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SUBJECT : Interview with Rudy Gustafson, Duluth, Minnesota
INTERVIEWER : Dr. Joann Hanson-Stone
PROGRAM : Swedish Immigrant Oral History Project
City of Duluth Sister Cities Commission

I'd like to begin by doing a bit of a summary of your family history that we had talked about the last time I was here. I understand that your father's name was Victor Gustavsson.

Right.

And your mother's name was Hanna or Johanna Mohm -- and could you tell me again where your father emigrated from. Where his home was?

He was from Urlma? and he did work in the railroad and that is how he happened to meet my mother because she was from the Norland and so he got involved somehow and how he met her I can't tell you but anyway that is how he met her when he was on the end of the railroad.

And her name was?

Hannah Mohm.

And she came from?

Bolnes.

What year your father emigrated from Sweden to Duluth?

As I recall it was 1905.

And your mother?

She came 1907.

Your mom and dad when they met they kept up with correspondence?

As far as I know; I can't tell you much about that.

Did you mother immigrate directly to Duluth?

Yes.

What brought her to Duluth?

Well she had a brother that had already immigrated to Duluth and his name was Ole. And so he was here and my father was here and of course they were corresponding so she ended up coming directly to Duluth.

What motivated your father to come to Duluth?

He had a brother -two brothers here and he had a sister – three sisters here and then he had the a granddaughter that was – Her father was here and he was the oldest one of the family and Hannah – Her name was Hannah too and then she came because of her father being here and then when she got here she married Victor Olson and they had two boys, Leslie and Arvid and my mother of course when she came here they got married and she did do housework jobs here at the east end but she married my father then.

Did you remember what year?

They were married in 1907.

What was your dad doing?

When he came to Duluth he got a job in the sawmill.

What was his job?

I am not actually sure but he was tending to the trolley that or the carriage that carries the logs to the saw and that is how he happened to get his hand cut because he was riding this carriage with the log on it and he reached out to pick up something and cut his hand off.

Which hand?

His right hand. He didn't cut it completely off but they did sew it back on so that he had some use of his thumb and these fingers were stiff of course.

And bent inward?

Like this. So he could use his thumb.

Did he work for more than one saw mill?

As far as I know only one saw mill and I can't tell you which one it was. I don't remember the name.

You mentioned Alger Smith?

That was a logging company and they did have a saw -mill in Duluth and I am assuming that that was the mill. But they had a railroad that ran straight north from Knife River way up into the north woods and so they were hauling logs from there and shipping them into Duluth by rail.

Your father was injured before your parents married; do you have any knowledge of that?

It happened before they were married.

As a result did he continue to work?

They – he didn't continue to work except that he went – they put him on a some kind of a pension or something and they paid him \$300.00 and of course he had to have care but anyway he took the \$300.00 and bought some land up at North Palmers up in Clover Valley. So they moved up there after he was able to – his hand was healed so he could use it and then they started and they built this house and he hired people from around there to cut these logs and trim them and lay them and put them together like that.

This part of the house was built first and only one room and there was no room upstairs and later on when we moved in there – when we first moved in there was just a one room and while we were there they – he had this added on.

So it was a two story addition with one room downstairs and one room up?

No after this was built then they built a stairway going up to the upstairs and made sleeping quarters up here.

Yes and is this the mud porch?

Yeah it's a kind of an entrance porch.

So you can keep the water off of you.

Yeah.

Where did your family live in Duluth prior to moving to the country?

We lived at 18 ½ Avenue West just above Third Street on the hillside.

Memories?

I was born in the hospital of course – St. Luke's and my sister was born a year and a couple months later at the home in Duluth.

What is your birthday?

December 18, 1908 and then my sister in 1910 in February.

You were the two children that were in the house in Duluth?

Right.

Any memories of that house?

Well no except that that house was across the street from where my father's sister lived - Anna Sundquist -and so we got up there when my father took me to Duluth and we visited them and pointed out the house where we were living when I was born.

Were they renting?

No they didn't rent.

Tell us about the homestead in Clover Valley?

Well this house was about 20 feet wide and 24 feet this way and then when they added this on it it was just the same width about a little further over but it was - it had hardwood floors. Well I can't tell you where the wood came from but it was the hardwood floor - tongue and groove.

Were there other buildings?

After we were there they put up a shack so they would have a cow and of course there was a toilet that was in the back yard, but that shack of a barn was just a tar paper shack you might say and I remember that. And then later on they built another barn and had some cows and a horse and chickens of course, but other than that and a hay barn so they could harvest the hay and store it in the barn. That barn lasted till about 1932 and the wind blew it down.

Was your family living on the homestead?

Yes, my mother was living there. She died in 1950.

So did she live the rest of her life there?

Yes to 1934 - she lived there a few years. I think it was two or three-years and I wasn't married yet then. I was married in 1935 so it must have been she did live there for a short time and then I had moved her. I got a job in the city of Duluth and I moved my mother -we rented a house in Morley Heights and I moved in there and Mom and my sister went with me.

Ruth?

Ruth.

How many acres?

There was 40 to begin with and then he sold 5 acres to a fellow – a bachelor.

Did your father have to clear any acreage?

Oh, yah, all the land had to be cleared because there was pine stumps all over the place that had been logged off and all those stumps had to be blasted with dynamite and then pulled out with a horse and burnt. I remember them very distinctly and so all the land had to be cleared. There was no clearing when we came.

So the logging companies had been there first?

Oh yah, definitely.

Were any crops raised other than the hay?

Well, he was able to dig a patch and raise some potatoes and dig them by hand and later when we got a horse we had a plow that you walked behind and you plowed up enough so that we could raise a garden.

How did your parents make a living in Clover Valley?

Well the only living they had was from what they raised on the farm and the milk from the cows and stuff like that and occasionally he would get a job for the township working and shoveling gravel and they built roads around and they had to haul gravel from the gravel pit so you had to stand there and shovel the gravel onto the wagon and usually they were all farmers there that had horses and they would have a wagon so I even had to shovel gravel myself.

So it was a temporary part time job?

Oh' just temporary, temporary.

Did your parents belong to a cooperative?

No, not – well, I remember hauling cream to this Palmer's, which was 3 ½ miles and hauling it with a horse and wagon. And that was the only income we had outside of selling potatoes wherever – we were able to sack them up and haul them to Duluth and I remember selling them to the various people living along London Road and walking in and asking if they wanted to buy some potatoes and some of them bought cream and milk – but that was only once or twice a month that this happened.

And a certain time of the year?

Right; it was in the summer time we would take the horse and wagon and go to Duluth.

How long did that take you?

Well, it would take quite a while because the road was 3 ½ miles to Palmer's and then 10 miles to Lester Park and then have to continue on London Road to about 15th Avenue East is where these people lived that bought our products.

I have no idea how fast a horse and wagon?

Usually a horse and wagon would travel about 3 ½ miles an hour.

So it would be a long day. Did you stay overnight or go back the same day?

As a rule we would stay overnight but I think we used to take the street car to the west end where my father had relatives and we would stay with them for overnight but ordinarily we would only be gone a day.

Where on the west end?

Well my uncle –my father's oldest brother- lived on 23rd Avenue West and 4th Street and he was the father to Ann Gustafson who had the A & E Supply Company. Ben was half sister or half brother to my Hannah who was raised by my father's folks and she had – she was – Fred was her father. But she was raised in Sweden with my father and folks and then came over – and he sent for her and so she came here and stayed with them for a while and married Victor Olson.

Was the A & E Supply Company?

It was the architects' and engineers' supply company but in the beginning – to start out with it was a blue- printing business that had been started.

On the west end?

Yeah. I think it started on the west end.

What are your memories of your mother?

Well these are so many things I don't know what I could say about her that she did have to milk the cows because we had cows out on the farm and usually three or four cows and she would have to milk those cows and we finally got a separator – to begin with she would have to put the milk in the flat pan and wait until the cream would come to the top and skimmed it off and then to begin with they had accumulated four or five gallons of cream and I would haul it down to the Palmer's station and ship it into the Duluth creamery and produce

company in a can of course. But that was about the only income that they had except once in a while he would get a job shoveling gravel from the township.

Do you remember your mother -- did she enjoy certain activities?

I don't think that she had any particular thing that she did except she would have to sew clothes for the children by hand and do all the baking of course and she was quite -- she did pretty well at that because we never starved.

Would you consider her a good cook?

Oh, yeah, she was a good cook. She would cook oatmeal in the morning for us and milk and oatmeal and she had to bake all the bread so we had to toast the bread by laying it on the stove and then of course she had to make her own butter out of the cream that she got so she was always busy along with in 1914 we -- my father helped join a telephone co-op and then we got a telephone and when that came by then she always had a telephone to talk to the neighbors and that usually lasted several minutes or you might say hours.

Tell me about your neighbors?

Across the road from us was the Gustafson family and his original name was Kivi; somebody had changed it from Gustafson and that was before we moved up there and they had a log home and they had three children: two girls and a boy and the boy Neilo is still living there in that old house.

Were they Finnish?

They were Finnish. And they didn't speak English at all until later on they got to understand it. Then next to them south of there was the Elickson family and he had -- they had several children and the oldest boy was killed by lightning -struck the home in 1917 and he happened to be standing by the chimney and it went right down the chimney and killed him. He was about 16 or 17 years old at the time. And of course from then on Elim Elickson never had -- he lost his mind so that he eventually had to take him to Fergus Falls so they -- to the insane asylum. In the mean time before he actually was taken away he was -- they were -- he was very unfriendly with the Gustafson family next door so that they were always quarreling.

Was he Swedish?

They were what they called Swede-Finns--from Finland but they had some Swedish ancestry. Ms. Elickson she had a brother; his name was Matt Picari and he -- when I first got to know him I was probably 10 years old- he had a bottling works-Kaleva Bottling Works- in Duluth on First Avenue East and Michigan Street and then eventually he bought some land just a half of a mile from the Elickson farm on the main road there and he started farming so --

Would you consider your neighborhood predominantly Finnish?

I wouldn't say predominantly -- not in our area. The Gustafson's and Elickson's and the old man that bought that 5 acres was Finnish and across the road from there there was a Swede-Finn by the name of Elic Hakala and he was a bachelor. So there were a mixture and further up going to the -- off of the homestead road the Anderson family and they were from Sweden originally. There was a mixture of different nationalities all along that road.

Tell me memories of your father?

Well, I don't recall of anything particular about him; he did have to go out and shovel gravel to make a few dollars and he would take the horse and plow around for some of the neighbors so that they could raise gardens and stuff; other than that -- he was elected as a town supervisor- towards the end before he died he was a town supervisor and other than that I can't tell you much about it.

Did he have any hobbies?

Well, we did have a Swedish newspaper that we got once a week so he had that to read.

Title?

Senska Amerikana(?). There was two different newspapers and that was the one I remember and that came once a week. Going north from our place just a half of a mile there was a logging company still in operation and they were cutting timber back in the woods and then they would haul it to Palmer's with the horses and load them on freight cars and then they would haul them into Duluth and eventually sometime later on there was the family by the name of Houghtaling's(?) that moved in where the logging camp had been so they were there for quite a while and they had two daughters and a son so they -- and they all went to school where I went to school up in Clover Valley; there was Evelyn, Elmina and I can't remember the boy's name.

Tell me what public school?

That was a school that was there; the original one was organized by the settlers and but by the time I joined or got into the school in the beginning class that school had transferred to the county board of education so they had control of the school and the only -- it was only a one-room school and one teacher but they furnished the materials- books and things like that -for the kids to study and so on. There was up to the eighth grade.

Do you remember the school number?

92. St. Louis County number 92.

Did you -- what language?

Oh well I learned a little Finnish before I went to school because the neighbor kids all talked Finnish and I learned to talk "Finn" and I can still talk "Finn" and of course I learned

Swedish at home because that is what they talked and then I learned how to talk English after I went to school but other than that the beginner's class was quite set –

Do you have memories of learning English?

Learning English: I learned it basically after I started school.

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But then I learned English and my parents learned how to talk English after I did.

How did they learn?

Well they had – they didn't have to correspond so much but they had to go out and buy groceries and the neighbors were Finnish and Swedish and mostly Finnish and they had to learn to talk English to the extent my father could learn how to talk English so that – then of course north of us- half a mile north of us- was ah- Saamen's and they spoke English –

So your father and mother learned English to communicate?

Oh yes they all learned to talk English. We got a telephone in 1914 and then my mother of course would talk Swedish to her friends. It is English if you had to call somebody –

Do you remember teaching your parents English?

No, I don't.

Did they talk to you in English?

Oh yes, after I grew up and I got into school they learned to talk English and between themselves of course there was Swedish and of course I had four sisters and my sister Signe - I think- she lives out in Washington; she went to school a year after I did and so we all got to learn English.

Were you helping Signe to learn English before school?

I don't recall that. I had a sister next to that was Ruth and but she was born and she couldn't talk and she didn't - she was not able to talk to people so -

Did she understand?

She could understand but she could always yell at us and they would –

Any language?

There was no language – special-

Elsie, and Edith was born after that.

Do you have recollections of school?

I remember some of the teachers, yes. There was Eleanor Ahola Merritt, the daughter of the Merritts that started the Iron Range Mining Company, and she was a kind of a bossy teacher.

Any teachers Swedish?

I don't recall any of them being Swedish.

Were there any activities that you would do as a family?

They would have a picnic once a year at the town hall and that was at mid -summer and then we would all gather there and sometimes the mostly Swedish people there, but anyway that was the main event of the – in the country there, the mid -summer picnic.

Do you remember celebrating 4th of July?

We did yes, I remember firecrackers. Somehow or other we were able to get firecrackers - these tiny ones so yes, they did have celebrations for the 4th of July; and that's where you would hear firecrackers – you would hear firecrackers. That was at the town hall.

In Palmer?

North of Palmer –

Did you know the name of the town hall?

Duluth Town Hall. It was in St. Louis County and it was just two miles north of us on the right hand side and the building as far as I know is still standing. But it was only a one-room building.

How far was your school?

Two miles.

Was it in the same direction as the Town Hall?

Right; we had to go by the town hall in order to get to school. Two miles to school.

How did you get to school?

Walk. To begin with we had to walk and then later on after I spent two or three years walking, then the town or the county decided to make – haul the kids to school and my father

bid on it with his horse and wagon and he would pick up the neighbors' kids and go along the road and we would all ride in the wagon to school.

He would come and pick you up at the end of the day?

At the end of the day he would pick us up.

So it was another paid job?

Yeah, it was a paid job but it was quite low of course. I can't remember how much it was.

Did you have any responsibilities when you were growing up?

Well, I usually had to carry the wood in and then I would sometimes have to go out and clean the barn. And we got a car; of course I was pretty well grown up when we got the first model T car. I had to see that that was cleaned up and running but we always put the wheels – took the wheels off in the winter time and put that model T in the shed and took the wheels off and stored the wheels in the building someplace. But we never had use of the car until after the snow was gone.

What do you remember – year?

1924. And I was old enough then that I had been to Duluth and I had committed myself to buying a car. But then when my father saw that I wanted a car that bad he went with me and we went to Two Harbors and from Two Harbors the dealer there came –brought a model T car to us and so we bought that.

So that was your first car?

A 1924 – a 1921 model.

So you were able to use the car?

I got so that I could drive the car, yes.

Did you take your family in the car?

Oh, I always took them. My father could only have the use of one hand so he couldn't very well. He couldn't drive very well. He did drive but he had to – see there was no shifting in those days you could just press the foot pedal down and you were in low and if you let it back out you were in high. So he didn't have to use his right hand for shifting but he did use it for steering.

Did you have friends?

Well, I had neighbors' friends and neighbor kids of course and then from school we were friendly – I was friendly with some of the boys there; in fact one of them just died here a couple years ago. Leo Aho, name was.

What did you do with your friends?

Well, we would go hunting. We didn't get together that much because we were miles apart and the neighbor – Iner Alexson -we would see him once in awhile and Neilo; he was younger -we would see him, but I don't know – I know when we were small, we had sand boxes to play with so we played with the kids there – I played with the kids then.

Do you remember people visiting?

There wasn't too much visiting going on. I can't remember anything especially – my mother would visit – she would walk to Alexson's and talk to them and as far as visiting the other neighbors, really there wasn't much of that.

Do you remember people popping in on you?

Well, there was after cars were available; then they would have visitors but like I say there wasn't too much of that going on.

Did you belong to a church?

There was a church organized – it was – they would have- it wasn't exactly a church but they would have a minister would come up from – he would take the train up to Palmer's and then somebody would pick him up and take him up to the town hall and then they would have preaching services on Sunday. But this wasn't every Sunday.

The preacher came from Duluth?

Yes.

So it was open up to the community?

Right.

Denomination?

Well, usually the Presbyterian. That is the only one that I remember.

Any organizations, Swedish that your family belonged to?

No.

A Swedish newspaper?

Yes.

Traditions around the holidays? Traditions kept alive?

Well, they would always have a local picnic in mid -summer and that was usually at the town hall and then at Christmas time then there was the celebrations would be at school. Other than that there wasn't much.

Do you remember Christmas at home?

We usually had a Christmas tree and I remember going out and finding the tree and putting it in the house. We had it in the house for usually a week and my mother would trim it with tinsel and things. Other than that I don't remember anything special.

St. Lucia day?

No. They never celebrated it out there.

Did your parents share their feelings with you about leaving Sweden?

I don't recall especially talking about it. I remember them talking about their relatives and my father of course had brothers and sisters here and they would come- after automobiles were available they would come and visit us up on the farm. I don't recall of anything special. I had a - it was my cousin that came here from the old country and stayed in Duluth for a while and he eventually moved out to Denver where his and my aunt lived and from there he went to California.

To live?

He lived.

Did your family communicate with their relatives in Sweden?

Oh yes, they did; they all wrote letters. I can't tell you what was in them because I couldn't read Swedish. I could understand it.

So they did keep a correspondence?

Oh, yah.

Did any of your family go back and visit Sweden?

Not that I know of.

Did you have any family members stay behind and come to visit and then return to Sweden?

I can't remember any one particular – it seems to me there was one that came over and then went back but I can't tell you who it was.

Did your family exchange photos?

I think they did send pictures and we got pictures back and we still have them. Other than that my grandmother -my mother's mother -died just shortly before we came to Sweden the first time so I never got to know her.

That was when you were an adult?

Yah.

Are there- any artistic nature?

No.

Were there any artistic talent with your sisters?

I don't recall of anything particular. Because when I was through the 8th grade of course I left home and I wasn't home very much after that so Signe -my next sister- she followed me – or she came to Duluth and did housework and Ruth of course couldn't do anything because she was – she didn't develop, Elsie she went and stayed with my cousin then and she went to school and she went to normal school and she got to be a teacher, and Edith- I don't remember what she did. She was the youngest one. She did come to Duluth and stayed here too but that was after my father had died and my mother and I moved into Duluth.

Do you remember where Elsie taught?

I can't tell you.

So you and Signe went as far as 8th grade?

Right.

So then you went to work?

Well, I went part of the 9th grade and I stayed with my aunt in West Duluth. I didn't get along with my Uncle Albert so I left there and went to work for my cousin at the A & E Supply.

What school?

The old Denfeld on Central Avenue.

What did you do for work?

I started out running errands- running to the different architects for blue prints or for tracing and bringing them back and printed them at the blueprint shop and I would have to bring them back and to the architects. So that was my – I was an errand boy.

How old?

Oh, I suppose I was 16 or 17.

How old were you when you started school?

I was 6 years old.

Where did you live?

Well, I did go and find a place to live and I can't tell you just where it is now.

But you were on your own?

Oh, yeah.

Signe did housework?

Yes.

Ruth was born with mental illness?

Degenerated, yah.

So Elsie did graduate from normal school?

She went to high school and normal school. Duluth Normal.

A one room teacher?

She taught in Duluth but I can't tell you where it was.

Younger sister?

She finished high school up there in Clover Valley because they had already built a new school there and she was the first one to graduate from the school up there.

In the first class?

Well, she graduated from the 8th grade –wait a minute; I think she graduated from the senior –

Was there one senior and that was your sister?

There was a group.

So she graduated from the first class?

Right.

Clover Valley High School.

Right.

Any heirlooms from Sweden?

I can't tell you.

Your life?

Well, I went to work as an apprentice plumber for a plumbing company. East End Plumbing Company. John Kommerwald? was the owner at that time.

What year?

It was in the early or late 20's. I can't tell you what year it was. It was the late 20's anyway.

Work history?

After I left Kommerwald's, I went to work in the steel plant in Duluth and worked there for several months -I don't remember how long, and then from there I went to the Western Steel Products in Gary which is in the New Duluth and worked there for a while. Then I came -I can't tell you exactly what I did after that.

What made you move from one job to another?

Well, sometimes the jobs were monotonous – I was running a lathe at the steel plant and somehow or other I didn't get along with the foreman, or he didn't like what I was doing and so I was let out or I quit.

Was that US Steel?

Yes. That plant is no longer there. From there I went to work for a plumbing contractor, as an apprentice.

Gradually I went in the plumbing business myself.

What year did you start that?

I can't tell you exactly, but it was in the early 30's.

The name?

Gustafson Plumbing Service.

You were a one -man company?

Yah, except that I had to hire people. I got enough business so that I had to hire plumbers and helpers and so forth.

How long did that company last?

Well, I was in the plumbing business until the second world war started in 1942 and then I went - I didn't get into the war - I went into the shipyards to get away from getting drafted into the army so I got in the shipyards and evaded the draft and then after the shipyards closed or the war was over, then I went to - more or less into the plumbing business myself - the way I started- I would put my tools in the back of the car and I would go out and do a job if I got a call you know and I had somebody answering a phone and we got business that way but eventually I had to - I opened up a shop and that was out on East 4th Street and I had to hire plumbers and -

So Gustafson Plumbing Company?

Gustafson Plumbing Service.

Do you have photos of that shop?

No, because it was on the main drag -about 6th Avenue East and 4th Street- one of the buildings in there. I was only in there long enough - it got too small and I had to move out to a different shop.

Where was that?

5th Avenue West and worked out of a little shop there. I can't remember exactly where I went from there, but I was in the plumbing business for several years.

After the plumbing business?

Well, the plumbing business developed to a point where I had to - I was inveigled into buying a backhoe- the first backhoe that was in Duluth- it was mounted on a tractor and so I bought that and went out and the fact of the matter is it handled by Sterling Motor Company and I was the first one who had it so they wanted me to have it and they sold it to me real low price and eventually after I got going for a while I was doing digging for other plumbers and

eventually Sterling Motor wanted to get out of that tractor business so they came to me and asked me if I would take it over so I did ; took over the tractor business and somehow or other - can't remember where I located it -

What year?

Late 40's after the war.

What was the name?

I think I used the name Gustafson Tractor and Equipment.

Do you have photos?

Yes. I have some place here.

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You were married?

In 1936 I think it was.

Who did you marry?

I married Auni Maki.

Where were you married?

I was living then at my parents' - my living with my mother and sister at Morley Heights and that is where we got married - at your house? Yes.

Where is your wife from?

She was from near Iron River.

What is her ethnic group?

She is Finnish. Well, her mother had a little Swedish blood in her.

How did your mother feel about this match?

She didn't make any remarks about that at all as far as I know.

Being Swedish did you marry another Swede?

I think my mother did make a remark; she said, "I knew he would marry a Finn".

How many children do you have?

We have five boys. Daniel in August, Dennis born a year later, Donald, John and Bill or William.

Where were they born?

They were all born in Duluth. Well, I think it was St. Luke's.

Do your children identify with their Swedish heritage?

Well, I don't recall any particular incident where they would -- I can't tell you.

Were they interested in your family history?

Well, those are the things that I can't remember anything particular about.

How long did you have your company? When did you retire?

Well, I sold out to -Donald came and worked for us -- worked with me and then eventually or shortly afterwards John came and worked for us and somehow or other there was some misunderstanding and disagreement and then Donald left and he went into a business for himself so I -- then I turned over the business to John and we were located then on Riley Road just north of Procter.

Still under the Gustafson name?

Yeah, Gustafson Equipment Company. And we were doing a big business there at that time and 2 million dollars a year in sales but eventually in 1980 when Reagan got in -- 1981 I think we operated up there on Riley Road until 1986 and then it just folded up. So I had to sell out and I -- somebody came along and bought it and there was nothing left as far as assets are concerned so I ended up with nothing but it was a big business because like I say we went up to 2 million dollars a year sales at one time and then went down hill from there on.

Did you retire in 1986?

In 1982 and I turned it over to John.

What did your sons do in their lives? Did your wife ever work out of the home?

Oh she did very little -- she did a little housework --

Anywhere out of the home?

No, a mother --

You live today here in Duluth on Owatonna Street?

Right.

Tell me about your sons?

Daniel – Daniel got to be head of the physics department in Wayne State University in Detroit. He got – had a daughter and she is now a doctor – she is married and has two children and they live in Ohio. And Daniel's wife of course – Daniel got killed in a accident; he was on a vacation with his wife and daughter in Florida and they went out to the beach and the daughter was out swimming and somehow or other she yelled for help and she couldn't get to the beach and Daniel went out to get her and he drowned. The daughter got out of there. So Daniel was a real sad thing for us.

He went to graduate school and obtained a Ph.D. in physics. And

Dennis – and Dennis was killed in 1960 in a car accident. He was coming from some races or something in Wisconsin and was coming home and he went head on with another car and got killed.

When did Daniel drown?

In 1980.

So that was sometime after Dennis.

Dennis was killed in 1960 and Daniel in 1980.

What did your son who was killed in the car accident- was he working anywhere at the time?

He was working for me in our business.

Donald – he was the third son of course and he graduated from Central and I think he went up to UMD for a while and I don't know whether he graduated; anyway he is now in business for himself.

What kind of business?

I should know – my memory doesn't – well he's in business now down in Wisconsin.

John – he got to be professor in physics and his last job up here in Duluth at the university up on the hillside. I don't know what they call it – not the University of Minnesota- there is another one up there on the hill.

Did he get a Ph.D. in physics?

Yeah and right now he is living in Knife River and pretty – he does a job here and there for Donald but the school was out just a few days ago – so he has the summer off.

William – Bill is a doctor – M.D. in Appleton, Wisconsin.

When you look back growing up in a Swedish immigrant household how would you describe it to someone else who never had such an experience?

I can't tell you much about experience because I was two years old when we moved out of there and moved to the country. Well I guess there isn't much to say about it except when you are two years old and growing up in the sticks you have cats, rabbits, and I helped with the barn chores after I grew older and of course grade school which I had to walk two miles and then of course in the mean time when school wasn't going I had to help with the chores in the barn and do the hay and gardening and various things like that besides having to go out at night and socialize.

When you think about your family history what do you think about that?

Well I never really think about it – I don't think I'm a foreigner but I really can't say much about it except that naturally my mother and father were immigrants– they spoke English but broken English and between them they would speak Swedish and occasionally they would have arguments in Swedish. But other than that I can't tell you much just the old farm work that had to be done.

Now you belong to the Swedish Cultural Society in Duluth-?

Right; I have been a member for about a couple three years. It is interesting. I like to know more – I would like to know more about – I have been to Sweden three times, and I would like to know more about Sweden and I have been to Finland too. I have a fairly good knowledge of what it's like there.

Have any of your sons gone to Sweden to visit?

Not that I know of. They had – Bill we had with us once and that's it.

When someone asks you about your ethnic background how do you answer?

Well, I can't say anything more about that – that I'm from Sweden and I had been there three times so I have a little knowledge of what it's like and I got to meet some of the relatives on my mother and father's side and many of those have passed away since I was there. So but I'm glad I went out there and as far as Finland is concerned I was able to get along quite well because I could understand Finnish and so it was an enjoyable trip.

Do you have a sense of pride or does it make you feel good that you come from Swedish immigrant families?

Well, I don't have any particular feeling about it except that I know my background from Sweden and as far as I know everything was hunky dory so I am glad I went there and met some of them before they passed away and we have – I went to my father's or grandfather's grave site and where he was sexton in the church and that's it right there, so we were walked in there and he was already passed away but he was in the church cemetery so we were- you know- I have gotten around seeing quite a bit of things that I wanted to see.

So you wanted to connect?

Yeah, of course we met relatives there that we wanted to see more than once.

Do you keep in touch with relatives here?

Well, I had one cousin that ended up in California and I – his name is Godfred and in Swedish you said Godfred elan?son and he changed his name to Fred Lanson using part of the old name but he has passed away now as far as I know.

You have one sister still living?

I have two sisters still living.

You have a sister who paints?

That was Elsie and she has passed away. She did paint.

Acrylics or watercolors or both?

I can't tell you – she was a good artist.

She painted pictures of the homesteads and other rural scenes?

Right. Yeah.

Anything else?

Elsie had a daughter Elise who is- my memory isn't good anymore but she is in this country.

Ruth ended up at Faribault?

She didn't end at Faribault because she died here in Duluth. She spent some time in Faribault and she died here in Duluth and in the hospital – St. Luke's hospital. She was in a rest home here in Duluth and she got to the point where she had to be transferred to the hospital.

So she stayed with the family as long as ?

As long as my mother was able to take care of her.

Did she have strong feelings about that and that she wanted to make sure Ruth was ok?

Well actually she had to put Ruth in the rest home before my mother died so she was conscious of that fact but she was quite well taken care of in this rest home so my mother didn't have any particular worries about that. She used to go there and visit.

Did you remember how Ruth was able to function in your community?

Well pretty much stayed at home; the only time she would go out would be with my mother and so she was not able to function with other people because she couldn't talk.

What did she do during the day?

Well it seems like she was always doing something, fooling around with something. She would look at newspapers but I don't know if she could read or anything. But she couldn't talk very well.

Did she help mom?

Yeah, she could wipe dishes. Yeah, she got around and did that but other than that she was not capable of - well I guess she did dress herself but other than that there wasn't anything she could do.

How did people handle that in those days?

Well it seems like they were able to handle it because she could take care of herself and my mother had to help her with various things and she could eat and wipe dishes and stuff like that so - she was part of the family .

END OF INTERVIEW