their community.

Marilyn: They're lucky to have a café.

Joan: Now, you had four children. What are they doing now? Did any of them stay in the community?

Jack: Well, Kalen went from here to college and wound up as a bank examiner. Then she met Jeff Hahn at the Hanston Bank and they got married. She still examined for a while, then finally it didn't work, so she quit that. Now she's postmaster at Rozel. Kenton, of course, went to college, was a teacher, did plays. He loved acting, so he was the teacher at the Parsons Junior College, Lebette Junior College. Then he went to Bartlesville (*Oklahoma*) and opened an antique store.

One time he was driving home from Tulsa and listening to the radio, when they had the ad for people to teach in China. And Kenton just said, "I can do that." That was in June, I think. And the next January he was in China. He was there for maybe five years. Then he moved to Laos. And he's been there five years.

Cheryl went to college. She started out advising people who were in financial trouble. Then she married Bob Annan and she worked around Topeka, once at Hills Brothers Dog Food. Then they moved to Sabetha, Bob got a good job up there with Extru-Tech Corporation. Cheryl has worked for a dentist, chiropractor, a veterinarian and for about five years she had her own little gift shop, that was in Fairview, which is five miles from Sabetha.

Laura went to Dodge Juco (*Junior College*). Then she got married, and she was a para-professional in Lewis and also in Hanston. Then they separated, and she's now living in Jetmore working for the Hodgeman County District Court.

Joan: So half of your children have stayed in rural western Kansas. That's 50%.

Marilyn: Two of the girls are within half hour of driving.

Jack: Kind of unusual for this time.

Joan: Okay, what have you been doing with your life since 1970's say?

Jack: Well, we started auctioneering in 1977, and our first auction was in Kinsley with, I want to say *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

Marilyn: No, Alice Stetson was her name, but I don't know what her shop was called.

Jack: It was an antique store right across from the theater. And she wanted to sell out. Stanley Young and I were partners at that time. Then later through the years, we separated.

Joan: How did you get into auctioneering?

Jack: I read in the paper that the Dodge City Juco was offering a course in auctioneering. It was so difficult for me to think of going to auction school and spending two weeks away from home, when we had the chores, so I just took the course up there. There were seven or eight of us in the course, and I was the only one that continued it. But I enjoyed it and enjoy the work.

Joan: And you're still farming at the same time.

Jack: Yes, it's a part time job. And the first two years, I think the first year, Stan and I had something like 15 auctions. Well, Larry Carr has got his big place where people can take stuff, and he can hold it for them. Same way with Scott Brown. So it is pretty hard to compete against those two and Kirk's out west. All of them started years before we started. Scott Brown, I think his goes back into the '30's. Kirks started right after war, I think he told me in '48. Larry Carr started about '63.

Joan: What do you learn in auction school?

Jack: Well, you learn your chant.

Joan: Maybe we can get you to do some of that here!

Jack: My chant isn't something like you remember the auctioneer's song? It's nothing like that, but anyway, we spent a lot of time counting by 2 ½, by five by ten, by two upwards and then go back. We went through some "Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers" you know, this type of thing, to make you try to keep your...

(At this point Jack auctions off a ceramic Scotty dog sitting on the table to give an example of his auctioneering style.)

That's what we did up in school. He'd bring things to school, and he'd have us price them. He say, "Tell me what this is worth." And we never knew. If we were lucky, we got within a couple dollars. But I can remember one time he brought some soapstone sculpture. I thought I was pretty smart because we were into it. But what he said it was worth and what I said it was worth, we didn't agree by far. You never know at an auction because you don't know how bad this person wants it. You hope there's two there that want it, at least two. If not, well you know, we've sold a lot of things for \$1, sometimes boxes of things. And I question if they were worth that, but "Thank you, people, thank you!" But when we do an estate, we want to sell everything. Particularly if we moved it from the home because we don't want to move it back. If we don't sell it, it still belongs in that estate, so I lots of times will just bid 50 cents on something. It's sold, it's mine and the estate's out of it. So anyway, we've been doing auctions now for the last 34 years. Going on 34, it was probably in June that we had that first sale, I can't remember exactly. But anyway...

Joan: Does Marilyn help you with the auction?

Jack: Marilyn is what keeps the business going. She is the clerk, and when the bills are all paid, she takes care of the money. Our daughter Laura helps a lot as a cashier. Kalen does too.

Marilyn: When we first started, they all did.

Jack: Oh yes, we had all of them. I remember when Laura was six or seven years old. We'd been to Larry Carr's auctions a lot, and Larry was always saying, "Cheap, cheap, cheap," when he thought something wasn't...well, here is little old Laura, strutting around, talking to people there in Kinsley. We had something up, the Lewis boys were there, and Laura says, "Cheap, cheap, cheap!" and the Lewis boys busted out laughing. They were great people. I really enjoyed Bert and Buck Lewis. I bought a lot of stuff from them and sold them a lot of stuff. You always wanted to see them come because it may be just a quarter, but we got rid of it.

Joan: For our tape, the Lewis', why were they buying and selling?

Jack: Mrs. Schnoebelen called them "The Fleagle Brothers" because those boys, they bought anything and they took it out to the ranch and people would go out there to look for stuff. They told me, lots of times they'd put something back under a bench so it would look like it had been there for years. People would come out and, "Oh, look what we've found." They'd bring it over and buy it. Bert told me one time, he said, "We sold a blind horse one time. We told the guy buying it that he doesn't look too good." This was the Lewis boys; you should have been interviewing them.

Joan: So they had sort of a flea market?

Jack: Oh no, they just had a ranch out there that had a bunch of sheds.

Marilyn: People knew that they had things that they would sell. So they would stop by the Lewis' and see if they had something to buy.

Jack: I bought truck tires from them. Anything they could make money on, they bought. Then we had their sale, after the boys died. Buck's boy is a cattle buyer. He contacted us, so we had their sale. I think it was in January. I know I had some barrels around with some heat, wood fires to warm up. But it was a beautiful day for that time of the year, and we had quite a crowd. Of course, everybody knew Lewis's for miles around, and they all came.

Marilyn: And I think the sun was shining with no wind. You know, one of those January days that you couldn't ask for anything better.

Jack: I hate to say that was probably the most memorable auction ever, but right now that's the only one I can think of. I felt close to the Lewis boys, and I felt it was an honor they asked us to have it. But we have another auctioneer that helps us, and we have another boy in Dodge City that is a ringman and helps us. He knows a lot about antiques.

Joan: What's a ringman?

Jack: That's somebody that holds something up while you're selling it, and they also take bids. But you have the auctioneer, then you have the ringman or man, whatever it is. It is their job just to pick up stuff and be ready to go when something is sold. Then you have the clerk who records everything, and then the cashier who takes the money. Usually, within a week, we have the owner paid. We've always just gone, I know it's not recommended by legal people, but we've always told people that once you have us have the sale, we take everything, and we take the responsibility. If we get a hot check, we will take care of it. Legal people tell you that you can't do that, but fortunately we haven't had any. Oh, maybe a couple of them, but over the years I'll

bet we haven't lost \$50. The main problem is that people will leave before their last bill gets in. Usually after every auction we'll have about three to five tickets, once in a while it's more, for people who didn't pay. So we get their name and address and phone numbers and I write them a letter saying, "You owe us this much if you bought this item." And I put the little ticket in there. If they bought it, they'll pay for it, I think. But we've had people say, "I didn't buy it."

Marilyn: And we take their word for it. There's mistakes made in the clerking.

Jack: You know, 24, 56, 64 for instance. "54" well, maybe she thought I said "64". But, she's always stopping me and saying, "Whose number?" I forget to give her the number, and it's "What number is that?" And then, too, we get to where we think we know the number, a person's number, and we may not actually right at that time. "Oh, that's 33, Marilyn." And they don't say anything, and then we find out that 33 didn't buy it. So, there are little things like that happen all the time.

Rosetta: You really have to be really alert, for a long time.

Marilyn: Some of those sales last...we've had them as long as eight or longer hours.

Jack: Bill Froetschner's started at 10:00 in the morning and ran until after dark. That was in the spring, but probably should have had a two day sale. But golly, when you have a two day sale, people want to know what you're going to sell the first day and the second day. If you're going to have a two day sale, you'd better split it so they'll know. But we've never, I don't think we've ever had a two day sale. We've always managed to get ours done. We can sell about 90 items in an hour, so if we have a five hour sale, we have 450 or 500 items. We start at 10:00 and try to get done, hopefully, around 3:00 in the afternoon. Sometimes a little longer, sometimes a little less. It depends on the amount of items you have. That's probably the biggest thing. Well, in the '80's, I went to work at Crustbuster. I know there was a time in there when I drew unemployment because they laid everybody off. But then they went back, and when I went back the second time, the grass program was just going in. We built zillions of grass drills. They had everything in the building. They were ready to shut down when the government authorized the grass bill. They were ready to go with the grass drill.

Joan: What did you do for them?

Jack: I worked in what they called, "Plant 3". We made the parts, just made the parts. They shipped them over across the street where they welded them together and put the machines together. We took the raw material and made the parts, whatever they needed. Holes punched in, or bent, or whatever they needed.

Joan: And where is Crustbuster located?

Jack: In Spearville. Then I retired there in '92, when I was 62.

Joan: And you were still farming while you were at Crustbuster?

Jack: That's one reason we got rid of the cattle, and also the irrigated ground. Bud Horning rented it for several years, and then the Wetzels rented it.

Joan: I guess I never asked you, did you ever irrigate any more of your ground other than that 30

acres?

Jack: Yes, we irrigated 110 acres on the west side.

Joan: When did you do that?

Jack: Well, in '76 I think we drilled that well.

Marilyn: Also, we irrigated down south too.

Jack: Yes, we had a quarter down south that we had bought from Marilyn's *uncle (Bill Froetschner)*. Then we sold that, but we put a circle on that one down there.

Joan: Have you seen changes in the water? Have you had to re-drill wells or anything?

Jack: I did, but it wasn't the water's fault. The pipe the water comes up in, you pump it up in, got a hole in it and it was about 100 feet down. That hole hitting against the casing just wore a big hole. When it did that, the fill sand around the well came down in the well and filled two lengths of our circle up with sand. So we drilled another well right beside it.

Joan: But the water table stayed about the same.

Jack: Yes, the water table has remained the same, remarkably in this area. We're in Dakota sandstone here. We measure it every year and I don't think there's been a foot difference in all the years we've irrigated. We did irrigate about 80 acres right north of the house, but that well did not hold up to what they said it started. We had alfalfa out there one year, and it just couldn't water the alfalfa. Then the water people said you're irrigating more ground than you're entitled to. Then the government came out with a program to buy out your wells.

Joan: Retire them?

Jack: Yes, so we went ahead with that. It kept us out of trouble with the State, and we weren't getting enough water really to raise a crop. So that irrigation is abandoned. But the one over west, the Wetzel boys put a circle on, and they're irrigating 85 acres now.

Probably the highlight happened last year, we paid off our land loans. So the first time in 45 years, we've been married 50, we probably went under. I think it was in the mid '70's that we got in trouble and had to mortgage some land. We finally got out of it in 2010. We had a big burning of the mortgage.

I did substitute teach in the last ten years, and learned a lot about what teacher's put up with. I had a little kindergarten girl, they were sitting around, and I said, "Okay, we can all get up on our chairs now and go back to work." The little girl sat there on the floor and said, "Make me." A kindergarten girl! So, Jack told Marilyn when he came home, "If they ever call me again, tell them I'm busy, I'm dead, anything. I'm not going back into that class."

Marilyn: And I thought he had to have had a wonderful day because Kindergarten kids look up to their teachers.

Joan: Especially a man.

Marilyn: And he says, "If they ever call me again, tell them I died, tell I'm busy! I won't go back."

Joan: Well, you're a transplant into Edwards County, coming here as a grown man. How do you think your life has been affected living here?

Jack: Oh, I want to say that I've loved every minute of it. I suppose there were minutes that maybe I didn't love, but all in all, it's a great place to live. Actually we got all the amenities of life we need, or we're within driving range of it if we need that. It's nothing like...I've been reading a book on the history of Kansas, and they talk about how long it takes them to get from Kansas City to Medicine Lodge, things like that, five days. You know, I'll be going to Wichita tomorrow to the VA hospital, but everything else is just here. People have just been good to me.

Marilyn: Tell them how you felt when you first came out, how this area varied from Sedgwick County.

Jack: We were in Sedgwick County, on my uncle's farm. There were creeks. The fields were determined by the creeks, for the most part. Gee, I got out here and another thing, in Wichita, we lived right south of McConnell Airforce Base, and those big bombers used to come and just circle our house. They'd always come out, and when they circled, you didn't talk. You couldn't do anything. I got out here, and gee, no airplanes. And if there were, they were so high that it didn't bother you. Fields were quarters, very few fields in this area are cut up.

Marilyn: I was thinking more of the honesty of the people. You said you could see a tractor out in the field here, and back there that was really taking a chance.

Jack: Anything around Wichita that was out in a field or not tied down, even in your yard, you ran the risk of it disappearing. And out here, geez, I'd be in the field at nighttime, and "Come get me, Marilyn." We didn't have cell phones then, so I'd say, "Come over and get me about dark." And we'd shut things off and leave it there, and it would still be there in the morning. So yes, the people as a whole were different than around Wichita. You felt like nearly everybody out here you could trust. Back there, there were a lot you could, but....

Joan: People still leave things out in the field, don't they? I think they do when I drive around, and I'm always amazed, you know.

Jack: We had a neighbor, a man that lived just north of St. Mary's Church, had his tractor stolen in the last four or five years (maybe more than that because time gets away from me). And then, you hear and read about people that...well look at the aluminum and copper that's being stolen now. They're ripping off bleachers! I can't understand the people they sell this to. If I go in there with a truckload of bleachers! Anyway, we're living in a whole different world now. I worry about my grandkids.

Joan: How many grandkids do you have?

Jack: We've got ten. Everywhere from four years old up to, well, we've got great-grandchildren. Our oldest daughter adopted three children, she and her husband, and two of them have got children. So we've...

Joan: You've got a lot to keep track of.

Jack: Well, that's Marilyn's job!

Marilyn: I keep track of the grandchildren, but the greats, I don't know their birthdays.

Joan: What do you see for the future of Edwards County?

Jack: Well, I've said there's less people and less businesses. There'll be bigger farms. There'll be more consolidations and maybe even county consolidations. If and when we ever get out of this recession or depression or whatever they want to call it, I think things will stabilize. But until then, geez, just go down the streets of Kinsley and see how many businesses have disappeared in the last ten years.

Joan: What's the difference in the farming then and now, and what do you see in the future?

Jack: Well, farming, we're probably the smallest farmer in the area, really. We're not, I'm not...if you read the farm magazines, they've got this satellite, GPS, I think is what they call it. I'm not into that. We have so many technical things. They can tell spots in your fields where you need more nitrogen and others. While using GPS they can adjust automatically, this will adjust. Everything is just...my son-in-law has this GPS, and they just set it and they don't have to drive the tractor. They do, or there's always somebody in the cab. But once you get started on that degree or whatever they call it, it goes. When you get to the end of the row, of course, you've got to turn around. I don't know how that works, they may even have that to where it ends. But he told me, the first year they got it, they used it. And then the next year, they were going to put on fertilizer, it was for corn. They were planting corn. The next year, they were going to put on fertilizer, and it went right back to the same exact spots and went right down the row, just like they'd done before. We're going to see more of that, I think. We're going to see a lot of just very fine adjustments in the field where you need something or don't.

We are getting, which is quite a concern, I don't know if we've got it here, but this kochia is getting resistant to Roundup and those type of things. I just saw in the magazine, they showed a picture of that kochia growing in a field that had been sprayed. Everything else around it was dead, but that row where that kochia plant had rolled across that field and scattered its seeds, it left a trail of each plant. We see an awful lot of that, and we're going to see more of it. We even see it in our own health, people don't take all of their pills or something the doctor gives them and the germ or whatever it is becomes resistant. I know the hospitals are really concerned about this. So that's what I see in farming. I don't see a great change. No-till planting or farming is going to be more and more forced on us by expenses. This year, do I want to work this ground down here and go through the expense of diesel at \$3 a gallon, or do I want to just hire somebody to come in and plant it with no-till and then come in and spray it. We got some noxious weeds on it, so spraying will be an advantage to that point. So we're about convinced that we'll get somebody to come in and no-till it and then go in and spray it. You save moisture, too. You save soil. I know this winter, I'm sure you've seen it, the land blowing around different places? Well, we set here and didn't have to worry about it because our stubble was on the ground. Down east of here, we saw where you couldn't see clear to the river because of the dust. So, I think no-till is going to become more and more. Other than that, personally, the technology, I'm not using. Other than just those basic things. I'm not using any. If I get my soil test and it calls for 40 lb of nitrogen, the whole field get 40 lbs of nitrogen, whether it needs it or not. That's the way that I'm farming, now, and I probably will continue because I will be 81 in June. I've had several people want to rent the farm, I told Marilyn, hey, this is our first year out of debt. Let's do something! Maybe we can make a living and do something.

Joan: Any chance that a kid will come back?

Jack: No, maybe our daughter's husband, Jeff Hahn, may want it. But that's 26 miles from here, and I don't know. Several of the neighbors, of course the neighbors...every neighbors, even when we were looking for land, neighbor land was the best. We are farming some right north of Kinsley, Mrs. Lucille George's. She's dead, she died this last year, but we had her auction one time. I was helping Jerry Allison do some work for her, and she told me that the guy who was farming, taking care of their land, was quitting. So I asked her about Mrs. George. She told me who she was and where she lived. I started home, and then thought, I'm going back to talk to her. Well, she said, "I'm looking for that guy around Offerle that does auctions." And I said, "That's me!" And so we had her auction, and then I asked her, "Is anybody farming your land?" and she said, "No, and do you know, God must have sent you here, because that's been bothering me." And I couldn't believe it, with people all around the country ready to grab any land that's available. So we've been farming that for five or six years, at least. Now her daughter, Diane Brown, is in Wichita, so we're farming through her. That was an addition to our farm. And the low light in our lives, I guess, in the mid '80's we had to go take out bankruptcy.

Rosetta: There were a lot of people that did.

Joan: Was it crop failure, weather-wise, or...?

Jack: It was a lender. We had Farmer's Home, and they were so adamant that we were going to give them this ground, to settle up with them, and then we could farm it or buy it back if we wanted it. And that's when we sold a quarter down south where we had the circle. We paid them off, got them out of our hair. No, we didn't completely pay them off; we got them off our back. But about five years ago, I talked to Mike Hitz, at the Ford County State Bank. And I said, "Can you help us on this?" Because of course, Farmer's Home takes all your land if you get a loan from them, they want all your land in that loan. He said, "We'll take..." And they took the four lots across the north side. This is a correction line quarter, so instead of being four quarters, we're living on the south half of the north half, which is 180, which is a quarter, but a long one. The two right south of us, regular quarters, but there are four lots along the north side of it, that have about 70 some acres in each lot. So, he said, he'd take those four lots. And they reduced the interest by half and we paid them off.

Joan: So that's just great.

Jack: We got through all that. The sad part about bankruptcy is you send your money to the referee, or whatever they call it. He gets 10% right off the top, and then they pay the bills. Well, 10% of \$13,000 would pay a lot towards whatever else in a loan. So that was it, and other than that, I don't know. Of course, our kids marry, our grandkids, those are all important times in our life. Just these few personal things that stick out.