

Leon Buckwalter's Stories

June 24, 1999. As told to me (Clair Buckwalter) by my bother Leon at his house in Lititz, PA

I am going to start collecting some of the stories he has to tell about growing up in the home of our parents, Freeland and Florence Buckwalter. Freeland and Florence Buckwalter were born in Lancaster County, PA. in 1902. They got married in March of 1923 and Leon was born on December 21, 1923. After Leon was born our four sisters were born. Ellen, the oldest, lives in Lancaster. Then Marian was born. She lives in Smoketown, PA.

Then Kathryn was born. Kathryn lives in Canton, PA. She will soon move back to Lancaster Co. And Evelyn, the youngest sister, lives in Belleville, PA. I was the youngest of the children. I was born in June 1947.

Mother and dad were dairy farmers. They started farming at our grandfather Huber's farm in Witmer, Pa. after they were married. Then they soon bought their own farm north of Leacock, PA. where they had a dairy and crop farm. They farmed there until 1949. They sold that and bought a truck farm in Bareville, PA. They did truck farming and Dad took jobs off the farm in agriculture businesses. They were there until 1965. They sold that and moved to a house on Quarry Road in back of Forest Hills in Leola. They lived there until mother died in April, 1984. Then Dad moved to Landis Homes about 1986 where he died in September, 1988.

Clair: Leon, for the record, state your name and where you live.

Leon: My name is Leon Buckwalter and I live at 128 Mayfield Drive in Lititz, PA.

Clair: Your wife's name?

Leon: Miriam E.

Clair: She was a Bair from Brownstown, PA.

Clair: What do you do? What is your occupation?

Leon: I am retired. I do a Monday afternoon stint over at the Re-Uzit Home Center store.

Clair: MCC runs that? Where is it? In Akron?

Leon: It is west of Ephrata.

Clair: If you could name your children and where they live?

Leon: Herb is our oldest one. He lives in Toronto, Ontario. He works for the city there as a paramedic. Our next child is Fred. He lives in Washington, D.C. He works for the city also. Dana, our oldest daughter, runs a restaurant in Wichita, KS. They live in Wichita. Lori, our youngest one, she's the only one of our kids who was born in New Jersey. She lives in Mountain Lake, Minnesota.

Clair: Her husband is a crop farmer. Where does Lori work?

Leon: She works at the school as a teacher's aid.

Leon: I was born on December 21, 1923, at the Lancaster General Hospital while my parents were living on and farming my Grandfather Huber's farm in Witmer, PA.

Clair: I thought that everyone was born at home, except me? That's not true?

Leon: No, I was the only one of the older ones that was born in the hospital.

Clair: So our sisters were born at home on the farm? Do you know why that was?

Leon: Lack of money, that's all I know.

Clair: They had no money on the farm? They had money for you?

Leon: I don't know.

Clair: Or was it because it was there first child that mother went to the hospital?

Leon: I don't know. I have no idea.

Leon: My memories of having lived in Witmer are few. I remember the closed-in rear porch. I remember the time mother fished me from beneath the car in the driveway where I was eating grease from the transmission.

Clair: What years did they live there? 1923- until when? When did they buy the farm?

Leon: They bought the farm in 1927.

Clair: So they lived in Witmer 3 or 4 years.

Leon: Yes. I think father was sort of nervous the whole time he was there. It was a two party house. I think father was a little nervous because his landlord could see every move he made.

Clair: His father-in-law?

Leon: Right. In 1927 they bought David Nolt's farm in Upper Leacock Township. I got the impression that Grandfather Huber never lived that down.

Clair: He didn't want them to move?

Leon: He didn't want them to move. That was the last thing on his mind. I don't remember moving day.

Leon: In 1929 the Stock Market crashed. That was the start of the Great Depression.

Clair: You remember the stock market crash? What do you remember? Did you read it in the paper? How did you know about it?

Leon: I guess we read it in the paper.

Clair: What did it mean to you?

Leon: Just all the sudden there wasn't any money. Up until that time I thought the folks wouldn't mind that. But, I heard them say one night that if it weren't for Uncle Issac who made it possible for them to get government loans, they would have lost the farm.

Clair: How did they buy the farm? Was Uncle Issac involved in buying the farm?

Leon: I suspect he was. I don't know how they discovered David Nolt had a farm for sale. I don't know who was farming David Nolt's farm. Anyway, I can still see him come stomping across the fields back to the farm. There was a pole shed there on the east side of the barn when we moved there. I remember father tearing that thing down. He didn't want that pole shed there for some reason. The first time David Nolt came over after that pole shed was down he thought that was such a pity.

Clair: So he would visit there after he sold the farm?

Leon: Yes, I can still see him coming across the fields.

Clair: Was he a neighbor?

Leon: No, he lived in Leacock.

Clair: But, he just had to come back to visit the farm?

Leon: Yes, he had to come back to visit.

Leon: As I stated, all of the sudden there just wasn't any money around.

Clair: It happened real fast?

Leon: The banks closed up. It happened over night. Our family didn't have any money. I was surprised to hear that the folks didn't have any money. I remember coming home from school the day the stock market crashed. I saw there was something wrong with the folks. They weren't their usual selves. That's when I discovered we were as poor as the next guy. Of course, we always had plenty to eat living on the farm, you know. There were some people in the city, I understood, didn't have enough to eat.

Clair: Even in Lancaster?

Leon: Especially cities like New York City. Lancaster was able to get food.

Leon: When Freeland first had the farm. He was trying to build up his dairy farm. He would look for heifers. Uncle Issac would come out on a Saturday and we'd go down to the northern part of Maryland and the southern part of Pennsylvania looking for heifers. And Dick Buckwalter and I would be riding along in the back seat of the Model A. Dick would be laying in the back seat of the old Model A saying " I'll bet you \$10 bucks we're going uphill."

Leon: We were at our Landis cousins one time. One of the Landis cousins, I forget his first name, he drowned himself in a watering trough.

Clair: By accident or on purpose?

Leon: On purpose. They found him face down in the watering trough. That was after we were there. We were there one Sunday for dinner. Dick was just a little guy. He came to

Aunt Mable and said, " I must poop." She tried to cover it up. Aunt Mable said, "What did you say, Dickie?" Dick yelled, "I MUST POOP." Dick was quite a character, that fellow!

Leon: One time we were fixing something in the lawn, the yard fence. I guess we were putting new wood in. Anyway, Dick broke the yardstick. So everyone there was coming down on him for breaking the yardstick: his dad, dad, and a couple of his uncles on his mother's side. After a bit Dick said, "Ah, a couple of tacks will fix it!"

Clair: So Uncle Isaac was around the farm a lot?

Leon: Oh yes, they came out often. Often they visited evenings during the week and on Saturdays.

Clair: Dad and Uncle Issac must have gotten along quite well?

Leon: Apparently they did, yes.

Clair: Or was it because he had money in the place?

Leon: I don't know if he had money in the farm or not. He might have.

Leon: I remember Uncle Issac used to herd the kids into the car. And he would keep on talking. After a bit all the kids would be out of the car. Those three kids he had. Dick was the oldest, then came Bonnie, and then Jack was the youngest. Then Uncle Isaac would yell at them: "Get back into the car." That was like Freeland. He used to be all ready for church. He would tell us, "Get into the car awhile." Then Freeland would be nowhere around. We'd ask where Freeland was. Someone said, "Oh, we saw him heading for the john!"

Leon: I have a few things to say about my grandparents. My grandparents were killed in 1933 while they were crossing Columbia Avenue after they spent the day with I.Z. Buckwalter on Watson Avenue. They were killed by one car. They were crossing

Columbia Avenue to get the trolley back to their home on New Holland Avenue.

Clair: Do you remember when it happened?

Leon: Yes, I remember it. I sensed there was something wrong one morning. I came to find out that Charlie Groff, Aunt Mabel's brother, (he had the honors of telling father) came to the house with the news.

Clair: You mean they didn't find out until morning?

Leon: It was 2:30 one morning.

Clair: How comes it took so long for them to find out? Uncle Isaac didn't call them?

Leon: We had no phone.

Clair: So someone had to come out to the farm?

Leon: Yes. So Charlie Groff had the honors.

Clair: They were both dead by then?

Leon: Oh, yes.

Clair: Didn't one of them live for a brief period?

Leon: My grandmother lived for a short time.

Clair: Well, it certainly must have been very hard on the family.

Leon: Sure was. I remember we all had to go get haircuts. I remember father telling stories about Kurtz's barber shop which was above Kurtz's store. I am not sure what day it

was. There was over 1000 people at the funeral.

Clair: It was at Mellinger's Church, of course.

Leon. It was at Mellinger's.

Clair: How old were you then?

Leon: I was nine, almost ten.

Clair: Do you remember the service?

Leon: Oh yes, I remember the service. They had caskets alike, of course.

Clair: Did they have a viewing? Were the caskets open at any time?

Leon: They had a viewing the night before. It was the old fashioned way, you know.

Clair: Don't you have memories of them while they were alive?

Leon: Oh, yes. I remember Grandfather Buckwalter coming to the farm. Of course, we visited them on New Holland Avenue frequently: Sundays and week day evenings. Grandmother would always stand and watch us until she couldn't see us any more. Father got the idea after they were killed that she stood there longer the last time we visited. But, I think he was full of wind. Anyway, I remember visiting there often. Grandfather was a great snap (ginger) man. He liked his snaps. He would say, "Get some snaps out," to Hallie, his wife "Get some snaps," he would say. Grandfather came out to the farm often, a couple times a week, I think.

Clair: He rode the trolley?

Leon: He came to Center Square on the trolley. I remember the Albrights and the Beams.

They lived on opposite corners of what is now Route 272 and Center Square road. They would say (about grandfather), "Gee, he walks fast." They would see him get off the car, off the trolley, and in no time at all he would be at the farm.

Clair: He never had a driver's license, did he?

Leon: No, he never had an automobile.

Clair: He never owned one?

Leon: Nope.

Clair: Do you know why?

Leon: I don't know. I don't know if he figured he couldn't afford it or what.

Clair: Did they seem to have money or did they seem to be poor.

Leon: I don't know. We didn't talk about money when we were kids. I have no idea. Well, he (grandfather) surely didn't have much. He was a school teacher in his working years, I guess. Other than that he had the farm at East Earl.

Clair: Do you have any memories of grandmother being ill? Dad always talked about her not being well.

Leon: Yeah, she was a little like he was; about half sick all the time.

Clair: She had stomach trouble like him?

Leon: Well, I think she had heart trouble.

Clair: That was the story he (father) always had: that she couldn't do the house work when

he was growing up and that he had to do the house work and the cooking. That was always his story.

Leon: That's right. He said that, didn't he? I'd forgotten that he said that.

Leon: The next thing I have here is the Elam and Mary grandparent stories. Elam was a grumpy guy, you know. He always said that he was better off "ta home". We had him to Harrisburg to the Farm Show one time. I think that is the farthest he was ever away from home.

Clair: Really? That's your recollection? He never went much of anywhere?

Leon: No, he never went anywhere. His wife took a beating, really. He didn't feel well unless he was at home, you know. So he thought. One time the folks took two days off and went to Atlantic City. For some reason they came home the first night. I don't know if they didn't go to the motel they had or what. " Anyway, Elam and Mary were watching over us kids. And by the time the folks got home that night they (Elam and Mary) were in bed. We were all in bed. Elam went home yet that night! He was nuts! I already said his wife took a lot.

Clair: What do you mean by that?

Leon: She never got any where. She had company almost every Sunday.

Clair: So she could see somebody? They never went visiting? If she didn't invite people in she didn't see anyone?

Leon: That's about the way I read the thing.

Clair: Did she have poor health?

Leon: No, her health was good up until she had the breast cancer.

Clair: She had breast cancer?

Leon: I don't remember the year. I remember the day she died. We were at Turtleneck skating.

Clair: Where is Turtleneck?

Leon: Beats me, Clair. I was wondering that myself. I think it's north of Bird-in-Hand.

Clair: Did she die unexpectedly?

Leon: No, I don't think so. I don't know if she died at home or in the hospital. I forget. He was a nutty guy. He wouldn't tell us, she wouldn't tell us that she had breast cancer. One time we pulled in over there one Sunday afternoon. He came out and motioned us away with his hand. That's when we found out she had breast cancer after we got into the house.

Clair: She was sick then?

Leon: She told us, I think. He didn't want us to know. That's the kind of guy he was.

Clair: The subject was taboo?

Leon: Yep. He was mad at the world. He used to say, "All the hard luck a going".

Clair: Why did he feel that way.

Leon: Well, you see he was crippled. He had infantile paralysis when he was a kid. And he wore a brace on his right leg, I guess. I don't remember which leg it was any more. He thought everyone was down on him. I can remember father saying that Elam worked one time for Newt Martin in Leola. Newt Martin had a steel business there. He didn't stay very long because he thought they were making fun of him.

Clair: So he didn't think very much of himself?

Leon: Nope. He had a very poor image of himself except when he "sot" on the porch!

He used "sot" instead of sat.

Clair: So how did that affect our mother? Did he affect her self image?

Leon: Oh, I'm sure it did. It took it's toll. Mother was a pretty good writer, you know.

Clair: Well, I don't know if I know that. What did she write?

Leon: She wrote something about Mrs. Kling. Something came up about that recently in our house. She just wrote something in one of the church papers.

Clair: I think I remember seeing that, now.

Leon: Miriam had a copy of that recently. She (mother) was a pretty good writer.

Leon: Next thing I have here is about my school experience.

Clair: Did you start to school when you were six?

Leon: Yeah, I think so. That would have been what year?

Clair: That would have been 1929 or 1930.

Leon: Yeah. I went to Stormstown Academy, you know.

Clair: That's what it was called?

Leon: No, Stormstown School.

Clair: You called it Stormstown Academy?

Leon: That's what I called it; especially since I'm out of that place. That's no longer standing, you know. We used to stand up at the school and wonder how soon the quarry would be up at the school. We never had any idea it would be so soon. I notice now the quarry is now up to what they call Stormstown road.

Clair: So the pit swallowed up the place the school used to be?

Leon: Yep. Anyway, I went there for eight years. That was the days before busing. We walked a mile and a half across the fields to school.

Clair: You didn't go on the roads? You went across the fields?

Leon: We walked the fields when it wasn't muddy. What is Stormstown road now that was all mud. So when that was all muddy in the spring time we went up to the cinder road. I don't know what they call that now.

Clair: Before our sisters went, did you walk with neighborhood children? You didn't walk by yourself?

Leon: Oh no. Neighborhood kids: the Amish kids next door: Amos Stoltzfus, I guess his older sister was out of school by the time I got started, Rachel, Barb, those girls, and the Horst people: Marvin and Mildred.

Clair: Horst? So they weren't Amish. Were they Mennonites?

Leon: Mennonites. They were members at Groffdale.

Leon: Then (walking to school) we picked up the Griffith family up the way. Do you

remember the Griffiths?

Clair: No, I don't remember them.

Leon: They lived in the...some farm that was owned by someone else. Martin Griffith.

Clair: Were they Mennonites?

Leon: No, they were what we called holy rollers in those days. They have a more sophisticated name now.

Clair: So most of the neighbors were Amish, would you say?

Leon: Our two closest neighbors were Amish. Levi Stoltzfus and Soli Beiler. Soli Beiler bought Jake and Doll Kockle's place. I don't know what year that was, either.

Clair: So they moved there after you did?

Leon: Soli Beiler did, yeah. See he lived there alone for a number of years. He finally got married. Then he brought a wife with him. I was at his sale since we were back here in Pennsylvania. He had a sale. Boy, oh boy. That place needed a father!

Clair: Was there a lot of junk?

Leon: Junk and inside in the kitchen as I recall the linoleum was all gone. Soli Beiler used to sing. Freeland used to say that he is singing the praises. He used to sing Saturday nights. Saturday nights he would start singing.

Clair: You could hear him, you mean?

Leon: We could hear him.

Clair: At your house?

Leon: Oh, yeah. Especially if the wind was in the east.

Clair: Where was he? Out in the yard in the summer?

Leon: Yes, he was out. But he'd sing anywhere.

Clair: Back to your school. Do you remember any of your teachers?

Leon: Oh yeah. That was one thing I was going to mention. Teachers used to come home with us occasionally. Miss Eshleman, especially.

Clair: Why did they do that?

Leon: Well, it was something that was done then. Our house wasn't the only house she went to. She went to the Stoltzfus. and the Horst.s.

Clair: What would she do?

Leon: She would stay over night. She would stay over night and for breakfast the next morning. Then we had a ride to school the next morning.

Clair: You don't know why the teacher did that? Was it just the custom or what?

Leon: Just a custom, I guess. As the saying is: an old Canadian custom.

Clair: Where did she live?

Leon: I think she lived in Lancaster. Then later (after Miss Eshleman) there was a gal by the name of Good. She had discipline problems. Guys used to fart out loud.

Clair: She couldn't keep control?

Leon: No, she couldn't keep control. She used to stand there and lecture us and we would sit there and snicker.

Clair: So the kids were not perfect in those days either?

Leon: Oh heavens no.

Clair: How many different teachers did you have in the eight years?

Leon: Miss Eshleman was there for quite a while. Miss Good was there for a while.

I believe those were the only two teachers we had in the eight years.

Clair: Did you have some of the same people in your class for the whole eight years?

Was Amos (Stoltzfus) in your class?

Leon: Amos was above me. He is older than me. Amos must be 80 years old.

Elmer Glick, no his older brother was in my class. I can't think of his name now.

He lived up where we brought our water from at the next farm on the hill.

Clair: You mean you had to haul water?

Leon: We carried water down on a stick.

Clair: There was no well?

Leon: Oh, no! Of course the teacher kept the fire and everything and swept the floor.

Clair: So did you all have jobs to do?

Leon: No, we didn't have any jobs. Oh we did go for water; I think for a couple days or a week or something. We carried it on a stick. There would be two of us who went for water. We'd dump it into a something that was to be a cooler but it wasn't a cooler. A bucket of water!

Clair: Pretty primitive!

Leon: Yeah, the teacher kept the fire and swept the floor. I remember Harry Landis was school director, they were called those days. He was the only one who ever visited our school.

Clair: To check up on the teacher?

Leon: He was secretary of the board. And he came fairly often, I thought.

Clair: Did you like school or didn't you like school?

Leon: Oh, I hated school.

Clair: You did not like school?

Leon: Nope, I did not like school. That's the reason I "quituated" when I did.

Clair: It was entirely legal at that time to quit when you were through eighth grade?

Leon: Yeah, you could. You had to be 15, I think. 14 or 15 years old to quit. And, of course, the Amish they all quit.

Clair: So that's what you did?

Leon: I "quituated". I went one year to Upper Leacock to ninth grade. One year. And then I remember talking to father about it. Or he talked to me about it. He said he'd like to see me stay on the farm. But, education was up to me; whither I wanted to go or not and finish the next three years. So, I decided to quit. And I remember how free I felt when I didn't have to go back to school. (After I quit) father started to ask me questions about how I would do; to run the fences. This was unusual for him.

Clair: So what kind of relationship do you think you had with him? Did you communicate well with him?

Leon: So, so.

Clair: Was it better (talking) to mother?

Leon: Ah, when I had something to tell mother. I can remember telling her when I was getting married. I went to mother. She was easier (to talk to).

Clair: It surprises me that he would talk to you about school. That seems to be the type of thing she would have talked about.

Leon: Well, I think she had him pegged for that question.

Clair: She was in charge of that?

Leon: I always had the impression that she "sicked" him unto me. She thought that was his job.

Clair: It sounds like to me that would have been her idea. I can't quite imagine him asking you that.

Leon: You see I bicycled out there for the eight months of school. As did my sisters.

Clair: They all rode bicycles out there?

Leon: Yes, I'm thinking of Ellen now, especially. Marian, I can't remember whither she rode bicycle or not. But there was no bus service. I think Upper Leacock had one bus that Davey Burkholder kept. He drove the bus and kept it in his garage. Do you know where Davey Burkholder was?

Clair: Well, he was across from Kurtz's store.

Leon: Yes, across from Kurtz's store.

Clair: Where Steffy's is now?

Leon: Yes, Steffy.

Clair: You know that Burkholder was still driving bus when I went to school. He owned the busses then, I think. So he was doing that for a long time.

Leon: Oh, yeah. Yeah, he was doing that a long time.

Leon: Let's go to stories about my sisters. I already mentioned that they biked themselves to Upper Leacock.

Clair: But most of them must have gone to Stormstown for awhile?

Leon: Oh, yeah they did.

Clair: Did they all go there? Did Evie go there?.

Leon: I don't remember of Evie going there

Clair: But Ellen and Marian and Kathryn all went to Stormstown?

Clair: They all went to eighth grade?

Leon: I think so.

Clair: And then they bicycled up to Upper Leacock?

Leon: Yeap. At milking time it was sort of a joint effort, you know. I can still see Ellen sitting there milking a cow and the cow would "wamp" her with its tail. She would get upset. And the cow would get her foot in the bucket, sometimes. She would say, "Now what do I do"? Well, anyway, I can remember one time one of them (sisters) came out, I think it was Kass, no, I think it was Evie, came out from the house. We were milking the cows. Mom was there anyway. She came out for the purpose of seeing mom. She had a complaint about her sisters in the house. Mother finally asked her where they were now.

"Oh they are in there playing that old "...dopy" (Monopoly) game," she said.

Clair: So mother always helped to milk?

Leon: Pretty often, yeah.

Clair: And anybody else that was available and old enough?

Leon: I think so.

Clair: The little ones stayed in the house by themselves?

Leon: Oh yeah. Those were the days without phone service and we had an outside john, you know. We always had an outside john. We never had a bathroom (on the farm).

Clair: No, never on the farm. You know, that.s something I didn't realize until a few years

ago. They (our parents) never had an indoor bathroom until they moved to Bareville.

Leon: My father was sick half of the time. One time he fell out of the barn. He was layed up in bed for six weeks.

Clair: He fell out of the barn? I don't know if I remember that story.

Leon: I can't remember any more. I can still see him falling.

Clair: You saw it?

Leon: Yeah, I saw it. I was there. I don't know if we were taking down tobacco or what. Anyway, he fell from what I call the square of the barn down on the floor. He fell about 12 feet. He fractured a vertebrae. I can remember putting boards under the mattress for him.

Clair: Didn't go to the hospital or anything?

Leon: Oh heavens no. You didn't go to the hospital in those days unless it was absolutely necessary, Clair.

Clair: Did the doctor come out to the house? Was it Dr. Ranck?

Leon: Ranck was in later years. It was Dr. Ressler from Bird-in-Hand. We had Doc Ressler.

Clair: All the way from Bird-in-Hand?

Leon: Oh yeah, Doc Ressler. I had ear ache once for a week, I think. Uncle Isaac came up to my bedroom one time and said, .We think you ought to go to the hospital..

I said, "Well, if you think so and Dr. Ressler thinks so." "Well, that's the trouble," he (Uncle Isaac) said, "Dr. Ressler doesn't think you should go!" All the sudden something cleared

up that day. I got a terrific headache. Anyway, I didn't go to the hospital.

Clair: Dr. Ressler didn't believe in hospitals?

Leon: Not so much. He was one of those guys you'd pay a buck for a visit. That was a lot of money for him. I can remember when he had an old Model T roadster. Then, Doc Ranck came on the scene. I think we had Doc Ranck come over a few times.

Clair: So when dad fell out of the barn he was in bed then for awhile?

Leon: He was in bed for six weeks.

Clair: What happened to the farm, then?

Leon: I had to take charge.

Clair: How old were you?

Leon: I don't know. Uncle Isaac sent Dick out to help. Jimminy pats. What a pain he was! He would throw a little hay into the cows and then he would go in and listen to the radio. My father and him had an on going thing about whether hill billy music was the thing or not.

Clair: Did Dick like hill billy music?

Leon: No, Dick did not like hill billy music. My father did, though. He used to go up to

Lebzelters Grove Sunday afternoon before we went to church. We weren't going to church for awhile, you know?

Clair: No, I didn't know that.

Leon: Oh yeah. We'd go up to Lebzelters Grove to hear Cousin Lee and his Boys.

Clair: Where was this grove at?

Leon: I don't know any more, Clair.

Leon: But they had country music. It used to run way into the winter. I remember Cousin Lee pulled a canvas up around him one time. We were up there and it was so cold.

Clair: Did they charge to get in?

Leon: Oh yeah.

Clair: The whole family went up there Sunday afternoons?

Leon: The whole family. Dick and Freeland used to get into arguments about country music.

Clair: Dick being the city boy didn't want to have anything to do with that?

Leon: No, heavens, no.

Clair: So you did the milking and farming when dad was laid up?

Leon: Yeah, I called up and ordered feed for the cows. I had to see that the mixture was right, you know. That is, what Freeland called right. Yeah, Dick was useless around the barn. They used to send him out to help pick tomatoes and potatoes. "Oh, boy," he'd say, "This is hard on my back." One time he came out there early, well early for him. It was 6:30 or something like that. It was cool. Dick said, "Yeah, I had the heater on coming out." That reminds me of something about my sisters. In the days before heaters in cars we used to travel by blanket. We had a blanket over our legs. I remember yanking that thing off them (sisters)! It was said that I picked on my sisters. I remember yanking that thing off. The first car that had a heater had a heater on the manifold. It was a 1926 Dodge. That's the

first car I can remember having a heater.

Clair: Did it make any heat?

Leon: Yeah, it made some heat. I don't know when they started making heaters standard equipment. But it was late, as I remember. I remember that when I started at Mellinger's in 1947. And I remember that heaters were not standard yet.

Clair: Oh, my goodness. Had to order one if you wanted one?

Leon: Yep, I remember we couldn't keep heaters in stock. We kept them up on the second story there.

Clair: So what's the first car that you remember Dad having?

Leon: Oh, he had some Model T's. He had two Model T pickups around. And then he had a 1924 sedan. Then he got what he called an "Assache". A 1924 or 1925 Essex. He got it at a bargain rate. She had two teeth off the fly wheel. According to where she would stop he couldn't get it started! He had to push it to get it started!

Clair: He didn't know that when he got it?

Leon: Oh yeah, he knew it. He figured it would never stop but it did. It stopped where the teeth were out. So he called that his "Assache".

That is the end of my first session with Leon on Thursday June 24, 1999.

Session II

Today is July 31, 1999. My name is Clair Buckwalter. I am in my brother, Leon

Buckwalter's house in Lititz PA. We are starting our second session to record some of Leon's memoirs in story fashion.

Clair: So are there other stories you have?

Leon: Working on the farm memories: work is never finished. There is always something to do. It is a 7 day a week job; 365 days per year; especially with cows.

Leon: Stories about our neighbors on the farm: Jake and Dol Kockle: when we first moved to Upper Leacock township, they were our closest neighbors. They lived where Soli Beiler lived later on. Shuslik Amos Witmer lived up&he was Dave Horst's father-in-law. Levi Stoltzfus was a neighbor. One time Levi's big silo blew in. We could see it from our house. Levi couldn't see it from his house. So one day my father and I were over there. Father says to Levi, "What are you doing with your silo?" Levi came around the corner and said, "What the deal!" He was an Amish bishop, you know. I just list the name of our neighbors here: Mark Griffith; John D. Stoltzfus; three Zooks: Henry Zook, Ez Zook, and I can't think of the other's name. I sold my bicycle to Abner Zook. His father threw it into the creek. They shunned Ez Zook, you know. I don't know why. He couldn't eat with the family. He couldn't eat with us when we were there filling silo. He had to eat out on the porch. I can't remember if he divorced his wife or wasn't living with her for some reason. I can't remember why they shunned him. He said one time when he was sitting out on the porch, "If you're going to have that pie you'd better bring it on."

These are people we filled silo with together: Dave Horst, Ezra Zook, Elam Stoltzfus, and John D. Stoltzfus. There were also the Klings, the Albrights, the Leamans.

Oh, the Leamans, we helped to fill silo there. I'll tell you a story about the Leamans. We were out there filling silo and my father got the horses in an old spring harrow that was grown up with weeds, you know. This was when Abe was farming yet. Rohrer was explaining to my father when they got into the house to eat a meal: "Yeah," he says, "The old man fell over that the other day!" He (Abe) wasn't too great a farmer. Then there was Sol Beiler, Elam Reif, Harry Beam, Albrights, the Klings. They were all our neighbors.

Elam Reif just died the other week. He was 87 years old. He lived in the farm across from our lane. Our lanes took off from the same spot. The main lane went in from what is now 772. That barn blew down one time when we were on the farm there. Levi's tobacco shed blew down at that time also. My father says, "I wonder about the tobacco shed over across..there was some Stoltzfus that lived there, John Stoltzfus. I looked across and I says, "Well, the barn is down." All it did to our place was to take half a tree out. Took it out and sat it down way the heck down in the field. There was no damage to the buildings.

Shuslik Amos: him and his wife died almost together as I recall. Dave Horst then rented that house to I don't even remember the guys name. I just remember he worked for Shreiner, the stone quarry people there in Brownstown. One day he came in the road there with the truck. I don't know if he was loaded or empty. Anyway, he said he had it up to 50 coming in from Center Square. That was the time the road wasn't macadamized then yet. It was stone.

Clair: So you got to know the neighbors by working together? Did you socialize with them?

Leon: Not a whole lot. We didn't socialize with any of them on a regular basis. There was seven or eight in the group that filled silo together, you know. I think there were eight people or nine. Might have been nine. Rohrer Leaman, (Abe at the time), Henry Zook, Ez Zook, Dave Horst, &&..The Albrights and the Klings weren't a part of this because they weren't farmers. Well, the Klings had a small farm there. They had 20 acres or something like that. Plus Sol Beiler&he never had a silo. Now I see there is a silo there now. John D. Stoltzfus took the longest. Elam Stoltzfus had the silo filling rigs, you know. We learned to know the Amish, you know. At least, I learned to know them: by going to school with them and also farming with them. Juny Albright just died recently.

Harry Beam lived on the opposite corner of Center Square there.

I just realized how our mother worked in her early days. When it comes to washing, doing laundry, she filled the copper kettles with water, carried it in by the buckets full.

I can still see her do this. She carried it in from the pump outside. Then she started a wood fire under the copper kettles. This is all in preparation of doing her laundry. I remember her cranking the wringer. This was long before we had electricity.

Clair: Where did our mother learn to work like she did?

Leon: I don't know. You remember how she worked at Bareville. How she worked at that stand. She never stopped working.

Clair: My memory is that she started working early in the morning and long after I was tired and worn out she was sitting in the middle of the kitchen surrounded by a million eggs weighing each one and washing each one with a rag. Way into the middle of the night.

Leon: Her manual labor was tremendous. Her level of work was tremendous. You know when the thresher men were there she made them breakfast. Then she would have a snack at the middle of the morning: lemonade and cookies. Then she would make lunch for these guys. It was a big dinner. I did not appreciate her enough for what she did. Jiminey pats! I am not sure Freeland realized what she did. The first years on the farm you know there was no electricity.

Clair: Do you remember what year they got electricity?

Leon: Yeah, it was '36 maybe. I'm not sure; '36 or '37 they built the line in. And Bill Harsh wired up our buildings.

Clair: Was he an electrician?

Leon: Bill Harsh? He claimed to be. He's the guy he was so busy you couldn't get him to do anything. Bob Groff one time went to where he was working and threw his anvil in and said, "That will get him here!" You don't remember Bob Groff? Him and his father were in the cattle jockeying business; jockeying cattle. I saw Bob's son at Leacock fire company

the time we got together there.

I remember Freeland had Model T trucks, you know. He had two of them at one time. He ran them down over a quarry to get rid of them! I should have kept those buggers!

He also had a '26 Model T and a '26 Dodge; not at the same time. That Dodge had a hot air heater in it. And he had a '29 or '30 Essex. He called that his "Assache." Then he traded the Essex on a '30 Ford. We thought that was the cat's meow! One day he painted that thing up in the orchard. I guess he figured there was less dust up there. He painted that it with a brush. I had a '39 Dodge and a '47 Ford, a '49 Ford, a '56 Ford, and a '61 Ford.

No phones, electricity, and an outside john. Albrights had the phone. They used to send me up there to make a call. Anybody went up there. Even Levi went up there.

Clair: When did you get a phone on the farm?

Leon: After we got electricity, of course. Gee, I don't know what year it was, Clair. I have no idea. Being without electricity was sort of a matter of the fact thing. When we got it we thought we were somebody. The outdoor john was okay in the summer but it was a drafty affair in the winter.

The cattle boat. I have a day to day diary on that thing. I redid it a couple of years ago. We loaded up on November 6, '45.

Clair: Were you drafted?

Leon: No, I was never drafted. That was considered an essential job at the time: working on a farm. The cattle boat thing was a volunteer job. We heard they were doing this. My buddies began to inquire about it. So, I guess, I just sort of fell into it.

Clair: It was cattle from where to where?

Leon: Baltimore to Poland. Guys got sick on the first few days out. I didn't mind it at all. So they put me down the hold. I'd hook the tongs in the hay bales and they would pull them up. I can still hear the guy say, "You feel good. Why don't you go down into the deck."

Clair: Who provided the cattle?

Leon: I guess they were donated. A lot of the cattle (in Europe) were destroyed during the war. The war was over in '43, I guess. Perhaps '44.

Clair: So this was part of the effort of this country to help the war stricken countries to rebuild?

Leon: That's right. I have here: out of bed at 6 a.m. Watered horses until breakfast. This was on November 8. Until breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Meeting in mess hall following breakfast. Luke Bomberger and I were assigned to 37 horses on the second deck. Ship left Pier #9 at 1:00 p.m. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. Attended horses following dinner. Helped the veterinarian inject horses until 9:30 p.m. As I said I have a day to day dairy.

Clair: How long did it take to get to Poland?

Leon: Two weeks.

Clair: Any storms?

Leon: It was stormy on the way home. The night we docked off of shore one night. The captain was scared that night because he came down and asked for prayer for him.

Clair: Were you empty coming back?

Leon: We took on water for ballast.

Clair: You had nothing to do coming back?

Leon: The only thing we did was clean out the stalls. We threw it overboard. We were in Poland three weeks longer than anybody else. We found out after we left there that that was what it was about: who was going to get the manure; who was going to clean off the boat. They couldn't decide that so the captain finally said, "We're leaving boys" one Sunday morning. I guess it was then that he told us that the reason we were docked there so long was because they couldn't decide who was going to get the manure.

Clair: Did you get to travel any during the three weeks?

Leon: Yeah, I spent my 22nd birthday in Copenhagen, Denmark. We stayed there until noon. That was December 21. We went on shore in the afternoon and stayed out until 10:00 p.m. Shore leave expired at midnight. I don't know what that means.

Clair: During the three weeks there you didn't have to work?

Leon: We had free time. We were not involved with helping to unload the cattle or load them as far as that goes.

Clair: Where else did you go?

Leon: The North Sea. That's a son of a gun! It was rough in there, boy.

We came into Boston coming back. I remember the sea being rough coming into Boston. The boat would go up on a wave and then drop down. You could see the water above the boat, you know.

Clair: How big a boat was this?

Leon: It was 400 and some feet long as I recall. I'm sure I have it here somewhere.

Clair: How many cattle?

Leon: There was something over 1200 I think. Half of them were horses and the other half were heifers.

On November 23 we anchored off the shores of Holland. Three dead animals overboard. Threw them overboard! Freaking sharks! Very cold weather. Anchored near entrance of Elbe River at 7:00 p.m. Two days later we went through the Kiel Canal on November 25.

Took up anchor at 6:00 a.m. on November 26 and sailed through the Baltic Sea the entire day. It was reported that the ship lost its course during the afternoon hours and. I think that was erroneous. Sailed through dangerous mine fields. We had a guy on the ship that I think was along for the ride. Anyway, he passed a lot of rumors around.

Clair: So who went with you?

Leon: Bill Pellman, Paul Reitz, Biz Mellinger, and some guys that I know on a local level here: Paul Martin from north of Ephrata here.

Clair: So how did you get to Baltimore?

Leon: I don't remember any more.

Clair: You came into Boston?

Leon: We took a train to Philadelphia and then from Philadelphia to Lancaster.

Went to Baltimore, Md. For physical exam. Went on board steamship S.S. American. Loading of cattle began at 7:30 p.m. Helped to feed and water cattle until 10:30 p.m. That was the first day.

Clair: Doesn't sound like you had much time off?

Leon: Not on the way over. None! On the way back we horsed around playing ball on the bottom deck. I remember we played baseball down there.

Christmas Day. That was '45. We are still anchored off the shores of Norway. Heavy storms still raging. Had a service in the A.M. Also, in the evening. Played ball after evening until 1:00 a.m. We didn't have anything to do coming home after we got the dung thrown overboard. On January 3, I have written here, it was 8 weeks since we left Baltimore. I played tennis with Lloyd Hoover. Lloyd Hoover was an older man. He was in his 50's at that time, I think. Noffzinger was our pastor. Noffzinger came to Bareville later on. He was the pastor of the group on the ship. And Noffzinger came to the Bareville Church of the Brethern. I visited him one time when we were over here from Jersey.

Dr. Resinger, he was a piece of work. He was the vet assigned to our boat. Dr. Resinger, 24 years old single, veterinarian in charge of all cattlemen. James Fairall, he was the guy that was along for the ride.

Clair: Was this the government sending cattle or was this another organization?

Leon: It was Brethern Service in cooperation with U.N.R.R.A: United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation. But we were under the umbrella of Brethern Service.

Clair: So how many weeks altogether was it?

Leon: We were gone from November 6 until some time in January. It was 12 weeks, I think. We were gone longer than anticipated but we still got our regular pay. \$100 bucks.

For the whole trip.

Clair: Was that good pay or just a little in those days?

Leon: That was just a little pay.

I wasn't drafted because farm work was considered essential. It was said I just missed the draft because of the call of the world. I went to Philadelphia with some other guys for what they said was the final physical. I'll never forget on the way back from Philadelphia they said, "The war is over!" I wasn't sure about that until I got home and father said, "Yeah, the war is over!"

Session III

My name is Clair Buckwalter. I am in the home of my brother, Leon Buckwalter, on Mayfield Drive in Lititz, PA. Today is January, 15, 2000.

Leon starts talking about our mother and how she used to peddle produce from her garden in Lancaster.

Clair: How often did she peddle? Every week?

Leon: Every week. She started out on a street&..I can't think of the name of it now.

Clair: Who decided where to peddle. How did she know where to peddle?

Leon: She knew where to go.

Clair: People who had money? In the richer parts of town?

Leon: That is where she started out. And when stuff didn't sell like sweet corn, she take it down and dump it off in the Seventh Ward. She gave a lot of it away.

Clair: So she often raised too much in her garden even with the big family she had?

Leon: Too much in the garden!

Clair: Was that on purpose?

Leon: Accidentally on purpose.

Clair: She wanted to peddle?

Leon: She wanted to peddle. She always had lots of sweet corn, man. We'd take the old green '37 Ford full of sweet corn. We'd take the back seat out and throw the corn in there. We had a garden in the front of the house. It wasn't a field when we moved there.

Leon: I remember a hired man that dad had, I forget what his name was, he cut a walnut tree down out there in the front one evening! My father had hired men. I remember this guy would take two pieces of bread and mashed potatoes and make a sandwich out of them before he left the table.

Clair: What day did she (mother) peddle?

Leon: Friday. Always on Friday. Sometimes, Tuesday if she had a lot of corn.

Clair: So Dad never went peddling?

Leon: He never went peddling. He always sent me. I did the driving.

Clair: She (mother) would be running in and out?

Leon: Yeah she would go into the door. I remember the street now. It was Pleasure Road in Lancaster.

Clair: Where is Pleasure Road?

Leon: In the east end of town near where Grandpap Buckwalter lived.She worked her

head off at that job.

Clair: Did she get the spending money then, or what?

Leon: I guess she did, I don't know. I don't know if she turned that into the company store or what...I can remember how hot it got in that car sometimes.

Clair: She always had this thing about selling produce! She peddled in Lancaster and then in Bareville she had her roadside stand.

Leon: Yeah, she ran herself to death.

Clair: This was all her idea? Dad didn't say she had to do this, did he?

Leon: Oh, I don't think he ever said that she had to do it. It was all her idea....Early on, you know, she worked her fingers to the bone washing and stuff.

Leon: I really don't have much else to say.

Clair: Earlier you had started talking about what you would do differently. Did you want to talk about that at all?

Leon: I don't know. I guess I would do everything pretty much the same except maybe move to Oxford, if I had to do it over.

Clair: What about that experience would make you think about it again?

Leon: How do you feel about that dear? (Leon is talking to his wife, Miriam)

Miriam: I think in retrospect that you and I had different ideas right from the beginning about New Jersey.

Leon: Part of the reason to go to New Jersey was just to do something different.

There were things going on the County at the time. ...I was about 39 in '62 when we moved. &..We had a truck rented in Lancaster. We went in there Sunday night for it and it was not there. It was on the road somewhere. They said that it would get there any time. One of those any time jobs, you know. ...Freeland was packing the truck. He said, "It's never all going to go on." They told us that a certain length truck would haul everything. We ended up going up to B.Z. Mellinger's and getting another one. And we had that one full.

Clair: So you ended up with two trucks. I think I almost remember one truck getting full and having to go get another one. Who drove all the trucks?

Leon: Ben Hershey drove one. I guess I drove the other one. I remember Mark and Fred being with me.

Miriam: I drove the car with Dana and Grandma Bair.

Clair: Esther Bair?

Miriam: Yes, I think my parents went along. Did your parents go?

Leon: I don't know if they went to New Jersey or not.

Clair: Don't I have pictures of moving day at your house in Oxford?

Leon: I can remember the belt was slipping on the truck I was driving, Mellinger's truck.

It wasn't charging. The alternator wasn't charging.

Clair: So what was your idea for moving to Oxford that was different from Leon's?

Miriam: Well, I think I saw it is as an opportunity to share my faith and to relate to the people

there.

Clair: That's why I always thought you did that. Leon, you didn't have the same idea?

Leon: Yeah, I guess I did at the time...I got tangled up with those guys in Washington there. Well, the first 19 months we lived there I worked for Hackettstown Auto Parts, the Poyers. Then I became acquainted with this guy, this Hilkert guy. He says, "Any time you want a job, come around." I was working for Poyer's in Hackettstown for peanuts: \$80 dollars a week. And I had to drive 14 or 15 miles to Hackettstown. But those were the days when a buck was a buck, you know. ...It was the type of faith those guys had. They would fight and carry on. I became interested in CBM Association. I remember being down in Flemington one night and those guys thought I should take the job of being president. I just couldn't. I was so glad I never got into that. Anyway, they folded up pretty much after that. ...They were going to build a church. They were meeting in the grange hall. It was going to be a Nazarene church. The first thing I knew they had sold the land they were going to build a church on. They couldn't agree what kind of building to build. So I said to myself, "I went over there (N.J.) to get away from that."

Clair: But the people at Faith Mennonite got along pretty good, didn't they?

Leon: Yeah, except one time there was a little trouble between the pastor and us.

Clair: Which pastor was that?

Leon: Swartley.

Clair: But you got that resolved fairly quickly, didn't you? It wasn't a long term thing, was it?

Leon: No... I should not have gotten so involved in the work at Oxford. One time I was chairman of the board there, Sunday school superintendent and song leader. I did everything...and chairman of the building committee.

Clair: How come you got to do everything? What did everyone else do?

Leon: Well, there was only people of the community and they weren't fit to do anything.

Leon: That's what the pastor thought.

(Miriam thinks we're getting off the subject of family history)

Clair: When you were of dating age you said Mother wanted you to get a new car.

Does that mean it was fairly easy in those days to afford a new car, compared to now?

Leon: Father used to give me money every week.

Clair: He paid you for working?

Leon: Yes he did towards the last. I never spent a nickel.

Clair: Didn't you get a brand new car?

Leon: Yeah. Cars were \$1200 bucks those days.

Clair: So were they easier to buy then they are now?

Leon: Much easier.

Clair: So in effect people were wealthier then than they are now.

Leon: It was easier from the stand point of dollars and cents.

Clair: The young people that they ran around with. Did they drive new cars?

Leon: Yeah, they drove new cars.

Leon: I think Mother thought if I would get a new car I might get a girlfriend.

Clair: Was she right?

Clair: That Turtle-neck skating place...?

Leon: Turtle-neck? That was down by Bird-in-Hand.

Clair: That was an ice skating rink or a pond?

Leon: It was a pond where the Mennonites went Sunday afternoon.

I don't know exactly where that was. It must have been near the Brubaker duck farm.

That's where I was the day my grandmother died.

Clair: You said the place that Sol Beiler lived needed a father. What did you mean by that? You were at his sale a few years ago?

Leon: It was since we moved back to PA.

Leon: That place always needed a father, even when Doll Kuckle lived there. She was an horrendous housekeeper. She kept things in terrible shape. When Sol came in he didn't do anything for it.

Clair: But the saying. Was it just a saying or were you making a comment about our dad?

Leon: That's just a saying. The place needed a daddy.

Leon: I don't know who lives there now.

Clair: Are they Amish?

Leon: Oh, they're all Amish.

Leon: Except Elam Reif. He weighs in there somehow. Elam lived there a number of years before he was married. The same with Sol Beiler. Sol Beiler wasn't married when he first came. His sisters came in a couple days a week to take care of things.

Clair: I didn't know Amish would take up housekeeping before they get married.

Leon: Oh, Soli did. He finally married one of the Spiker girls. He married pretty well.

Clair: The story about teachers coming home with you occasionally. I'm still curious about that.

Leon: (They did that) once a year.

Clair: Ellen couldn't seem to remember that.

Leon: She must remember that. Miss Eshleman. She came along home a couple times.

Clair: Once a year? They did it with every student?

Leon: They only went where they were invited, I guess.

Leon: Miss Eshleman was from Lancaster. She would stay only one night.

Miriam: Maybe they did that to get to know their pupils parents. That's the way they did it then. Now they bring the parents out to the school.

Leon: It is strange that you say that. I hadn't thought about that.

Leon: I don't know if it was more than Miss Eshleman or not.

Clair: Do you remember how that made you feel? I would think that would be uncomfortable to have the teacher come home.

Leon: No, I don't think so. Not until Miss Good got there. She was a bone of contention too...in that she was such a poor disciplinarian.

Clair: So did she come to your house?

Leon: No, I don't think so.

Clair: You talked about Ledselter's.

Leon: Ledselter's Grove?

Clair: You don't remember where that was exactly?

Leon: I can remember going up through Clay, I think. Up there somewhere.

Back in the woods, there. It's west of Ephrata.

Clair: Was it outside, like a campmeeting ground?

Leon: The only thing I remember was a platform in a grove of trees.

I remember Cousin Lee from York. Mom used to like Cousin Lee.

Miriam: This wasn't religious?

Leon: No, hillbillys.

Clair: I can't picture my parents doing that. That sort of fascinates me.

Leon: Well, you see they didn't go to church every Sunday until us kids were 12, 13, or 14.

Leon: Some people just didn't go to church every Sunday.

Miriam: A lot of churches didn't have church every Sunday.

Leon: That's the way it was...at Stumptown.

Leon: You see my parents&.my father drove a newspaper route into Lebanon County Sunday mornings for a long time. Uncle Issac got him into that during the Depression.

He would just through them off. I rode with him a couple times. You would just through the bundles off. He would go into Lancaster to load up. &..So we had to do the milking Sunday mornings.

Clair: And he would get back too late for church then?

Leon: That is what he thought.

Clair: So you didn't go to church regularly until you were 12 or 13?

Leon: Yeah.

Clair: That would have been '35 or '37. Then where did you go to church?

Leon: Stumptown. I remember the first teacher I had, Miss Herr, Miss Fanny Herr.

Down beside the furnace there in the basement of the Stumptown church.

Clair: Did that church look pretty much like it does now?

Leon: I guess it changed some. The inside is about the same, I guess. The only thing that is different&...it used to be&. The men were separated from the women, you know. Sit on one side or "ta-other".

Clair: Do you remember Carpenter's starting? When was that?

Leon: 1939. That was the year we fixed the cow barn.

Clair: So what did he (father) do? Make it bigger or what?

Leon: Yeah, he put in stalls for 20 cows, I guess. 20 or 30, I forget.

Clair: Was that the normal size dairy for those years?

Leon: Well, we only had 50 acres. That was small for the area. I don't know how much the Lehmans had out there. They had 60 some acres, I think.

Clair: Did all the farmers have cows?

Leon: Most of the Amish had a dairy. The Lehmans had a dairy. Albrights were too small, of course.

Clair: So what do you remember about Carpenter's? Did John Wentling come around to visit or how did you find out about Carpenter's?

Leon: John Wentling and Willis Kling...they asked us to come there. Of course, we said we would.

Miriam: It was a Union church. These men thought there would be need for people right in

that area instead of driving different directions to church.

Clair: Was your family a part of this?

Miriam: Yes. You see, we drove the opposite direction to church...to Metzler's Church.

And they (Buckwalters) drove to Stumptown.

Clair: So when it started...how big was it?

Leon: 30 some.

Miriam: I don't remember that either. Did we have Sunday school in the afternoon at first?

Leon: Yep, Sunday school in the afternoon.

Miriam: I guess until they saw how many people would attend and then when it drew they decided to have it Sunday mornings.

Clair: So is Carpenter's where you first met Miriam or did you know Miriam before?

Leon: No, I didn't know her before.

Miriam: I was 13 when Carpenter's started. Of course, it was a small group. There was about a half a dozen teenagers. And we would do a lot of things together. My parents thought I was too young to be in with that group. I usually insisted until I was allowed to.

We would go away to visit different churches on Sunday evenings together. And we would go to each others' homes. We would spend a lot of time in each others' homes.

Clair: Was there a formal youth organization?

Miriam: Later on I guess there was. In the beginning it was pretty informal.

Leon: On Sunday night there was young people's meetings. Often one of our sisters would have an essay. I was song leader one time at Stumptown and I didn't show up.

Clair: Were you song leader at Carpenter's?

Leon: Yeah, that is where I got my start.

Clair: Any other leadership things you did there at Carpenter's?

Leon: No, not really. I remember that Richard and I dug a grave one time. I don't know whose grave that was.

Clair: I didn't think Mennonites used that graveyard. Were the Klings in charge of the cemetery?

Leon: I don't remember. I don't think they were in charge of it, necessarily.

Clair: So did our sisters have any leadership roles at Carpenter's?

Leon: I don't think so, Clair.

Miriam: Well, they probably participated in young people's meetings that were held every other week or once a month.

Leon: Yeah, I can remember them having essays to give. I can remember Ellen getting in a "go-around" with mom about an essay she had to give. She was writing things that mom didn't agree with. I forget what it was.

Leon: You're learning stuff aren't you dear?

Leon: Yeah, those were the days. Those were the days when money didn't mean anything. Worked on the farm for years and didn't get anything.

Miriam: I thought you said your dad gave you money every week?

Leon: He did towards the last.

Clair: How old were you when he started doing that?

Leon: I was past the 20 mark. How old was I when I got married?

Miriam: How old were you? 24.

Leon: 24? Probably around 20 (when dad started paying him).

Clair: Did you ask them for money or whose idea was it?

Leon: No, I never asked for anything. It was sort of a bad setup there. Freeland, he claimed to have a sick stomach, you know? So I did most of the work around the place.

So, I guess he felt guilty; had a guilt complex and started giving me some money.

Miriam: The money was a way to keep you on the farm and take it over.

Leon: Anyway, in 1947, I was picking corn and I decided to take a job at Mellinger's.

Clair: It was the corn picking that pushed you over the edge?

Leon: In '47 I started at Mellinger's. We got married in December, '47.

Clair: All of dad's stomach problems...I don't remember them keeping him from working.

That is new to me. Your saying he got out of a lot of work.

Leon: Oh, yeah.

Clair: My recollection of him in Bareville at their truck farm is that he always was working.

Clair: Maybe he was simply taking advantage of you at a certain age?

Leon: Oh, I can't say I was taken advantage of, necessarily, but, for instance, I can remember one time I was shovel harrowing tobacco or corn or some of both. And they were praising me because I got so much done one evening...I can remember one time Warren Albright...he used to work for us a lot...Warren said that Freeland was going between the house and the barn singing, "I never feel that way...I always paint the clouds with sunshine." And Warren says, "No, you never do."

Clair: Dad was a pessimist?

Leon: Yeah.

Leon: Saturday mom would always have sweet potatoes. She would fry them up. The leftovers she would fry up for Sunday noon time. And the puddings...she would always great on pork puddings. Mush and puddin. Always had that stuff for breakfast during the winter months.

Leon: We didn't butcher any pigs. We always butchered a beef every year.

Leon: Mom never baked bread. She always had "Novy" come in. "Novy" was the guy who drove for Cooper Bakery in Leacock. Bread was 6 cents a loaf. We used to go into (Cooper's) there with the milk truck. And sell wholesale. That was when I was relief man for Martin's.

Clair: What is Martin's?

Leon: That is something we didn't touch on. That was C. W. in Leola, there.

Clair: You mean Carp Martin when he had his milk route?

Leon: Yep. I was the only guy who know all their routes for about three years. Carp and

Earl. Did Earl have the business when we were in New Holland yet? I remember that he came down there one time at our door. I was sleepy, I remember. And you told him I would rather work for Keiper Brothers. This was after I had quit.

Clair: When did you work for Martin's?

Leon: When I was on the farm. Carp and Earl both had milk routes at the time. And of course Harold entered into the picture, too.

Leon: There were a couple times I worked all night with the milk routes and then worked all day on the farm. I can remember pitching wheat sheaves once all day for Levi Stoltzfus after working all night. &&..I can remember working for a buck a day. That was John B. Stoltzfus, I think. There wasn't any money during the Depreession , you know. We didn't have any money during the Depression but we ate well.

Leon: The four of us: Dave Horst, Rorher Leaman, and Levi Stoltzfus&.of course, he didn't allow any tractors of his place..he was the bishop&&.Dad always keep a couple horses for that purpose. Pretty much that is the reason dad kept horses. And of course, Uncle Issac had riding horses at the farm. My dad was one of the first one to have a tractor. He bought that old Fordson down at Bird-in-Hand. I can remember Dave Horst being down there&..dad was selling horses to Aaron Kolb. Dave Horst was in there and says, "I can see that this guy is getting ready for a tractor". So, it wasn't long before he bought a tractor. Old Fordson...boy oh boy that thing did grind! Finally she stopped one day short never to go again. Something in the rear end, I think. Then he bought the F-12 Farmall. He bought it at the Farmall place in Ephrata. That's what he had when he finished up

farming in Upper Leacock township.

Clair: Did dad own much other machinery?

Leon: No, he never had much. The Farmall was a 1937. We didn't have a bailer or a corn picker. We picked corn by hand. We had a hay loader that we ran over the row.

That's the way Dave Horst, Rorher Leaman, Levi Stoltzfus, and father worked together.

During those times...I was 120 pounds. During the summer months we worked that loader, whew! Especially when a certain Amish kid drove the horses! He drove too fast!

One guy was taking the hay off the loader and pushing it up to the guy in front. Marv Horst and I used to trade off on that job. I had forgotten&I used to yell at the Amish kid...I visited Levi one time shortly after his wife died...I thought I was free to go..as I was pulling away there comes an Amishman jumping over the fence..it was Johnny.

Johnny's son is farming there now.

Clair: Amos' grandson is farming there now? John was Amos' son?

Leon: Well, let's see. John was Levi's son.

Clair: So Amos and John were brothers?

Leon: Levi bought the farm when father sold it. Amos farmed there. Amos didn't have any sons. So John's son is on the farm now. John was farming Levi's place. The Amish have grossdaddy houses. That's where I went to visit Amos at the grossdaddy house.

Clair: Is Amos still living? Yes, Amos is. His father was 90 something when he died, Levi. He was like my dad used to say, "He'll live as long as he sees anyone else living."