

Interview of Jeanette Lillehoj by H.B. Simonsen
Transcript reviewed and corrected by H.B. Simonsen
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Input filename
Jeanette Lillehoj_hbs.srt

[SPEAKER_02]: And I'll start with asking about your full name, please.
[SPEAKER_00]: Jeanette Lillehoy.
[SPEAKER_00]: My maiden name was Rasmussen.
[SPEAKER_02]: Okay.
[SPEAKER_02]: And when and where were you born?
[SPEAKER_00]: I was born October 25, 1929, in a farmhouse in rural Iowa.
[SPEAKER_02]: Up in Kimballton?
[SPEAKER_00]: In the Kimballton area, yeah.
[SPEAKER_02]: Your parents, were they of Danish background?
[SPEAKER_00]: Yes, they both had Danish background.
[SPEAKER_00]: My mother's mother was... What was her name?
[SPEAKER_00]: My mother's name, Martha Jensen.
[SPEAKER_00]: And her father's name was Jens Jensen, another Jens Jensen.
[SPEAKER_00]: And her mother's name was Johanna.
[SPEAKER_00]: And her father was an immigrant.
[SPEAKER_00]: But he came as, I think, as a young man.
[SPEAKER_00]: I'm not sure just exactly how old he was.
[SPEAKER_00]: And her mother's parents were immigrants.
[SPEAKER_00]: And my father's name was Henning Rasmussen.
[SPEAKER_00]: And his parents were both immigrants.
[SPEAKER_00]: His father's name was Lars Rasmussen.
[SPEAKER_00]: And he was from Fyn.
[SPEAKER_00]: And my grandmother's name was Monica Henningsen.
[SPEAKER_00]: And she was also from Fyn.
[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah.
[SPEAKER_00]: And we've discovered in later years that my husband's, this is an aside, my husband's father and my father's father were from very close proximity on Fyn.
[SPEAKER_00]: So my husband and I were destined.
[SPEAKER_01]: I'm sure you were.
[SPEAKER_02]: That's a good one.
[SPEAKER_00]: That's interesting.
[SPEAKER_00]: It's very interesting.
[SPEAKER_02]: Are you aware of any of your ancestors from Denmark coming from Jutland, maybe middle part of Jutland?
[SPEAKER_00]: My husband's family was, his grandfather was.
[SPEAKER_02]: From Jutland?
[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.
[SPEAKER_02]: Do you know where about?
[SPEAKER_00]: I'm ashamed to say this because we've been there, but it's in the Silkeborg area, up in that general area.
[SPEAKER_00]: And Horsens, up in that.
[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: But they're from very small, rural, they were rural people.
[SPEAKER_00]: And I can't remember, because I've been there, but I can't, I'm sorry.
[SPEAKER_02]: I understand that, that's fine.
[SPEAKER_02]: But, well, it's good to, I'm curious because the museum that I work at is in this area, so this is kind of our audience that we're going to.
[SPEAKER_00]: Where do you work?
[SPEAKER_02]: I work in Skanderborg.
[SPEAKER_02]: which is between Aarhus and Silkeborg, near Horsens.
[SPEAKER_02]: So this is exactly this area.
[SPEAKER_02]: Well, anyway, your parents came to this country.
[SPEAKER_02]: No, your grandparents came to this country.
[SPEAKER_02]: And did they go directly out here to Iowa?
[SPEAKER_00]: My mother's parents didn't.
[SPEAKER_00]: They came by way of Wisconsin.
[SPEAKER_00]: But my dad's parents came right here.
[SPEAKER_00]: And they came later.
[SPEAKER_00]: My dad's parents came in the early 1900s and my mother's family came earlier than that, I think in the late, I don't know just exactly.
[SPEAKER_00]: No, no.
[SPEAKER_02]: What about your life back on your, you grew up on a farm?
[SPEAKER_00]: No, I grew up in Kimballton, a small town.
[SPEAKER_02]: Oh yeah?
[SPEAKER_02]: So what did your parents do for a living?
[SPEAKER_00]: My father was an electrician, he had the same job his whole life.
[SPEAKER_00]: the plant that provided electricity and the water for the town.
[SPEAKER_00]: And my husband's parents were farmers.
[SPEAKER_02]: Okay.
[SPEAKER_02]: So you grew up in a... Small town.
[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.
[SPEAKER_02]: How was your home in connection with traditions from Denmark?
[SPEAKER_00]: Now you've had a Danish background.
[SPEAKER_00]: My home, we didn't have really any.
[SPEAKER_00]: This all came as a later after effect.
[SPEAKER_00]: But there were immigrants in Kimballton at that time, and they were influencing everybody's life, especially the church life, because they were, not all of them, but a lot of them were involved in the church.
[SPEAKER_02]: So you didn't speak Danish at home?
[SPEAKER_01]: No.
[SPEAKER_02]: In what way did you, that means you sort of...
[SPEAKER_00]: Well my husband did.
[SPEAKER_00]: When he was a child he learned Danish and he didn't speak English until he went to school.
[SPEAKER_02]: In what way did you then come in and get in close contact with Danish traditions?
[SPEAKER_00]: Well we had this Bible school, a summer school, and they got teachers out from Des Moines, from Grandview College, and the church did.

[SPEAKER_00]: This was run by the church.

[SPEAKER_00]: they had an English section and a Danish section.

[SPEAKER_00]: The Danish section was, everything was done in, the parents, in this way, the parents were teaching them the formal Danish language.

[SPEAKER_00]: They were learning Danish language and everything they did was in the Danish.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then in the English school, in the English part, it was strictly English and we did Bible stories and things like that.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then in the afternoons,

[SPEAKER_00]: we had folk dancing and gymnastics.

[SPEAKER_00]: And for the gymnastics, the girls and the boys were separated.

[SPEAKER_00]: And when the girls had gymnastics, the boys were doing whatever.

[SPEAKER_00]: I don't know if they were doing woodworking or they were being told stories or just what.

[SPEAKER_00]: And when the boys had...

[SPEAKER_00]: And the girls had the same method, but they did fancy work.

[SPEAKER_00]: They did sewing and things like that.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then we got together for folk dancing after that.

[SPEAKER_00]: Am I explaining it well enough?

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: What age would the children have that went there?

[SPEAKER_00]: I suppose when you started public school, you started Bible school in the summertime.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then you kept on until you were confirmed.

[SPEAKER_02]: So that was a good many years that you attended this.

[SPEAKER_00]: And my mother told me that when she went to school, they had these out in the country.

[SPEAKER_00]: They had three different locations out in the country.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I don't know who were the teachers for these kids.

[SPEAKER_00]: But they went for eight weeks, mother said.

[SPEAKER_00]: And my mother pointed out to me one day.

[SPEAKER_00]: But that was strictly Danish.

[SPEAKER_02]: That was strictly Danish.

[SPEAKER_00]: In my mother's days.

[SPEAKER_00]: My mother could speak Danish.

[SPEAKER_00]: I don't think my father could.

[SPEAKER_00]: I never heard my dad speak Danish.

[SPEAKER_02]: It's hard to say, but you're attending the Danish summer school.

[SPEAKER_02]: Would that lead to your basic knowledge of Danish?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, because what happened to me is my parents sent me to the English.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I don't know at a certain point in my life I decided I wanted to go to the Danish.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I'm on my own.

[SPEAKER_00]: I didn't correspond with anybody about this and I just went to the Danish.

[SPEAKER_00]: And they just stuck me in.

[SPEAKER_00]: There was only one class, and so I got stuck in with all these kids that knew Danish from home, and I didn't know a doggone thing.

[SPEAKER_00]: And so then they were calling on different kids to recite different things.

[SPEAKER_00]: And when I was called on, I just stumbled, and everybody laughed at me.

[SPEAKER_00]: You know, it didn't seem to make a difference.

[SPEAKER_00]: They were all my friends.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, sure, sure.

[SPEAKER_00]: And you learned it quickly.

[SPEAKER_00]: We had very good friendships.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then I picked up more Danish in my husband's home because they were speaking Danish.

[SPEAKER_02]: When you met him?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then also when they had parties and things like that, they had a lot of get-togethers, and they would often speak Danish together because they were all immigrants, and they were still speaking their mother language.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I picked up a lot of it.

[SPEAKER_00]: The first year we lived in Denmark, where the year we lived in Denmark, I thought, this is my chance.

[SPEAKER_00]: This is my chance.

[SPEAKER_00]: I thought, now how am I going to do it?

[SPEAKER_00]: And so I thought, well, the newspaper.

[SPEAKER_00]: I could read the newspaper.

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, that was impossible because of the vocabulary.

[SPEAKER_02]: That's the hard part of it.

[SPEAKER_02]: So when you grew up as a teenager, you went to what school?

[SPEAKER_00]: I went to Audubon High School, well we had a school in Kimballton and the year I was going to start in the high school, they closed the high school.

[SPEAKER_02]: They had a high school in Kimballton?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: But they closed it.

[SPEAKER_00]: My husband had just finished 10th grade and the high school in Kimballton only went to 10th grade.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then the kids had to go either, if they continued school, they either had to go to Audubon or Elk Horn or wherever.

[SPEAKER_00]: Mostly it was Audubon or Elk Horn.

[SPEAKER_00]: I decided, I went to Audubon the first year, first two years, and then I switched and finished up here in Elk Horn.

[SPEAKER_00]: I had a cousin and we were pretty good friends and we both decided to switch to Elk Horn.

[SPEAKER_00]: And our parents didn't object.

[SPEAKER_00]: No.

[SPEAKER_00]: What can I say?

[SPEAKER_02]: In those days, would there be some strain?

[SPEAKER_02]: I know what you're trying to say.

[SPEAKER_02]: Difference of opinion.

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, by the time we left Kimballton, my husband and I left Kimballton in 1954.

[SPEAKER_00]: He was in the Navy and right out of high school for two years.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then he got out and we got married.

[SPEAKER_00]: We were married pretty young.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then his parents had a farm and we were farming there.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then he...

[SPEAKER_00]: he decided he wanted to go back to school.

[SPEAKER_00]: So he started, I don't know how many years we've been married, but we had three children.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he went back to, he went to Iowa State.

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, he started at Grandview in Des Moines.

[SPEAKER_00]: And finished as much as he could there.

[SPEAKER_00]: He stayed with my brother at that time.

[SPEAKER_00]: The kids and I stayed on the farm in Kimballton.

[SPEAKER_00]: And one of the things I really hated was we had some cows.

[SPEAKER_00]: And they wanted to keep those cows.

[SPEAKER_00]: Because it would give the, they'd have calves and it'd be some income.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I had to push the hay bales down for those cows and I just hated it.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I'd count backwards.

[SPEAKER_00]: Only so many left.

[SPEAKER_00]: Only so many left when I had to go and climb up that.

[SPEAKER_00]: But it was good for me.

[SPEAKER_00]: It was good for me.

[SPEAKER_00]: But he did the two years at Grandview, and the kids and I stayed at home.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then he transferred.

[SPEAKER_00]: He couldn't do any more at that time.

[SPEAKER_00]: They didn't have four years.

[SPEAKER_00]: So then he transferred to Iowa State, and we moved up to Ames.

[SPEAKER_00]: And that was in about 1958.

[SPEAKER_00]: I can't remember just exactly.

[SPEAKER_02]: And he was into biochemistry?

[SPEAKER_00]: No.

[SPEAKER_00]: He started out, he was always very interested in history.

[SPEAKER_00]: So he started out in history, but he had a teacher at Grandview named Fred Hubbard,

[SPEAKER_00]: who was a very good, he was a botanist, and he was a very good teacher.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he kind of convinced my husband that he should go into biology.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then my husband had a good friend at that time named Paul Sorenson.

[SPEAKER_00]: Did you talk to Paul and Tyler?

[SPEAKER_00]: No, no.

[SPEAKER_00]: Okay, Paul and Ivan became very good friends, and they both then went into botany, just botany.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then as Ivan kept going, Ivan continued to tell, we were up in Ames for five years.

[SPEAKER_00]: We had three children.

[SPEAKER_00]: The oldest was 16 when we left there, and the youngest was, well, she was in fourth grade.

[SPEAKER_00]: But it was a good time because we were living in housing for students, married people, and everybody was in the same situation.

[SPEAKER_00]: Our children went to school in Ames, and everything went just fine.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I got to start school up there, too.

[SPEAKER_01]: Oh, yeah?

[SPEAKER_00]: Uh-huh.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I only had three years, and then I quit.

[SPEAKER_00]: Before we left, I quit because I understood that you had to have your final year wherever you graduated from.

[SPEAKER_00]: So I quit when I just had three years.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then when he graduated, we moved to Denmark for a year.

[SPEAKER_00]: He worked at the Carlsberg Lab.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then we came back, and he got a job at the Department of Agriculture at Peoria, Illinois, at the USDA Lab.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then we were there for about 11, 12, 13 years.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then we moved to New Orleans, Louisiana.

[SPEAKER_00]: There was a southern lab there, and he was a scientist there.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then we were there for nine years, and then he retired.

[SPEAKER_00]: He was older, you know, when he started his career.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then we moved back to our home.

[SPEAKER_00]: We had a house here.

[SPEAKER_00]: We had never sold because his parents...

[SPEAKER_00]: we had his parents house he was the only child and we kept the house all those years, so that's where you live now?, sounds good, I'm very happy to be there yeah you know it's it's a quiet life i wouldn't want to be in New Orleans and i certainly wouldn't want to be in Peoria i don't know if you don't think about Peoria but... The reason why you went to Denmark

[SPEAKER_02]: And your husband and the whole family went to Denmark.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, that's a story.

[SPEAKER_00]: That's a story, too.

[SPEAKER_00]: Because his father had wanted to move back to Denmark.

[SPEAKER_00]: His father was an immigrant, and he was older when he came.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I could tell you so many stories, but you don't want to hear all this.

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, it's fine.

[SPEAKER_00]: That's nice.

[SPEAKER_00]: His father knew his mother before they were married.

[SPEAKER_00]: They were connected in Denmark.

[SPEAKER_00]: As in-laws.

[SPEAKER_00]: Okay, yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: His father's sister was married to his mother's uncle.

[SPEAKER_01]: Okay, yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: And so they knew one, they had met in Denmark.
[SPEAKER_00]: And when Peter Lillehoj came to the United States, I think he came to the Lillehoj's, or the Bjørn's.
[SPEAKER_00]: Johanna's my mother-in-law's name.
[SPEAKER_00]: Her maiden name was Bjørn.
[SPEAKER_01]: Bjorn, yeah.
[SPEAKER_00]: And I think he came to them because he knew them from Denmark.
[SPEAKER_00]: And I don't know if he stayed here all the time.
[SPEAKER_00]: You know, I'm an in-law in that family, so I don't know everything.
[SPEAKER_00]: I know quite a bit, but I don't know everything.
[SPEAKER_00]: But he always wanted to go back to Denmark.
[SPEAKER_00]: And he had gone, and he did go, and he wanted to buy a farm.
[SPEAKER_00]: He wanted to move back to Denmark.
[SPEAKER_00]: And his wife was not very excited about doing that.
[SPEAKER_00]: She had been a schoolteacher, and Ivan told me once, that's my husband, that he thought his mother's calling, and she had been a schoolteacher in the early 1900s.
[SPEAKER_00]: She was born in 1890, and she had been a schoolteacher in the early 1900s, and that was when there were a lot of immigrants.
[SPEAKER_00]: And Ivan said he thought his mother's calling, so to speak, was to teach immigrant children in the country schools.
[SPEAKER_00]: And I have a book that she... It was to teach immigrant children over here.
[SPEAKER_00]: The children of immigrants here in this country.
[SPEAKER_00]: To make them American.
[SPEAKER_00]: And of course, that's what a school teacher is supposed to do, I guess.
[SPEAKER_00]: So I guess it wasn't such a lofty idea after all.
[SPEAKER_00]: But anyway, he had wanted to go back to Denmark and buy a farm.
[SPEAKER_00]: And she had never wanted to do that.
[SPEAKER_00]: And finally in the 30s, I guess she relented and he convinced her.
[SPEAKER_00]: And so he went by himself.
[SPEAKER_00]: Ivan was probably 12 to 15, I don't know just exactly then.
[SPEAKER_00]: Ivan was born in 1928.
[SPEAKER_00]: And he went back, and that was in the late 30s.
[SPEAKER_00]: And the only place that the land was cheap, this is what I heard, I'm not for sure I got it right, but the only place land was available and cheap enough for him to buy was in the southern part of Denmark, close to Germany.
[SPEAKER_00]: And he could tell that there were things going on that he wasn't too happy about.
[SPEAKER_00]: So he changed his mind.
[SPEAKER_00]: I guess he probably didn't want to bury his family over into that.
[SPEAKER_00]: You know it was right before the Second World War.
[SPEAKER_00]: So then he decided not to.
[SPEAKER_00]: And he brought his wife a set of Danish dishes instead.
[SPEAKER_01]: And she was happy, I guess.
[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.
[SPEAKER_00]: And you know, they were older when they were married.
[SPEAKER_00]: She was 36 when Ivan was born, and he was an only child.

[SPEAKER_00]: I really know more about my husband's family than I do.

[SPEAKER_00]: I mean, my husband's family, their life was more interesting than mine.

[SPEAKER_01]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: And since he was an only child, I got everything.

[SPEAKER_02]: So he went back.

[SPEAKER_00]: Oh, and then the reason we went to Denmark, well, see, then they never did go back to Denmark.

[SPEAKER_00]: He never did go back to Denmark after that.

[SPEAKER_02]: The dad.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, the father.

[SPEAKER_00]: Ivan's dad, Peter Lilloj.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he never went back to Denmark after that.

[SPEAKER_00]: And so Ivan never, they went on a year's trip when Ivan was a year old.

[SPEAKER_00]: They took the

[SPEAKER_00]: the tour to Southern Europe, you know, and everything.

[SPEAKER_00]: And they stayed with the family.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I think that's probably when Peter Lillehoj met Johanna Bjørn in that year, year's time.

[SPEAKER_00]: And we have pictures of his school teacher and they brought a car over there and, you know, the immigrant coming back home again, you know, type of thing.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he was from Holby, (? I'm not sure about the name, maybe Højby; hbs)

[SPEAKER_00]: And when we were in Denmark in,

[SPEAKER_00]: 1999, we went to that farm.

[SPEAKER_00]: That was the first time we had been there.

[SPEAKER_02]: On Fyn.

[SPEAKER_00]: At Hobie.

[SPEAKER_00]: And a dentist in Copenhagen has that now, bought it.

[SPEAKER_00]: And they use it for a summer home.

[SPEAKER_00]: And it was so beautiful there.

[SPEAKER_00]: Oh, I couldn't understand why anybody would want to leave that, because you could see the ocean from there, you know, and it was just so beautiful.

[SPEAKER_00]: But there wasn't work.

[SPEAKER_01]: No.

[SPEAKER_00]: That's why people came, because they couldn't find work.

[SPEAKER_00]: But anyway, then Ivan... But the reason why you went back... Yeah, the reason why we went back was because Ivan had never gotten back.

[SPEAKER_00]: And his father had died.

[SPEAKER_00]: And his father had been dead just a couple of years.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he just... This was a time when he could do it.

[SPEAKER_00]: Before he finished his education, he'd gotten his Ph.D., and it was in 1964.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he had gotten his PhD, and he didn't have a job yet, so it was a good time to go.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then he would study while he was over there.

[SPEAKER_00]: He would go into a laboratory where he could continue doing what he did.

[SPEAKER_00]: And that's why we went there.

[SPEAKER_00]: And we lived in Copenhagen.

[SPEAKER_02]: So you got into Danish daily life, Danish language?

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, yes and no, because we were, you know, we were, it's a cosmopolitan city, and I just loved it.

[SPEAKER_00]: You know, I could walk around.

[SPEAKER_00]: We lived on Vesterbrogade, close to the Rådhusplads and the Walking Street.

[SPEAKER_00]: And I could walk to Nørreport.

[SPEAKER_00]: I walked over to Nørreport a lot.

[SPEAKER_00]: And our oldest daughter went to the Legos Plant School (? the name is not right, but I don't know it; hbs)

[SPEAKER_00]: It was still there.

[SPEAKER_00]: then as a school.

[SPEAKER_00]: It's not now, I understand.

[SPEAKER_00]: What was the name?

[SPEAKER_00]: My Danish isn't.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, I don't know the school.

[SPEAKER_00]: No, it's closed now.

[SPEAKER_00]: It's closed now because I've asked people since then.

[SPEAKER_00]: And the two little ones, they were in, she was in 10th grade.

[SPEAKER_00]: And the two little ones were in 4th and 5th grade.

[SPEAKER_00]: And they went to a Danish school.

[SPEAKER_00]: They went to Nansensgade.

[SPEAKER_00]: They went through Ørstedsparken.

[SPEAKER_00]: to Nansensgades school?

[SPEAKER_00]: And at that time, I understand that street now, or that area of Copenhagen is gentrified now.

[SPEAKER_02]: Probably is.

[SPEAKER_00]: But it wasn't then.

[SPEAKER_00]: It wasn't then.

[SPEAKER_00]: And when I went to talk to the teachers, and they seemed to do all right.

[SPEAKER_00]: Our son, it's really funny because they're kind of the opposite of what they are today, those two people.

[SPEAKER_00]: The girl was, she was more shy, and she would come home, and we lived in this apartment on the third floor, and she'd come home and go up, and we had a lot of little tables sitting around, and she'd begin her studies.

[SPEAKER_00]: They didn't do any of their, they had a lot of homework.

[SPEAKER_00]: They just kind of taught them in the mornings, and then they got out early in the afternoon, about 2 o'clock, and then they'd come home and have some schoolwork to do.

[SPEAKER_00]: And she would come home.

[SPEAKER_00]: She was, what, in fourth grade, so what was she?

[SPEAKER_00]: Ten years old.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, and she would begin her schoolwork, and very studious.

[SPEAKER_00]: And my son, he had a friend named Peter, and he didn't do any studying.

[SPEAKER_00]: I heard about that before.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then it was funny, because when I talked to the teachers ahead of time, Elizabeth's teacher, my little girl, said that both those teachers could speak English.

[SPEAKER_00]: But Elizabeth's teacher was not going to speak English to her.

[SPEAKER_00]: She was in Denmark, and she had to learn Danish.

[SPEAKER_00]: She was going to a Danish school.

[SPEAKER_00]: My son's teacher had just the opposite philosophy.

[SPEAKER_00]: She would help him through English as much as she could.

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, the first half of the year, they didn't give him any grades.

[SPEAKER_00]: on their reports that were sent home.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then when they started sending reports home, their grades were identical.

[SPEAKER_00]: So that shows me that when you teach a child a language, it really doesn't matter how you do it, just so you do it.

[SPEAKER_00]: Of course, it depends on the personality, too, though.

[SPEAKER_00]: It depends on the personality.

[SPEAKER_02]: So that was just for a year, actually?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: And then you went back to... And then we came back to the U.S.

[SPEAKER_00]: That was in 1965.

[SPEAKER_02]: And then you went to stay and live in, where was that?

[SPEAKER_00]: Well Ivan didn't have a job at that point.

[SPEAKER_00]: And so we came back to Kimballton and we went back up to Ames again.

[SPEAKER_00]: We had been living up there prior to that.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he said he had some work to do up there.

[SPEAKER_00]: I'm not so sure he did.

[SPEAKER_00]: But anyways, I don't know how, but he got a job then.

[SPEAKER_00]: When we came back to the United States, we were driving, and we stopped in Peoria at the lab there.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he went in and talked to people.

[SPEAKER_00]: What year would that be?

[SPEAKER_00]: 1965.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then at the end of the summer, we moved to Peoria.

[SPEAKER_02]: What state is that?

[SPEAKER_00]: That's Illinois.

[SPEAKER_00]: It's south of Chicago.

[SPEAKER_00]: It's an old river town.

[SPEAKER_02]: So you've been living in different places until you moved back to Kimballton?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, we were gone for 30 years.

[SPEAKER_02]: So how was it to come back to this area?

[SPEAKER_00]: It was fine because we had been back off and on.

[SPEAKER_00]: We had left a lot of friends here, knew a lot of people.

[SPEAKER_02]: Overall picture would be that you had many contacts with your community here and with Denmark.

[SPEAKER_02]: So Danish would be a thing around the corner in your daily life, so to speak.

[SPEAKER_00]: It wasn't so much when we lived away from here, because we had no opportunity to meet.

[SPEAKER_00]: But one time when we were in Peoria, no, New Orleans,
[SPEAKER_00]: There was a woman that worked at the lab where my husband was working, whose husband was a Danish immigrant.
[SPEAKER_00]: And they had, somehow or another, they had gotten a couple of girls that were traveling, Danish girls that were traveling.
[SPEAKER_00]: And we had them to our house.
[SPEAKER_00]: But that, there was really... Just a visit.
[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.
[SPEAKER_00]: And oh yes, then one year, one of the Danish, the society that, with the Rebuild thing,
[SPEAKER_00]: Danish American Rebuild Society, is that what they call it?
[SPEAKER_00]: They had a meeting in New Orleans once, and we went to that.
[SPEAKER_00]: And they had a supper way up on a big, where you could see the Mississippi River and everything.
[SPEAKER_00]: And there was a couple Danish guys there that my husband was talking to.
[SPEAKER_00]: He told me that when he, that year he lived in Denmark, he was so proud of himself because he thought he could pass for Copenhagen Dane.
[SPEAKER_00]: Speaking.
[SPEAKER_00]: Speaking Danish.
[SPEAKER_00]: So well.
[SPEAKER_00]: And he was a modest person.
[SPEAKER_00]: Like if there was a Danish, if you were sitting in a group of people and there were some Danes here and they wanted to take Danish, Ivan was very hesitant to speak Danish to them.
[SPEAKER_00]: He was a modest person that way.
[SPEAKER_00]: He was a very different person because some ways he was modest and some ways he wasn't.
[SPEAKER_00]: And you have to understand too that my husband and I were childhood sweethearts.
[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, yeah.
[SPEAKER_02]: I get that picture.
[SPEAKER_00]: And it was really because we didn't really have a close relationship, but it was all the kids around us.
[SPEAKER_00]: It's very strange when I talk to people about it, and I've talked to some of my friends about it.
[SPEAKER_00]: We didn't pair off as teenagers.
[SPEAKER_00]: We just went as a group.
[SPEAKER_00]: We had a real rich childhood in Kimballton, and I don't know how to explain it, and I've talked to other people about it too, and we don't really know what, it was a combination of the times and then the church.
[SPEAKER_00]: It was before the Second World War.
[SPEAKER_02]: And the activities that were taking place in the church, because the church, then you just think about Sunday, but you think about the church in a broader term.
[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, it wasn't a Sunday thing.
[SPEAKER_00]: It wasn't really, I go to church on Sunday and I read the gospel.
[SPEAKER_00]: It wasn't that.

[SPEAKER_00]: It was the communion of people.
[SPEAKER_02]: And I guess you would have many things taking place in and out of the church.
[SPEAKER_02]: Like maybe singing folk dances.
[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, well, yeah.
[SPEAKER_02]: This kind of thing.
[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, uh-huh.
[SPEAKER_00]: And then there was a camp at Grandview in the 40s and 50s.
[SPEAKER_00]: And Rita Juhl talked about that in her article a little bit.
[SPEAKER_00]: And we all went to that camp.
[SPEAKER_00]: And they brought, it was a Grundtvigian thing.
[SPEAKER_00]: So it was congregations that had the Grundtvigian persuasion would get to send their children to this camp.
[SPEAKER_00]: And it was sort of a prelude to going to Grandview, I suppose.
[SPEAKER_00]: I guess that was a wise thing to do.
[SPEAKER_00]: A way to introduce the kids to Grandview now.
[SPEAKER_00]: So I went there and I had a good time at this camp, so maybe I should go to college there when I finish high school.
[SPEAKER_02]: Many people did and kept the connection.
[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, kept the ties.
[SPEAKER_00]: And we laugh about it now, too, that Grandview was a place where Danes could meet Danes to get married to them.
[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, absolutely.
[SPEAKER_02]: I have quite a few stories about exactly this.
[SPEAKER_00]: In fact, the Des Moines Register once even had an article about that in the paper.
[SPEAKER_00]: And they found different couples, you know, and they highlighted them.
[SPEAKER_00]: But that's not such a bad idea.
[SPEAKER_00]: No, you have it in the community.
[SPEAKER_00]: I was listening to a thing last night on television about Jewish people.
[SPEAKER_00]: Jewish, yeah.
[SPEAKER_00]: And that was a two-hour program on public television.
[SPEAKER_00]: Mm-hmm.
[SPEAKER_00]: And that was one of the things you had.
[SPEAKER_00]: There were two migrations of Jews to the United States.
[SPEAKER_00]: The early migration when the country was just starting, and then right before the Second World War.
[SPEAKER_00]: And the first ones, they called them German Jews.
[SPEAKER_00]: And then the next one, and Ivan and I had talked about this sometime, because our oldest daughter married a Jewish guy from New York.
[SPEAKER_00]: But then there were these Bohemian Jews.
[SPEAKER_00]: And they were from Russia and some of those countries around there.
[SPEAKER_00]: And they were completely different types of people.
[SPEAKER_00]: But the idea was that you have to marry a Jewish person.
[SPEAKER_02]: And if you didn't... And that reminded you of Grand U. Yeah.
[SPEAKER_02]: That's interesting.
[SPEAKER_00]: But if you didn't, I think in that society they even disclaimed them.

[SPEAKER_00]: I don't think the Danes did that.
[SPEAKER_02]: No, I don't think so.
[SPEAKER_02]: Going a little into that... I didn't go to Grandview.
[SPEAKER_02]: No.
[SPEAKER_02]: But I got to think about the Elk Horn-Kimballton situation.
[SPEAKER_02]: These two communities, very close, but with each their church affiliation.
[SPEAKER_02]: How was it actually?
[SPEAKER_02]: Because Annette said that was something of the past and now it's only things that the media present.
[SPEAKER_00]: Well, it's history.
[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, it's history.
[SPEAKER_02]: So it was... I mean, you can't discount history.
[SPEAKER_02]: Would you have examples of things that... Well, I knew one lady.
[SPEAKER_02]: Some limits in this... of your life?
[SPEAKER_00]: No, the only thing that I heard about limits as far as...
[SPEAKER_00]: getting together with other younger people.
[SPEAKER_00]: My husband told me that his dad told him, don't get together from those girls over in West Shelby County, because they were Catholics.
[SPEAKER_01]: Okay.
[SPEAKER_00]: That was the limit.
[SPEAKER_00]: That was the only limit I ever heard.
[SPEAKER_00]: My parents never told me.
[SPEAKER_02]: No problem between Elk Horn and Kimballton.
[SPEAKER_00]: No, I suppose not, because... But there was a historical problem, but...
[SPEAKER_02]: That's something different.
[SPEAKER_02]: I'm just curious about your sort of personal experience with this thing.
[SPEAKER_00]: Well, one lady told me, a wonderful old lady, she's gone now, but she said that when she was younger, and she was much older than I am, she was my mother's age, that they didn't have dances.
[SPEAKER_00]: We had folk dancing.
[SPEAKER_00]: And we would have, we had a young people's society where we got together and had meetings and then we had, afterwards we played, we called them round games.
[SPEAKER_00]: I don't really know
[SPEAKER_00]: what they were now, to tell you the truth.
[SPEAKER_00]: But we called them round games, and it was kind of like folk dancing.
[SPEAKER_00]: The girls from Elk Horn would come down.
[SPEAKER_00]: This woman told me that, that the girls from Kimballton used to get so mad at the girls from Elk Horn, because they would come down and kind of hang in the periphery.
[SPEAKER_02]: Good example.
[SPEAKER_00]: They could not take part in it.
[SPEAKER_00]: Because, you know, they were much stricter in their upbringing than we were.
[SPEAKER_02]: Now you've been at the Tyler meeting.
[SPEAKER_02]: Have you been there for many times?
[SPEAKER_02]: Oh, maybe six times.
[SPEAKER_02]: How did that come about?

[SPEAKER_00]: How did I get involved in it?

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, how did you get that idea to go to Tyler?

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, my sister had gone, and from the past, and my mother's generation, my mother never went up there, but my aunt did.

[SPEAKER_00]: One of my aunts did.

[SPEAKER_01]: So you've been hearing about Tyler.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, we've been hearing about it.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then we had some good friends.

[SPEAKER_00]: I have a cousin who was, his wife had relatives in Tyler, and they came down.

[SPEAKER_00]: Did you talk to Harold Madsen (? I'm not sure about the name; hbs) in Tyler?

[SPEAKER_00]: He's an old family friend up there.

[SPEAKER_02]: I'm not sure.

[SPEAKER_02]: I didn't talk to him like this, but I might have spoken to him.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, we had family friends up there.

[SPEAKER_02]: So how did you like it?

[SPEAKER_00]: Oh, I like it.

[SPEAKER_02]: I wouldn't go up there if I didn't.

[SPEAKER_02]: You went with your husband?

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: And you enjoyed being there?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: I understand that.

[SPEAKER_02]: What do you like in particular?

[SPEAKER_02]: Is there anything that you especially... Just seeing the people again.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah?

[SPEAKER_00]: And some of the lectures.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: So you feel very much like belonging to a group.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, it's a group that I feel comfortable in.

[SPEAKER_00]: You know, when you get older you want to be with people that you're comfortable with.

[SPEAKER_00]: That's true.

[SPEAKER_00]: That you have the same opinions about things.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, and were you there, did you hear the Indian young man?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yes, I did.

[SPEAKER_00]: You know, I really give him a lot of credit.

[SPEAKER_02]: I agree, that was really interesting.

[SPEAKER_02]: He was good at explaining things that you never thought about.

[SPEAKER_00]: And he was brave enough to say them, too.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, and he said in a way that no one would... He wouldn't cause any... Offense.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: That was good.

[SPEAKER_02]: So... That meeting, of course, has...

[SPEAKER_02]: some heritage.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_00]: Well the whole situation at Tyler.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yeah, because as you said before we started this tape, it's how to separate the Grundtvigian from the community, from the Danish traditions that you just had and cherished.

[SPEAKER_02]: But would you, could you?

[SPEAKER_02]: comment on the Grundtvigian.

[SPEAKER_02]: What is the Grundtvigian heritage, or what is the Grundtvigian value?

[SPEAKER_00]: Well, it's hard to put your finger on it.

[SPEAKER_00]: But I really feel it's a more liberal attitude.

[SPEAKER_00]: That's the way I look at it.

[SPEAKER_02]: It's more liberal, both politically and culturally?

[SPEAKER_00]: The whole outlook on life is a more liberal attitude.

[SPEAKER_02]: Go on, a little further than that.

[SPEAKER_02]: What do you mean by that?

[SPEAKER_00]: Well for instance, the homosexual thing now.

[SPEAKER_00]: With that.

[SPEAKER_00]: The racial thing.

[SPEAKER_00]: I might be wrong.

[SPEAKER_00]: I mean I might be wrong, it's just my own, I feel that because I talk to people different places.

[SPEAKER_00]: I feel that anybody that belongs to the Grundtvigian tradition is a more liberal, has a more liberal outlook on life.

[SPEAKER_00]: Now it isn't true across the board, but generally.

[SPEAKER_00]: I'm not a student of Grundtvig.

[SPEAKER_02]: No, no, no.

[SPEAKER_01]: No.

[SPEAKER_00]: My husband was.

[SPEAKER_02]: In what way?

[SPEAKER_02]: Would he study?

[SPEAKER_00]: Well he read Kierkegaard, he read Kierkegaard too.

[SPEAKER_00]: That's too bad you can't talk to him.

[SPEAKER_02]: Yes it is, but I like talking to you about these things.

[SPEAKER_02]: But I think you're right about the liberal outlook.

[SPEAKER_02]: that's sort of the message I get from speaking with many of you all the ones I've been sitting and having... so it's very much in line, - And I think that goes into the thing at Tyler too that we feel like we're a congregation probably isn't the right but a group of people who have the same philosophy of life and

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah.

[SPEAKER_02]: And feel at ease that you're welcome because there's a tolerance that you can say that you're the one, you're the person that you are, and you accept it.

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, around here you have to be careful what you say.

[SPEAKER_02]: That could be, because you feel very welcome as a newcomer as well.

[SPEAKER_02]: And I think that would go for anyone.

[SPEAKER_02]: I felt that, but OK, I come from Denmark.

[SPEAKER_02]: That's kind of interesting, right?

[SPEAKER_00]: Yeah, but Denmark isn't the same.

[SPEAKER_00]: Everybody doesn't think the same in Denmark.

[SPEAKER_00]: No, that's true.

[SPEAKER_00]: Isn't there a history of the people that are more fundamentalist?

[SPEAKER_02]: That hasn't so much impact anymore, but it used to have.

[SPEAKER_02]: But we have many differences in political opinion, cultural outlook, like here.

[SPEAKER_02]: So being in this group, I agree with you, that's very comfortable.

[SPEAKER_02]: You feel very much at ease.

[SPEAKER_02]: And another thing is we know... we have to sit down at different

[SPEAKER_02]: speak with different people every meal.

[SPEAKER_02]: And that just goes so fine.

[SPEAKER_02]: You just are interested in each other.

[SPEAKER_00]: And then if we talk about the past, we often know some of the same people and things like that.

[SPEAKER_02]: Of course, you would have a lot in common.

[SPEAKER_02]: Not only in outlook, but you'll simply have relatives and friends and acquaintances.

[SPEAKER_00]: And sometimes there's family groups.

[SPEAKER_00]: Like when we started going up there, I had a bunch of cousins, and we were quite a few.

[SPEAKER_00]: But now we don't have that anymore because time has passed.

[SPEAKER_00]: People have passed on.

[SPEAKER_02]: Well, I think I'll stop my laptop and say thanks very much.

[SPEAKER_00]: I haven't given you an awful lot about my childhood, but I tell you, it was a real rich childhood.