

Interview of Eiler Ravenholt by H.B. Simonsen
Transcript reviewed and corrected by H.B. Simonsen
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[SPEAKER_02]: I'd like to ask you about your full name.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah, my full name is Eiler Ravenholt, but as a child I was of course known as Eiler Raunholt.

[SPEAKER_02]: Sure.

[SPEAKER_02]: And when and where were you born?

[SPEAKER_01]: I was born on the farm between Luck and Milltown in 1923, and I was the
[SPEAKER_01]: third surviving son of Ansgar and Christine Ravenholt, or it was pronounced Raunholt in the community in those days, and that pronunciation continues even though we have changed the name to pronounce it as Ravenholt, and in fact my brothers have all added the E between the V and the N to

[SPEAKER_01]: make it a little easier for people to pronounce and spell.

[SPEAKER_01]: I was number three in a family of nine children, two sets of twins, and I have a twin sister.

[SPEAKER_01]: What was the names of your parents?

[SPEAKER_01]: Ansgar and Christine.

[SPEAKER_01]: And my mother's maiden name was Petersen.

[SPEAKER_01]: And were they born in this country?

[SPEAKER_01]: They were born in this country.

[SPEAKER_01]: They were in fact born in this area.

[SPEAKER_01]: My father was born in West Denmark, and my mother born a few miles west of West Denmark on a farm.

[SPEAKER_01]: So their parents, your grandparents came from Denmark.

[SPEAKER_01]: My grandparents were all from Denmark, and my grandfather had come over in 1870 from Thorning, the area of Thorning sogn.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah, that's near Silkeborg.

[SPEAKER_01]: Pardon?

[SPEAKER_01]: That's near Silkeborg.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah, nearby Viborg.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yes, between Silkeborg and Viborg, that's true, yes.

[SPEAKER_01]: And he had worked in Minnesota for some years, and then... Excuse me, would you?

[SPEAKER_02]: I'll just cut that out because I asked, I put that about Silkeborg.

[SPEAKER_02]: We don't, you just, he was born in Thorning sogn.

[SPEAKER_02]: Would you go on from there?

[SPEAKER_01]: Well, from Thorning sogn, he...

[SPEAKER_01]: As a young man, he came to this country in 1870.

[SPEAKER_01]: He already had a brother in Iowa at the time, and he had another brother that followed him over here, Andreas.

[SPEAKER_01]: I've forgotten the name of the brother in Iowa who died at a young age.

[SPEAKER_01]: But anyway, he worked initially in Minnesota and then in 1874 he took a train to Salt Lake City and then took an ox cart to Helena, Montana, where he mined gold for the National Mining Company in a place called Unionville.

[SPEAKER_01]: which was right near Helena and worked there for two years.

[SPEAKER_01]: And then decided to go back to Denmark, traveling first with a German fellow by rowboat until they got down far enough.

[SPEAKER_01]: I'm not, I don't remember the,

[SPEAKER_01]: The steamboats didn't come up the Missouri River as far as Helena, at least at that time they were having Indian wars in Montana and the Dakotas in that period of time.

[SPEAKER_01]: And he then went back to Denmark, stopping at the Expo in

[SPEAKER_01]: Philadelphia in 1876.

[SPEAKER_01]: Went back to Thorning where he married a cousin by the name of Johanna Thestup who was had trained as a butter maker and they

[SPEAKER_01]: proceeded to farm in that area for several years and then having had two children with them they again decided to emigrate to America I think it was in 82 or 83 and at this time he came to initially they went to Michigan

[SPEAKER_01]: and then he managed to have his pocket picked of, he had gotten his bank drafts cashed that he had with him, some fifteen hundred dollars and lost all of that so he ended up destitute in Iowa initially and then from Iowa they came up to

[SPEAKER_01]: the Luck area, and he proceeded to settle and work here.

[SPEAKER_01]: In 1885, they organized the first cooperative creamery in Wisconsin, and my grandmother,

[SPEAKER_01]: or Johanna was the first butter maker of that.

[SPEAKER_01]: And Anders became the collector of the cream from the farms and would travel by horse-drawn wagon to pick up the cream

[SPEAKER_01]: measure the cream which was and then they also hand skimmed it at that time and brought it to the creamery.

[SPEAKER_01]: I did a recent effort to go through the minutes of the old creamery board and he had a 20 mile trip or 22 mile trip to pick up cream each day.

[SPEAKER_01]: and in 1886 they started the creamery on the shore of Little Butternut and the other route man was a fellow by the name of Christian Henriksen who ends up being my great-grandfather on my mother's side and they were

[SPEAKER_01]: He and his, Anders and his wife then took over, contracted to run the creamery after running it on a, they ran it only in summertime from late April until early November.

[SPEAKER_01]: And they would then haul the

[SPEAKER_01]: Most of the butter was sold, putting it in 60-pound wooden tubs.

[SPEAKER_01]: They hauled it to Taylor's Falls, which meant a journey of some 20 miles each way by wagon, and then put it on the train there.

[SPEAKER_01]: And it got sent to New York, where it was sold through brokerage firms.

[SPEAKER_01]: You said it was a cooperative.

[SPEAKER_01]: It was a cooperative, yes.

[SPEAKER_01]: Do you know how it was organized?

[SPEAKER_01]: Well, it was organized by a group of people getting together.

[SPEAKER_01]: In fact, they organized it with a subscription of

[SPEAKER_01]: There were 73 shares of stock that were sold.

[SPEAKER_01]: A few people bought more than one share and most of them were purchased with \$5 down and they owed the other \$10, it was \$15 a share, then they had to pay 10% interest on

[SPEAKER_01]: the amount of money that they owed.

[SPEAKER_01]: There was an effort to locate it both here on the shore of Big Butternut
[SPEAKER_01]: by the fellow who had the original trading post here, William Foster, who offered them an acre of land to locate it here.
[SPEAKER_01]: And then there was Niels Petersen in West Denmark who offered an acre of land there.
[SPEAKER_01]: as nearly all of the members of the cooperative were Danes, they voted to locate it at West Denmark and built it there in 85 and 86 and started operation in early June of 86.
[SPEAKER_02]: Was it common at that time to set up cooperative creameries in Wisconsin?
[SPEAKER_01]: This was the first cooperative creamery in Wisconsin.
[SPEAKER_01]: There was an earlier cooperative creamery set up in Clark's Grove in southern Minnesota in Freeborn County that was the first one that I've been able to track.
[SPEAKER_02]: The idea of founding cooperative creameries, where did that come from, do you think?
[SPEAKER_01]: The first cooperative, as I remember, was organized in Britain in, I think, the 1840s at a place called Rockdale.
[SPEAKER_01]: But I know that it was common in Denmark
[SPEAKER_01]: by the 1870s to form cooperatives, and I know that the movement came to this country at about that time.
[SPEAKER_01]: So it was the Danes who brought the idea to this area, at least.
[SPEAKER_01]: They certainly furthered it, and it was not only in this area, but there were a lot of
[SPEAKER_01]: cooperative creameries established in the Upper Midwest, in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and also Nebraska.
[SPEAKER_02]: So there was an early Danish community in the West Denmark area.
[SPEAKER_01]: Actually, Edwin can give you much more of the early
[SPEAKER_01]: history and that he's done more work on it, but in the 1870s it started to develop.
[SPEAKER_01]: The founder of it, of the community, is more or less credited to a fellow known as M.C.
[SPEAKER_01]: Petersen.
[SPEAKER_01]: And
[SPEAKER_01]: The cooperative creamery, my grandfather actually took it over on a three-year contract in 1888.
[SPEAKER_01]: And this, after two years of operating it,
[SPEAKER_01]: where they got a certain percentage to pay for the operation.
[SPEAKER_01]: He asked to buy out.
[SPEAKER_01]: I've never been able to understand precisely what led to the disagreement.
[SPEAKER_01]: They brought in a new butter maker.
[SPEAKER_01]: by the name of Hjort, who is a Dane.
[SPEAKER_01]: In fact, they advertised in Dannevirke for a Danish butter maker, both before my grandfather got the contract and also to get his replacement.
[SPEAKER_01]: Okay.
[SPEAKER_02]: Your grandparents on your mother's side, they came from Denmark as well.
[SPEAKER_01]: They also came from Denmark, and they came from north of Aarhus.
[SPEAKER_01]: Kjellerup.
[SPEAKER_01]: Does that make sense?
[SPEAKER_01]: Kjellerup is not far from Thorning.

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[SPEAKER_01]: Oh, then I've... No, then it's... Hmm.

[SPEAKER_01]: I'm going to have to look at the map to remember where it was they came from.

[SPEAKER_01]: It was not so far from Aarhus.

[SPEAKER_01]: My grandfather had been on my mother's side, Niels Petersen, had been orphaned at a very young age.

[SPEAKER_01]: I think it's age of seven or eight.

[SPEAKER_01]: And he came over as a young man and

[SPEAKER_01]: He lived to be almost 96, so I can remember talking to him about his early years in this country.

[SPEAKER_01]: He went to work on farm in southern Wisconsin.

[SPEAKER_01]: And then he also worked in the lumber industry

[SPEAKER_01]: as a logger in northern Wisconsin in the early years.

[SPEAKER_01]: He told me that he got \$18 a month and room and board, that the Irish got only \$16 a month and room and board, and the Germans also got \$16 a month and room and board, but they got free beer.

[SPEAKER_01]: But not for the Danes.

[SPEAKER_01]: But the Danes, they got \$18 a month.

[SPEAKER_01]: ... had two extra dollars and no beer.

[SPEAKER_01]: And no beer.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_01]: So... And my grandmother had come over as a very young girl with Christian Henriksen.

[SPEAKER_01]: And I...

[SPEAKER_01]: I know that they lived not too far from Aarhus before they came over, but she went... I'm trying to remember.

[SPEAKER_01]: They came over about 1882 or 83, and they...

[SPEAKER_01]: actually as a young girl, they lived in West Denmark or settled in West Denmark right down the creek that flows out of Little Butternut and right next to the creamery.

[SPEAKER_01]: And at the age of 14, she was employed to wash the cream cans

[SPEAKER_01]: for 50 cents a week, and the first summer I know she earned \$7.

[SPEAKER_01]: Her father was getting, the first year got \$33, but the next years were getting \$30 a month during the summer months for

[SPEAKER_01]: collecting cream and bringing it in.

[SPEAKER_01]: And he also was responsible for building the ice house that was part of the creamery and also took the contract, I know, to fill the ice house with ice.

[SPEAKER_02]: You said they were separating the milk from the cream by hand to begin with.

[SPEAKER_02]: That's correct.

[SPEAKER_02]: But I'm aware in Denmark there was a cream separator.

[SPEAKER_01]: They came in a little later.

[SPEAKER_01]: From Denmark, what?

[SPEAKER_01]: No, I mean here the use of a cream separator came into use later.

[SPEAKER_01]: In these early years they separated it with a skimming spoon and they measured, they put the milk into a settling bowl

[SPEAKER_01]: can and those settling cans were they had two gallon ones and they had six gallon ones and they had a glass tube on the side and it was the job of the collector to measure the amount of cream and each

[SPEAKER_01]: inch of cream was to generate one pound of butter and then they had to skim it and skim it carefully and of course the housewives

[SPEAKER_01]: wanted them to be as generous as possible in measuring and as cautious as possible in terms of the amount of cream that they took so that they would leave a little of that behind.

[SPEAKER_01]: And in fact, he got into a problem the second or third year in running the creamery.

[SPEAKER_01]: My grandfather, Anders Raunholt, was getting an extra pound of butter for every 16 inches of cream.

[SPEAKER_01]: But my grandfather, my great grandfather, Christian Henriksen, was getting an extra pound of butter only for every 28 pounds of inches of cream.

[SPEAKER_01]: And so this was deemed to be unfair.

[SPEAKER_01]: to the farmers that Anders Raunholt was collecting from compared to the farmers that Christian Henriksen was collecting from.

[SPEAKER_01]: So then they switched routes for the second half of the summer.

[SPEAKER_02]: Very good.

[SPEAKER_02]: That's a good way to solve the problem.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: What I thought when I asked about this cream separator is that I think that one of the first small cream separators that was invented was invented in Denmark.

[SPEAKER_02]: That's quite possible.

[SPEAKER_02]: And I know it was exported.

[SPEAKER_02]: It was brought over here to several places, but maybe you had a different, you might have

[SPEAKER_02]: I'm not sure how early it came into the country.

[SPEAKER_02]: That's a detail we don't need to.

[SPEAKER_02]: But that's about getting an idea of your family background.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: Very good.

[SPEAKER_02]: Where did you go to school?

[SPEAKER_01]: Where did I go to school?

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah, to start with.

[SPEAKER_01]: Well, I went to grade school in Milltown.

[SPEAKER_01]: for the first almost six years and then in 1935 in the midst of the depression and with the drought that we had in 1934 and the cattle were mortgaged and they were no longer able to bring as much on the market as was owed on them.

[SPEAKER_01]: so the bank refused to let you sell them and still you had to feed them and you went deep in debt trying to buy feed for the cattle and the farm was foreclosed on and we were moved off the farm and

[SPEAKER_01]: At that time I was twelve years old and we moved for the summer into Helvegs hytte (? I'm not sure about the word; hbs) and then in the winter we moved into the Dane school at West Denmark which was a two-room school.

[SPEAKER_01]: There were eight of us children living with our parents and

[SPEAKER_01]: the Dane School.

[SPEAKER_01]: My mother hung up sheets on wires that has a very high ceiling and separated the two rooms into four rooms and we managed to live there for the winter and fortunately the WPA had started up in the summer of 35 and my father... What was that?

[SPEAKER_01]: This was the Works Progress Administration.

[SPEAKER_01]: It was a government program to put unemployed people to work.

[SPEAKER_01]: And they were getting \$35 a month for their labor.

[SPEAKER_01]: My father had been able to rescue

[SPEAKER_01]: four or five cows and two horses and a few pieces of equipment out of the foreclosure sale.

[SPEAKER_01]: So he got a little extra on WPA for furnishing the horse and wagon to help in the work.

[SPEAKER_01]: They worked

[SPEAKER_01]: on a variety of jobs.

[SPEAKER_01]: Some of it was road work and they also built the golf course in Luck in 1937.

[SPEAKER_01]: That's early.

[SPEAKER_01]: And doing work of that nature that was government sponsored.

[SPEAKER_02]: So your schooling started in Milltown.

[SPEAKER_01]: And then it went to

[SPEAKER_01]: one year in Little Butternut Country School which was a one-room school and then the next year we moved to a little farm north of Milltown that was only 20 acres and my dad continued with WPA and we went to Milltown grade school

[SPEAKER_01]: for the eighth grade and then also actually we moved to a neighboring farm that was 40 acres and continued there for two years and then we moved to Luck area and I switched school to the Luck High School and graduated from there in 1941.

[SPEAKER_01]: These schools you have been talking about, they were American public schools.

[SPEAKER_01]: They were American public schools.

[SPEAKER_01]: The last year I went to summer school was in 1935, the year we lost our farm.

[SPEAKER_01]: The summer school, that was a Danish school.

[SPEAKER_01]: That was Danish.

[SPEAKER_01]: But it was called Ferie School.

[SPEAKER_01]: Well, it was called Ferie School, but I think we also knew it just as summer school.

[SPEAKER_01]: But that was in all Danish.

[SPEAKER_01]: That was all Danish.

[SPEAKER_01]: Language and all who went there were of Danish background.

[SPEAKER_01]: uh... history we had uh... the minister at West Denmark uh... was a fellow by the name of Holger Koch who was uh... a very good storyteller and told interesting stories of Danish history as well as uh... old testament stories and uh...

[SPEAKER_01]: We had a good deal of singing.

[SPEAKER_01]: We also had a fair amount of physical education as a part of it.

[SPEAKER_01]: Singing songs from Denmark, I guess.

[SPEAKER_01]: Singing Danish songs.

[SPEAKER_01]: about and things of that nature as well as hymns.

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[SPEAKER_02]: So you graduated from the high school?

[SPEAKER_01]: In 1941.

[SPEAKER_01]: Then went to work in the harvest fields of North Dakota for the summer.

[SPEAKER_01]: I got sleeping sickness or encephalitis.

[SPEAKER_01]: while I was there and hospitalized.

[SPEAKER_01]: But we fortunately recovered.

[SPEAKER_01]: We had a horse that died of it that summer.

[SPEAKER_01]: It was, I think, known as equine encephalitis.

[SPEAKER_01]: At least it was more fatal for the horses than it was for humans.

[SPEAKER_01]: And then

[SPEAKER_01]: fall came, I went to work down in St.

[SPEAKER_01]: Paul at Montgomery Wards.

[SPEAKER_01]: Pearl Harbor came about, and Montgomery Wards, which was a big catalog retailer,

[SPEAKER_01]: found their business dropped, got laid off there.

[SPEAKER_01]: I worked in a hamburger shop for a couple of months and then I decided to do something else.

[SPEAKER_01]: I went to an N.Y.A.

[SPEAKER_01]: school, National Youth Administration school, to take training in sheet metal work for about eight weeks.

[SPEAKER_01]: and then they shipped me to Seattle and I went to work in the Bremerton Navy Yard, which is Puget Sound Navy Yard, and worked there for some six months and then I was about to be drafted into the service.

[SPEAKER_01]: I wanted to come home and spend Christmas with the family before going in, which I did, and then went into the

[SPEAKER_01]: service in the spring of 43 and took basic training in the Army Air Force.

[SPEAKER_01]: and Atlantic City and we were billeted in the ninth floor of the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

[SPEAKER_01]: Used to do our close harder drill on the boardwalk and calisthenics on the beach and then after some I suppose six weeks or so of basic training

[SPEAKER_01]: I got shipped to City College in New York for processing and sent to Niagara University.

[SPEAKER_01]: nine months until the spring of 44 when they closed down the program and sent us all as replacements to the infantry and then went overseas with an infantry division in August of 1944 and went into combat up in Belgium in October of 44 with the

[SPEAKER_01]: Canadian First Army, we were attached to them for a while to clear the Schelde estuary of the Germans so that they could use the port of Antwerp, which had been captured in late August, early September, but they had not been able to use it because the Germans controlled the eastern shore of the estuary.

[SPEAKER_01]: And then after some weeks there, got moved down into the Aachen area in the U.S.

[SPEAKER_01]: First Army and fought what became known as the Battle of the Siegfried Line in the area east of Aachen and continued in that area

[SPEAKER_01]: until in the late February we started the major drive that took us to Cologne by 7th of March and took Cologne and then we went down across the Rhine River at Remagen where we captured a bridge intact that survived the first a couple of weeks to

[SPEAKER_01]: permit us to get across the Rhine.

[SPEAKER_01]: And then I was with an armored spearhead that drove on surrounding the Ruhr Pocket, which encircled some 350,000

[SPEAKER_01]: members of the Wehrmacht and then continued.

[SPEAKER_01]: That happened on April 1st, that we linked up with the forces coming from the north, the U.S.

[SPEAKER_01]: 9th Army under

[SPEAKER_01]: Montgomery and we linked up on Easter Sunday, April 1st that year at a little town called Lipstadt and then we continued east from there and on the around the 10th of April I came down ill with hepatitis and was evacuated from there

[SPEAKER_01]: lay in a tent hospital for some days until they diagnosed me as having hepatitis and they airlifted me to a hospital in Paris.

[SPEAKER_01]: I was there for a couple of days and then they evacuated me to England and I was in a hospital in England for another month or two and

[SPEAKER_01]: By this time, of course, the war was over, and we thought we were heading back to the U.S.

[SPEAKER_01]: Instead, we found ourselves in another hospital near Winchester, England, with nothing to do but

[SPEAKER_01]: lots of time and I ended up meeting an English girl and after a courtship of some months I got sent back to France where I was first made dispatcher in a trucking company up near Reims and then

[SPEAKER_01]: After a couple of months there, I was staffing a PW camp with some 500 German prisoners.

[SPEAKER_01]: We also employed a number of Polish as guards.

[SPEAKER_01]: February I was heading back to the United States.

[SPEAKER_01]: In the meantime I'd been back on leave to England and gotten engaged to my girlfriend.

[SPEAKER_01]: We came back, I got back in early March and started the University of Minnesota a week after I got out of the Army.

[SPEAKER_02]: Studied what?

[SPEAKER_01]: at the University of Minnesota studying.

[SPEAKER_01]: Initially I was studying physics and math and then I got increasingly caught up in finding, I think, an interest that

[SPEAKER_01]: resulted probably from my wartime experiences.

[SPEAKER_01]: I got more interested in the social sciences.

[SPEAKER_01]: I ended up taking a degree in education with a major in the social studies and minors in math and physics, and I went into teaching.

[SPEAKER_01]: And I taught for, oh we had, our first child was born the week before I graduated.

[SPEAKER_01]: I had gone to school both winter and summer and managed to get through the university starting in the spring of 46 and finishing in August of 48.

[SPEAKER_01]: with my degree and had a teaching job.

[SPEAKER_01]: My mother-in-law in England suffered a heart attack and my wife, being one of two children, her brother was in the British Army, she

[SPEAKER_01]: felt some need to go home and to be with her mother and so she departed in December of 48 and the following

[SPEAKER_01]: June I followed her over there and went to the University of Southampton on the GI Bill for a year before we came back to the US.

[SPEAKER_01]: I continued my career in teaching for twelve years and then we got heavily involved in politics.

[SPEAKER_01]: How did that come about?

[SPEAKER_01]: I just started getting involved in the local

[SPEAKER_01]: Democratic or known as the Democratic Farmer Labor Party in Minnesota and as a result of fairly intense interest in organizing

[SPEAKER_01]: and expanding the party's influence in Mankato, Minnesota area.

[SPEAKER_01]: I got to know Hubert Humphrey fairly well.

[SPEAKER_01]: He was in talking to my class once and at Mankato High School I was teaching twelfth grade

[SPEAKER_01]: senior social studies, mostly government at that time.

[SPEAKER_01]: And then I got invited to, if I wanted to go to Washington for a while, I took a leave of absence.

[SPEAKER_01]: By Hubert Humphrey.

[SPEAKER_01]: By Hubert Humphrey, right.

[SPEAKER_01]: working for him after two years.

[SPEAKER_01]: He was heavily involved in the effort to become Lyndon Johnson's vice presidential nominee in the summer of 64, and I had to make a decision on whether I was going to go back to

[SPEAKER_01]: Mankato to teach are going to stay with him.

[SPEAKER_01]: By that time my wife was also working for Hubert Humphrey and we were quite heavily engaged in that and decided that I would continue in that role and

[SPEAKER_01]: I stayed with him through the, involved in the campaign in 64 and then again in 68 I was actually his emissary on the Johnson campaign until President Johnson announced that he was not going to seek re-election and then heavily engaged in the Humphrey effort to win the nomination

[SPEAKER_01]: for the rest of that year.

[SPEAKER_01]: And we, of course, eventually lost the election to Nixon by a narrow margin.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, Hubert Humphrey was the Democratic... Vice president.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah, he was vice president under Johnson.

[SPEAKER_01]: But in 68... In 68, he became the nominee.

[SPEAKER_02]: To become president.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah, and so I was heavily involved in the effort to secure the nomination and in the struggle in Chicago.

[SPEAKER_01]: My wife was also working, heavily involved in that.

[SPEAKER_01]: And we, after we lost, of course, the question was where were we going to go then.

[SPEAKER_01]: I had heard that there was a position that was under the jurisdiction of Senator Inouye of Hawaii, and I asked Humphrey if he would talk to him about it and see if there was some chance of my getting that.

[SPEAKER_01]: He reported back, no, that that was

[SPEAKER_01]: already committed to someone else, but then Senator Noe called me and needed an

[SPEAKER_01]: new administer assistant which was his top staff job on his personal staff and I got selected for that and continued as his administer assistant for 12 years and my wife went to work initially for

[SPEAKER_01]: a new senator from Alaska.

[SPEAKER_01]: They did not get along very well together.

[SPEAKER_01]: She then took a job with Senator Cranston of California as his office manager.

[SPEAKER_01]: And when Humphrey came back to the Senate two years later, he encouraged her to come back as his office manager.

[SPEAKER_01]: And so she did that and stayed with him until he died.

[SPEAKER_01]: I was involved in his effort again in 72 as a volunteer.

[SPEAKER_01]: Senator Noe was generous in letting me spend a good deal of my time trying to help him.

[SPEAKER_01]: Then after 12 years with Senator Noe,

[SPEAKER_02]: Just a word more about Hubert Humphrey.

[SPEAKER_02]: In the 1968 campaign, I guess that was like modern presidential campaigns that you travel around the country for a long, long period.

[SPEAKER_02]: And I guess Hubert Humphrey did that.

[SPEAKER_02]: Very definitely.

[SPEAKER_02]: Were you along with him?

[SPEAKER_01]: No, in 64 I had, I volunteered or was one of his advance men and I would go to various places and spend three, four days setting up the event that he was going to attend.

[SPEAKER_01]: In 68

[SPEAKER_01]: After the nomination at the end of August, I was designated by some as the Humphrey spy on the Nixon campaign.

[SPEAKER_01]: I traveled the country with Vice President Nixon

[SPEAKER_01]: recording all of his speeches, sending them back each night on telephone line so that we would have an accurate transcript by the next morning of what he had said and then observing how he was doing, reporting back to our campaign information that might be useful and helpful in the campaign.

[SPEAKER_01]: and continued that through to the final weekend when I rejoined the Humphrey campaign in Los Angeles, the final weekend before the election.

[SPEAKER_02]: So I got to see a good deal of the country.

[SPEAKER_02]: So you've always been a liberal Democrat.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: Where do you think that political outlook did come from?

[SPEAKER_01]: I don't know.

[SPEAKER_01]: It was common in our family.

[SPEAKER_01]: And my dad was certainly a supporter of Franklin Roosevelt, and in Wisconsin he was a supporter

[SPEAKER_01]: of the progressive movement which was headed by the La Follettes.

[SPEAKER_01]: My father had a fairly deep interest in political action.

[SPEAKER_01]: I can remember going with him to hear one of the La Follettes running for governor back

[SPEAKER_01]: as a child, and I suppose it was probably in 1938.

[SPEAKER_01]: We were, as a family, quite—our whole family, really, all nine of us were what you might call liberal Democrats.

[SPEAKER_02]: Did that go with the rest of the Danish community here in West Denmark?

[SPEAKER_01]: Certainly West Denmark was a pretty liberal community, and I would say that this was a

[SPEAKER_02]: Can you see any reason why?

[SPEAKER_02]: Why were you on that political side more than another side?

[SPEAKER_02]: If it's possible to explain that sort of thing.

[SPEAKER_01]: I think that it certainly grew out of our sense of community.

[SPEAKER_01]: I wouldn't say that we were

[SPEAKER_01]: that there was some particular training that brought us in that direction in terms of our exposure to specific teachers or something like that.

[SPEAKER_01]: I'm not aware that there's anything that I connected to.

[SPEAKER_01]: I know that I got enamored with Humphrey largely as a result of vocations to listening to him

[SPEAKER_01]: talk about his involvement and his travels in Europe.

[SPEAKER_01]: I can remember a late night while I was still teaching, being together with him in a hotel room in Minneapolis, and he was telling about his recent trip to the Soviet Union and his meeting with Khrushchev.

[SPEAKER_01]: and it was just an exciting seminar into world events.

[SPEAKER_01]: I bet it had been...

[SPEAKER_01]: I was planning to take you to a local place here to have some lunch before I leave for my

[SPEAKER_01]: You have an appointment at 1 o'clock.

[SPEAKER_01]: I have an appointment at 1 o'clock, which means leaving here at 12.30.

[SPEAKER_02]: Oh, yes.

[SPEAKER_02]: So we're getting close to it.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, if I'm going to take you to lunch before I go.

[SPEAKER_02]: That would be nice.

[SPEAKER_02]: Very nice.

[SPEAKER_02]: I have a few more questions about the traditions that went on in West Denmark in the community.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: But as you have been away living in Washington for a long, long period of years, that might be difficult for you to tell me much about it.

[SPEAKER_02]: But are you aware of traditions that have been kept on in the West Denmark community?

[SPEAKER_01]: Well, they've changed some.

[SPEAKER_01]: certainly instead of Sommerlejr, which used to be a gathering of young people from Askov and Tyler and Alden and a few sometimes from Des Moines and so forth, which was common in my teen years, they now have family camp, which involves both the

[SPEAKER_01]: parents and the children and has a good deal of singing and crafts and they have that.

[SPEAKER_01]: And Marlis' son Mark is responsible for a great deal of that now.

[SPEAKER_00]: along with Ed's two daughters.

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[SPEAKER_00]: The three of them are leaders.

[SPEAKER_02]: So that's in West Denmark.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah, we have a family camp here that's very similar to what they have in Tyler.

[SPEAKER_01]: Oh, I didn't know that.

Okay.

[SPEAKER_02]: So that's similar kind of things, activities.

[SPEAKER_01]: Except it's at...

[SPEAKER_01]: more at the family level and not so much as a young teens kind of activity.

[SPEAKER_01]: Although some of it involved adults to some extent as well.

[SPEAKER_01]: But it's singing.

[SPEAKER_01]: That's one big thing.

[SPEAKER_02]: Singing is certainly... Folk dancing still?

[SPEAKER_01]: Folk dancing is still something that they do.

[SPEAKER_01]: Lectures?

[SPEAKER_01]: lectures, they do have those as well, and they also have crafts, which was something which we didn't have when I was young.

[SPEAKER_01]: But that's what you may call the Danish folk school tradition.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_01]: My father had attended

[SPEAKER_01]: Askov Folk School in his youth in Denmark.

[SPEAKER_01]: Anders died in 1913, and my father and his mother had gone over to Denmark and spent about a year, I think, at that time.

[SPEAKER_01]: Incidentally, Christian Henriksen that I mentioned, my great-grandfather, he died in 1892 at a young age.

[SPEAKER_01]: My grandfather, Niels Petersen, actually met Anna Henriksen in Tyler.

[SPEAKER_01]: And they got married and had eleven children, and both lived to an old age, so I knew them fairly well.

[SPEAKER_02]: You told me before that you belonged to the Happy Danes.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: That's your group.

[SPEAKER_02]: And you?

[SPEAKER_00]: The Sad Danes.

[SPEAKER_02]: The Holy Danes.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: Please say your full name and where you were born.

[SPEAKER_00]: Marlis Anderson Peterson.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I was born at the farm just south of town here.

[SPEAKER_00]: The second of five siblings, anyway.

[SPEAKER_00]: And my parents were both of Danish.

[SPEAKER_00]: Their ancestors were all Danish.

[SPEAKER_02]: But they were born in this country.

[SPEAKER_00]: Correct.

[SPEAKER_00]: But I don't know, do you have time?

[SPEAKER_00]: I don't think you can keep going Eiler.

[SPEAKER_01]: Well, you can talk to him after I've left.

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[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, yeah.

[SPEAKER_01]: No, you're going with me, aren't you?

[SPEAKER_00]: Oh, yeah, that's right, I am.

[SPEAKER_00]: But I, you know, maybe we can just kind of talk while we go to lunch and I can... Yeah, but if we go back here, you have an appointment for a... Yeah, I mean, in order to eat, we need... What time are you going to be through?

[SPEAKER_01]: Oh, you can come to Edwin's at 2 o'clock.

[SPEAKER_01]: I was supposed to tell you