

Frank Edward Kirli

interviewed by

Mrs. W. A. Schmidt

August 21, 1975

Ruby Schmidt Collection of BiCentennial Interviews

ORAL HISTORIES OF FORT WORTH, INC.

FRANK EDWARD KIRLI

Mr. Kirli, today we're talking here at your desk at the Fort Worth Livestock Exchange Building, August 21, 1975. What is your full name?

FRANK EDWARD KIRLI, a possible Swiss-French name. The record shows that I was born in Detroit, Michigan on January 20, 1895. My mother's name was Mary and my father's name was Jacob. That's all I know. I don't remember them because in my early age I was raised by my uncle, Frank Kirli, my father's brother. He was a bachelor and a lumber camp boss in Canada. In my early age he took me with him over to Quebec, Canada, into the lumber camp.

Later on when I was old enough to go to school he brought me back to Detroit, Michigan, where I stayed with another uncle who was married and had a family of three girls and one boy. My bachelor uncle was providing for me. Later on the married uncle I was living with met death in an elevator accident. Since my aunt was widowed, my bachelor uncle married his brother's wife. They had rental property in Hamtramck, the northwest part of Detroit.

I was part of the family until about 15 years of age. I went to school and worked at various odd jobs like children did in those days. I worked at the Cooper Bakery in Detroit, the largest cake bakery in Michigan, as a pan boy--greased and scraped and cleaned bake pans. When I was 10 or 12 I was working after school--late at night and weekends. I couldn't get a steady job but I worked at anything that offered any amount of compensation - like going out and picking mushrooms in the woods.

How did you know which ones were the good ones?

My grandfather that I remember told me that you take and break 'em and touch them to your lip. If they burn they're not good--they're toadstools. But if they taste like a vegetable or a potato or any other raw vegetable, well then, they're all right. He was a woodsman and he used to take me out. . .I don't remember his name; I just called him "Grandpa." He didn't live long enough to remember him well but what little time we had, he took me out into the woods fishing--in the creeks, lakes and the rivers; he taught me a lot of woodsman knowledge about different things--trees, directions, etc. I thought he was hard on me, but I enjoyed every bit of it. It was a pleasure.

At about the age of 16 I quit school and got a job at an automobile factory. I was put in by my friends into what they call a "tool room" of a big automobile factory which was known as a Brush Runabout...the car name was Brush, like a Ford or Chevrolet. They didn't call 'em a sedan or pickup like that. They called 'em Brush Runabout. After several months I was supposed to be training for a tool maker and die maker. That is a craft where they make all the tools necessary and dies to make the products by machines--what machines they had. In other words, if I want a cup out of certain metals I'd have to make the tools to fit that machine so when I put the metal in there, press on it, I'd have the cup form.

But a labor inspector came along and checked the factory and found out that I was a little young to work where there was machinery that was dangerous. So he informed the superintendent that I was too young and he'd have to remove me. So I was moved from the machine section into what they call the "case hardening room." It's sort of a metal alloy process. They take a piece of machinery made out of soft metal which

can be machined and it requires a shaft which has to be tempered to a harder steel (like a gear for instance). They go through a process of heating, annealing, and treating with oils to produce that hardness. They call that "case hardening with tempering" process. A few months later the inspector come around in that section and found me and said it was dangerous and for me to get out. And after that episode, why, they decided they'd keep me anyhow. They put me on road testing. In those early days every car that was assembled, the motor was assembled by hand. There was no power assembly line. Each man assembled his own engine, took the parts as he came to them and made the engine; then that engine was put on a rack and broken in, limbered up, then placed in a car chassis with proper weights of pig iron, etc. on it until weight would be equivalent to the full load that the engine would be pulling and then they put me on the road track. Testing track, you see.

Those engines were put in a chassis and a driver and mechanic would go out; we had long linen frocks and goggles (the roads were dusty then) and we drove out in the country like from here to Lake Worth, say around Justin, Rhome, then back into Fort Worth; that was our track run. In that process I was the driver, and the mechanic checked on the action of the motor to see if everything worked okay or not. If it worked all right he'd put an OK tag on it and it'd be ready to put in a room where they put them in the car chassis and ready for shipment. I spent most of the time working in that capacity. I was on the test track. . .in other words, I was the pilot.

I enjoyed it. We'd stop at the farm places and eat fruit and stuff like that and stop at the wells and drink water. It was a great experience. I didn't realize it at the time but it was when I look back at it now.

They were cutting down on production, coming out with more modern automobiles, like the Cadillac, the Hudson, and the Hupmobile. Our firm was finally taken over by the Chevrolet Motor Co.--General Motors.

I went into partnership with a childhood boy friend. We worked together in what we called the Candy Store and Ice Cream Parlour. We also had a baseball team that we called our own team--it was representing us. We played teams from the other sections of the city. In connection with that we had a little automobile that we'd load up with "sodie water", popcorn and candy and stuff. We'd sell to the crowd at the game. We enjoyed the game and also made a little money by selling our products.

We used to go across the river from Detroit into Windsor to the horse racing and the amateur boxing. I had to defend myself as there was nobody else to do it. I was pretty handy with my mitts myself; I'd enter the preliminaries and get the far beat out of me for \$3 a night and admission to the main event fights.

I finally finished up school and decided to go West. I was always intrigued with the west--there was a picture show next to our little store and I wanted to see where that sunset was and the cowboys and where the wild west Indians were. So the only way to get there was to join the Army, so I did in 1915 at age 20. I

went by way of Washington, D. C.; Columbus Barracks, Ohio; Fort Douglas; Salt Lake City, Utah; and finally was assigned to active duty on the border at Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas. I served with the 20th United States Infantry.

During that time we had the revolution in Mexico, Caranza and Villa forces, and of course the Pancho Villa rebels raided Columbus, New Mexico, burned the town and all in 1915. We were dispatched from El Paso at night after eating our Thanksgiving dinner. This was the 20th Infantry and we went down to Columbus. And then they organized the pursuit troops after Villa entered the Durango mountains and I was one of the guards on the train which provided supplies for our base several miles into the interior of Mexico.

And that was my experience in chasing Villa in Mexico. Then after that expedition we come back and there was further outbreaks of hostilities along the border. We were at Nogales--what they call Douglas, Arizona--and a little place across the border called Agua Prietta. There was a big battle over there. We were engaged because the rebels come into town and trapped the Caranza forces; we wouldn't allow them to come into our territory. We had to take them as prisoners and give them refuge. So when we took over the Caranza forces into our side and put them into what they call a compound or stockade for refugees, at that time it was just barbed wire strung around with a patrol of guards and we kept them until they had safe passage back into their own country. Well, it took about 6 weeks. The Villa forces were camped at the mountains there and they made an attack and, of course, we didn't have automotive vehicles; all our supplies were hauled by horses and mules in covered wagons. The Villa forces camouflaged their appearance on the side of the mountain--they moved on to another town, and thinking they were still there, they left a little group back to keep campfires scattered all over the mountain to make appear that the whole army was still camped there when they moved on to another place, to Nogales, and then they went in there and shot up the town. So we were dispatched from Douglas up to Nogales to a little town over there. We were loaded up on a train overnight and when we got out, the battle was going on over there; of course, when we got off the train we hit the rock--there was big boulders there. A friend of mine, a member of our company, was lying by the side of me and the Mexicans in the mountains were shooting down on us. Buddy Casey got shot through the back. Of course, when he got shot he turned over and the next shot got just across from him and so I had my pack still on my back. I had a first aid kit with me like every soldier carried at the time and we had taken first aid on the wound until the corpsman came along and picked them up. I laid him on my blanket and my blanket had blood on it--his blood--I had that blanket with me for a long, long time. A friend of mine was going hunting one time and borrowed that blanket and he said he lost it. But anyhow it's a thing of the past. . .The man died. He was hit both places. His name was Jones. They called him Casey Jones. I think his right name was Tom Jones.

Outside of that when that skirmish was over we came back to Fort Bliss. We were at camp, not at the Fort. There was a fort and they had permanent buildings--rock and brick buildings--that was headquarters of the 8th Cavalry. The camps during that

time was all tents scattered all over where the Texas School of Mines is--they call it the boondocks--and we used to go to the boondocks and practice rifle shooting and stuff like that whenever we had any ammunition. But there was at that time a lot of national guards called out too to support the regular army on the border at Yolita Ford. We had to patrol the border all the way from California to Brownsville because at that time the forces was scattered and there was smuggling the ammunition supporting the rebels (from the United States) and there was the Texas Rangers. There wasn't enough of them to patrol the border, so I was on detail sent into the Big Bend country with headquarters at Marfa, Texas and field patrol at Presidio. That was about 90 miles between Marfa down to Presidio to the Rio Grande River. Then we had a territory that we covered with the Rangers east and west. And if we ever caught anybody we'd hold 'em prisoners till the Rangers came up and took custody of them. I served out there from about 1915, 1916, and 1917 when the war broke out--World War I.

Pershing was in command of the territory over there; they called it the 8th Corps. Now General Frongston's headquarters was at Fort Sam Houston--a territorial commander, general of day like Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas and New Mexico and Arizona and San Francisco. But Pershing was in command of the 8th Corps area with headquarters at Fort Bliss or El Paso, Texas. He earned the name of Black Jack while he was in the Philippines - a nickname - just like our General George Patton got his name, Blood and Guts, over in Salerno in the tank corps.

Incidentally, at the time when we was on the border in the Big Bend country patrolling there with the Rangers, General George Patton was a member of the 8th Cavalry. He was also on patrol at that time. He was either a lieutenant or a captain at that time. He got promoted to general later because during that Mexican trouble we didn't have any mechanized equipment of any kind. Our artillery was horse-drawn and our machine guns was on packs on mules. And so was the field artillery and mountain artillery.

The mountain artillery carried three guns, or three cannons, with the wheels and case strapped on the backs of the mules. And you had to carry a mule--you've seen pictures of the old prospectors with their packs and all of their equipment--that's the way they were rigged up. And they had to go up into the mountains to carry their guns and ammunition and everything and set up there cause you couldn't get the six inch guns up there, the mules couldn't draw them, it was mounted on wheels. But these three inch guns they call the mountain artillery was transported by mules, and the men had to drag the mules up with them. They had to be pretty stout men; you couldn't take a little man into the organization. They had to be real stout rugged men.

And when the war broke out in 1917 I was ordered by the headquarters at El Paso, and at that time plans were made to mobilize the American forces, the National Guard and the draft and all. Each group was sent out to different parts of the country to establish camps. I was one of the first six regular soldiers to come to Fort Worth to establish Camp Bowie, in about July 1917, I think. Captain Fred Fallin was in command of our group. There was a fellow named Sgt. Oliver, Harry Felkner, F. D.

Ferguson, Sgt. Delmar Maple, and myself. They had the construction crew already here but we were the first ones to know what was necessary to receive the materials coming in that the government agencies, the quartermaster department, shipped in. The first night we were in Fort Worth we stayed in the Chamber of Commerce Building which was on 6th and Houston Street, I believe. It was later called the Rosenthal or some kind of furniture outfit was there--across from the First Christian Church over there. We spent the night sleeping on the stage with our packs, and the next night we went out to camp and pitched our pup tents out there on the field at Montgomery and West Seventh Street. There wasn't a Camp Bowie Blvd. then. And we pitched our tents just about where the Will Rogers Coliseum is now and where that tower sits, at the best I can get my bearings. And when the construction crew started building the platform and the sides, the camp was really moved in about where the Casa Manana theater is now. Then as other troops arrived we had to provide a place for them, show them where they were supposed to be, and get provisions. We come to town to arrange for bread and other food to be delivered to camp so that they would be supplied with food. And we went to Washer Brothers, and Monnigs, and Striplings, to take everything that looked like we needed in the line of bedding, blankets, socks, and things. We also went to the mills to order flour and to the meat packers to get meat deliveries. We told 'em who we were, that we represented the Army and we would sign for it and let the government pay 'em for it. So we got many blankets for bedding because we hadn't had any and the boys come in, they had to sleep somewhere. Anything that looked like a cot--we got all the cots that was in town at the time. It was around July and August in 1917. Of course, the crew was working building the railroads and the warehouse and at the same time they was bringing in horses and mules and having what they call a remount station for all the draft animals we used to pull the wagons and deliver supplies. The first encampment was about where Will Rogers Tower is now. Early camp later covered from Camp Bowie, Montgomery, University and Crestline, and as far as where Arlington Heights Methodist Church is now, and back to where T&P tracks are now. From Montgomery Street down towards the river--Forest Park, and University Drive now--that's where the warehouses were. We had bales of blankets, uniforms, shoes, hats, caps, leggings, and all that stuff. When the quartermaster arrived then he had charge of receiving everything. But we were the first six regular soldiers in this camp to start it, and when the others came we just consolidated and expanded as we went. There was a firing range or target range down here on the Old Granbury Road close to Benbrook. We finally got motorized equipment in the form of motorcycles, but there was very few of the boys that could ride a motorcycle besides me. There was one man--a Dutchman--called Von Hoffen; they appointed him as a dispatch rider to take reports from various camps and deliver them to headquarters every day. Well, old Dutch like to drink and he got drunk one day and the military police took him to jail and then there was nobody to ride it but me, so they appointed me, and we had lots of fun about that. We had boys from all over the States in our organization; especially we had boys from all over the south--Florida, the Carolinas, Mississippi, Louisiana, some from Oklahoma, and we also had one from France.

He happened to be here in this country in the Army and he was assigned to us, along with one from Sweden, Denmark, Hawaii, and we had several of 'em that were German, some from Alaska, and some Oklahoma Indians too. The reason why we had that kind

of personnel in our organization, was that wherever we went in any part of the world we had to have somebody that could understand the native language, to deal with the natives for supplies and quarters and facilities.

This particular group was called the General Service Organization, and also they had a group they called the Railhead that provided transportation, what they now call Army Engineers. They operated trains whenever they went into a foreign country.

We were the 36th Division and the 90th Division was called the T&O (Texas and Oklahoma Division) and then they had the 4th Division from Pennsylvania and places like that.

They finally had replacements of the regular troops that were trained to take over while the younger ones came in for more training. They filled the camp up as we went out. We left here in 1918 about June, and sailed overseas on Ship USS Rhyundam (which was a Dutch wooden ship), a 13 day trip, in convoy to St. Nazaire France, then Ishertill and Dyon, France, Belgium and Alsace Lorraine, Luxemburg - in Army of Occupation through Luxemburg.

I was overseas when the big flu epidemic hit Camp Bowie. When we was situated in France a lot of our boys got the flu. In fact, I had the flu myself. The experience of my case in the flu was not a very pretty picture. I started to the field hospital and of course it rained and was muddy in France every day, and before I reached the hospital I finally got exhausted and fell along the highway or road. An ambulance came by, it was a Red Cross Army ambulance. They picked me up and took me to the field hospital. It was a big tent building, wet and damp and dreary. I laid about three days. They had me laying on a cot with a sheet over me and had somebody come and give me a pill and a drink of water and I laid there three days and nothing happened. I wasn't feeling any better. So finally one day an orderly or lieutenant or corpsman came in and looked at me and said, "You still alive?" And I said if I don't get the so and so out of here I won't be. I want to get my equipment and my pack and leave here. He said, where are you going? I said, I'm going back to my outfit. So I did get my pack and went over to the creek. I had whiskers and beard on me; I washed my face and scraped the whiskers off me. I went over the hill to a little French village, located what they call an apothecary, and got some of that French quinine--great big tablets--and then I went where they had bottles of liquor and got a bottle of cognac. And I went down to the remount station where they had supplies, and I saw a culvert with a bale of hay stuck in each end. I crawled in that culvert with my pack and cognac and quinine. I guess I laid there three days. Every time I'd wake up I'd take a pill and take me a drink. And lo and behold, when I got out of there I went back to my outfit and never had any flu since. But I wouldn't recommend everybody doing that. I could have died in that culvert and nobody would have known. That was in 1918.

And later on when the Armistice was signed and the war was over over there, I was on the front in Marne, France with the 3rd Division. They sent a lot of the boys that were in the service for the duration or drafted, and the National Guard. But

most of us that were in the regular service and a lot of them that were in for the duration they sent over to Germany to the Army of Occupation. We marched through France and Belgium and little country called Luxemburg into Germany on foot, and occupied a town in Germany. We stayed in groups and we stayed in individual homes; we didn't have any camp. Finally in 1919 I got to a little village called Andernach a few kilometers off from Koblenz and Kolone, where the River Moselle of France runs into the River Rhine. And when we got them all billeted I didn't have a place for myself so I went and knocked at #7 Felsgraben Strasa. A little boy and girl and a lady answered. I told 'em I was looking for a place; they said they didn't have room. I said I want to see. They had a little room outside the building--of course the homes were all built centuries ago. I finally had a room about 8 x 12. I said I'd take this for my bed. At that time I didn't know, but the son and the husband of that family was still in the German service as a machine gunner. And I was in that home and when I found that out I said, "Oh some night they'll come in and find me and slash my throat and that will be the end of me." But the strangest thing that every happened: the old man was released and come home. He knocked on my door. He bowed and shook hands and we made friends. Joseph Manebach was a Christian and a Mason who didn't share the Kaiser's views. Then two days later his son came in. He brought his son in and told him. I never had it so good as I had it over there. The little boy would come into my room and clean up and shine my shoes. The lady would come in and if there were any dirty clothes--we didn't have any extra clothes--would wash 'em up and clean 'em up and bring 'em back in. And they welcomed me. They had the picture on the wall of the Kaiser and all. They spit on it and turned it against the wall. They didn't like it. They were glad that we were in there and protecting those people. They didn't like the war any more than we did--they were forced into it. To make a long story short, I had to go and inspect some of the facilities out on the edge of town. We had a kitchen outside the cow shed that we converted into a kitchen, and all of us in town would have to track over there and get our meals and come back to our stations. As I was going through the kitchen late on night to inspect it, there was a fire box and it still had hot coals on it and there was a great big can of oil sitting by it, and I kicked it and it fell into the fire pit, and a blast flame shot up and burnt me and my eyes. I knew there was a bucket of lard that I had passed; I had vision enough to go back there and get that bucket of lard and smear over the burns, and I took a towel so that air wouldn't get to it. One of the boys took me to a German hospital. There I lay blinded. My eyes were burned more than anything else. I couldn't see anything for about 6 weeks. That was the winter of 1918-19. The family told me "Frank, you don't go to the kitchen, you'll eat here." They didn't have much food, all that was rationed. But whatever they had they shared with me, just to keep me from going out. I couldn't see anything. I could see an outline of a structure or a person, but I couldn't tell what color dress or pattern or anything. So my 24th birthday happened to be on January 20 and they knew it, and the lady of the house made me a birthday cake out of potatoes. They had wine and little trinkets to give me my birthday party in their home. Ever since that time I'm partial to potato pancakes, and every time I go anywhere they serve potato pancakes that's what I order.

When we were leaving after being assigned back to the states in 1919, those people lined up along the street when we were marching out to our transportation. We went to Koblenz by train to Cologne to Belgium and into France. They lined up there and cried to see us go. We sailed from Brest, France on USS Tiger (all steel Standard Oil tanker converted to a troop ship), which took 13 days to get to New York.

We had a tender feeling. We made friends. And I came to the conclusion that the people on the other side of the world are just as good as we are here. They have just as much love for their family and friends and for other people in the world as we have. Just some of the leaders that are forcing them into the situation that they have to contend with; it's not pleasant to them. To tell you the truth, and I hate to say this, but the German people have treated us with much more respect and welcomed us more than the French people did. We went there to save the nation. I understand that they had gone through a lot before we got there, and they were desperate and they weren't themselves, because they are a friendly people I know, and they like the American people, but as far as the soldiers were concerned the German people showed us a greater respect and welcome than the French people.

When we got back into the States I was with the 3rd Division overseas. Dr. Danforth, you probably know of him in Fort Worth, was a buddy of mine in the 3rd Division. I was assigned to both the 4th and 5th Divisions, and then come back with the 6th Division in 1920. We landed in New York and I was sent to San Antonio from there. The purpose was to close out the camp, discharge all the military personnel, write their discharges, and put the records and send them into Washington. At one time I was the oldest soldier in that entire camp.

My assignment was from there to Camp Pike, Little Rock, Arkansas. There were six of us from different parts of the country reported to establish Camp Pike Collins, a military school. Captain Jan Stedge, a Swede, was at this college. He was a burly fellow, used to be a cavalry officer. He didn't know me from Adam's apple. He looked at the various personnel: "I want you to report in charge of quarters", "I want you to report in charge of these facilities", and he looked at me and said, "I want you to be my secretary." He didn't know if I knew what end of the pencil to use. But anyhow I went and they started teaching the enlisted personnel elementary courses and special courses such as typewriting, shorthand, and Dr. Danforth was assigned as an instructor in pharmacy. As secretary I kept the records and all that and made out the reports. At one time during the term an inspector came from the Inspector General's office in Washington to inspect the facilities of this college, and he was going to write a report back to Washington to his superior, and Captain Stedge called me and said that the Colonel wanted to give me a letter on a report. Captain Stedge wrote a lot of letters and I always took the dictation. I never learned shorthand, and all the typing I done was on a hunt and peck system, but I was working keeping records in the Army. I had my own shorthand system. He dictated very slowly. What I couldn't get I could remember and could fill in, and after knowing what the subject was I could make it come out just what it should be. He didn't know that I couldn't take shorthand, so when this Colonel from the inspector got to dictating a letter he just started rattling off, and I couldn't keep up, even with my own system. I said, "Beg your pardon, Colonel, you will have to go slower."

I can't take dictation at the rate you're going." The Captain looked at me and said, "By golly, you have taken all of mine!" "Yes sir, but you know I've never had a course in shorthand and I use my own system." He said, "By golly, I don't see how you do it." And I showed him how I had done it. He was amazed at it and then he said that from now on you go to Lieutenant Boyd, (he was in charge of the business courses, giving shorthand and typewriting courses). So I went down there and tried to take a course in my spare time when I could get away from my duties at the college, and I learned some of it, but I couldn't get away from the idea that every now and then I would use a character of my own instead of the right one. And in typewriting instead of using the regular system I'd throw away my four fingers and I could make better time using just two. I never did master it to this day.

After so long a time we got the college going. It was a prominent section of our organization that attracted many of them. The boys had an opportunity to further their education and get special training in electronics, automotice, and business and in various skills like pharmacy. When I finally was pulled into the Reserves I wasn't discharged yet; I had six more months to complete serving my enlistment. I had about six and one-half years service at that time. I had to report to the district or the headquarters 8th Corps Area to Fort Sam Houston and I would get a monthly check and report to them. They finally did give me a discharge. I was first in the reserves and then fully discharged and I had no more connection with the military. But when the time came for me to go Captain Stedge, director of the education, said, "I want you to stay." I said, "Well, Captain, I think I want to go to West Texas and get in the oil field. I think I can make more money there than I can in the Army." He said, "I'll get you anything--I'll get you a promotion, I'll put you on any kind of service that you want if you'll stay." I said, "No, my mind's made up, I'm going to go." So I did, and I left and come down here.

The reason I came down here in 1917 when I first hit the camp, there was a group that come through the camp to see what's going on. Katherine Mary Runian, Nina Keith, Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Wiseman and Edward were in the group. The first time we met--you've heard the story about love at first sight--Katherine Mary and I became friends and I went to see her, and while I was here at camp, and corresponded with her while I was overseas, and naturally I wanted to come back over here. We had no kind of a promise to each other, but we kept up by correspondence. She was graduating from high school when I met her and working for the telephone company--Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. I would come to her home and visit with her and her parents, and we went to church and activities together. Then when I was sent overseas we kept in touch through correspondence. I made a trip one time from Little Rock down here at Christmas to be with her, but we never did have any promise or any plans to get married. However, in France a fellow by the name of Hanson, a Swede who was a member of our company, had a diamond ring that he bought for the granddaughter of President Harrison in Pennsylvania. And of course he wasn't good enough for the family and it never came to a head, so he still had that ring. I bought that ring off of him and when I got out of the service and come back here in February 1920 I got engaged and we married on May 10, 1920 at the Boulevard Methodist Church. She was payroll clerk for the old North Texas

of the telephone company. Her daddy, Joe C. Runion, was working for the telephone company, and he wanted me to work as a cable splicer--kind of special work. So I applied for that position at the telephone company. They didn't have any vacancy at that time, but in the meantime they had a vacancy in their garage. Their mechanic was on a drunk and they couldn't get their automobiles worked out. So I started working for the telephone company as a mechanic to keep their cars and work trucks going.

At the same time I got an extra job working for the Star-Telegram on Throckmorton and 8th Street, where Barber's Bookstore is now. I worked as an extra press boy.

At the same time on July 4th while we were camping out at Lake Worth with friends a friend of mine asked me how I'd like to go to work for the railroad. So we left camp and walked all the way from a slough about halfway from where Carswell Air Force Base is, all the way to the T&P Railroad Station here in town, and that day I went to work for the T&P Railway in the Superintendent's office in the Accounting Department, on a temporary basis. I was supposed to keep track of the materials used in payroll of the sections on the Fort Worth Division from Ranger to Longview. Then later on a job opened called a bill clerk. Stations were used by different railroads, and whatever services required or given here at this terminal I had to make a record of it and each month we'd bill 'em and they paid us and also other railroads would bill us for service at other stations.

Then later on the division accountant got promoted and I bid on his job and got it. I worked from 1920 till about 1932 when the depression came and they shut down a lot of the division offices and combined the personnel in their general office. We were rated on the basis of seniority and I only had 12 years. I didn't think I had a chance in the world, but a friend from the General President's office in Dallas told me to bid on only the two highest jobs. And lo and behold, when the jobs were awarded I got the second highest job of them. I'll tell you the secret of it. This fellow that worked out of the President's office one time come over here to the division office to the accountant office dressed like a tramp and got a job in the accounting department. At lunch time I said, "Sutton, are you going to eat?", and he said "No, I don't have no money." I asked where he was gonna stay, and he said he didn't know. I said, "Well, all right, you come with me and we will eat." I gave him some money to get a room, and pretty soon after that he came out of his shell. He evidently came down here from a bridge gang, and was just a laborer on the railroad assigned to the office. But in the long run he was an investigator--an FBI man or something like that. He had the inside track into the President's office, and he saw to it that I got those jobs. So for the kindness that I did to him that was his pay.

So then I was assigned over there to what they call the Chief Engineer's Office. We did accounting work in connection with the Interstate Commerce Commission giving a complete resume and the material piece by piece structural accounting of the facilities or any improvements of the buildings--what the foundation, land, substructure, and other facilities and utilities cost. The report went to the Interstate Commerce Commission so they could check it and see if that was

proper to include in the investment in the railroad so they could base the rates on it; fair return on the basic rates. After a while the position opened in the auditor's office, a traveling position, which I didn't like, but it paid more than I was making, so I bid on it and got it. That covered checking all the posts and sections on the entire T&P Railway from El Paso, Texas down through Fort Worth, Dallas, Longview, Marshall, to Texarkana, and through Marshall east of Shreveport to Mansfield, Louisiana, and to New Orleans, and also from Texarkana by way of Bonham, Whitesboro, and Denton, into Fort Worth.

In addition to that there is a little road called Texas & New Mexico that ran from Monahans through Hobbs and wound up in Lovington, New Mexico. And also there was a road called Pecos Valley that ran down into the valley from Pecos south, and then the Abilene Southern that ran both north and south from Abilene to Ballinger and Throckmorton, I think it was, and also the Ranger, Eastland & Wichita Falls and the Weatherford-Mineral Wells & Northwestern, and the Fort Worth-Belt and the Texas Midland from Terrell, and the Texas Shortline-Big Sandy. I had to check all of those. And down into New Orleans and Louisiana you'd get into the country with all the cane spurs; I was just going around in circles checking all of them.

In the meantime we were fortunate to have a daughter born March 9, 1925--June Marie. She is married to F. H. Ivers. Of course she was raised here on Northside--all my wife's friends and folks are on the Northside, so I had to commute back and forth from Dallas. I figured there was too much for me to do, so when Mr. J. D. Kutch who was a partner in Woody, Kutch Commission Company asked me to come to work for him I took a leave of absence from the railroad so I could come down here and try it out. Mr. Wallner, President of Panther Oil and Grease Co., known as Southwestern Petroleum now, advised me to do this. You know, I was making half of what I was making at the railroad. I gave up my seniority, my hospital care, and my railroad pension, and came down here for half of what I was making. I didn't ask them how much they would pay. Incidentally, all my life I've never lost a day's work; I never asked anybody for a job; I never asked 'em how much they paid, or I never asked 'em for a raise. I had to earn it, prove myself. If I wasn't satisfied with what I got it was between me and my boss, and if we couldn't settle it or come to any terms, why we continued till a better time.

When my leave of absence was up I asked 'em for an extension. They wanted me to come back to work and I said in that case I'll just have to resign. They wanted me to stay, so I just finally had to tell them I quit--they wouldn't accept my resignation.

My job on the railroad was very pleasant because I traveled to West and East Texas during the big rush when we were actually discovering oil and producing it. They were building spurs, and industries were locating all along the railroad tracks at that time. In no time I met engineers, geologists, and owners of oil companies and drilling companies. In those days they didn't have trucks to haul oil, or pipelines--everything had to be loaded on tank cars and transported from the oil fields into the refineries. Every time they had a spur I had to go up there and check the contract and get an engineer's estimate on how much it would cost, and the company would have to put up a deposit and we would have an understanding as to who would maintain the track, how much of it, from what point to what point, and so forth.

And on the land that no squatters or leases occupied--any of our land along the right-of-way where our property was--I had to watch out for that too as I went along. I also represented our land and industrial department, the tax commissioner of the railroad. In times where there was a tax problem where they wanted to raise taxes or have some adjustment he would always give me the file and say, "When you are over there go and talk to them." Well, I did a lot of good for them because they didn't look at me like a big shot. I was just one of the employees; I could get down on the ground level with anybody and not represent myself in any great capacity, only I would try to be reasonable and friendly with them, and I succeeded in many instances to avoid increase of taxes. The tax commissioner was so proud of me, he wanted to keep me working. When I resigned he sent a special invitation down here to bring my wife and daughter and go to Dallas to the Adolphus Hotel and set us up a great big dinner. I have a letter of recommendation from them--how much I was worth to them, how much they appreciated me, and any time I wanted to come back they'd be glad to have me.

I was at Ranger when the oil boom broke loose. The streets were knee deep in mud and dust. It was the same thing down in Eastland and Big Springs, and then in East Texas. I used to ride the trains a lot. I rode anything from a hand car to gasoline motor car, the section foreman's automobile, the buses, or a taxicab, ride in a caboose, ride in an engine cab, or ride the passenger train. I rode old #610 many miles. I had a pass for any transportation on the line and my family had the same thing.

Incidentally, my wife was born in London, Kentucky. Of course when I come down here in the early years I was considered what you call a damn yankee, and nobody looked on you with any favor at all. My wife's aunt, Mrs. Olivia Morrison, was a historian from DAR, and her husband was the judge of Lee County, Virginia. This aunt would come to Fort Worth from Virginia, and she said, "Katie, what do you want to marry a damn yankee for when there are so many good southern boys here? If you can't find one, come here and I'll find you one/" Anyhow, it didn't matter, we got married in spite of that. Anyway, she had two brothers, Dr. Clyde and Dr. Edgar Johnson, who opened and operated that Baylor County Hospital in Seymour, and Angus Wynne, who was a big operator in the Dallas Industrial District, was some of her kin, so she came down here to Texas to visit. We treated her nice--took her to the Stock Show and Rodeo one year, and up to Wichita Falls and Seymour to see her kinfolks. When she left after her first visit she put her arms around me and said, "Frank, you're the only damn yankee in this world that I love." We made several trips to visit the kin folks in Kentucky, got passes for us and for my daddy-in-law and mother-in-law. There was still a lot of them in the hills where the three states meet--they call it the Cumberland Gap. Every time I went on vacation I drove because riding a train wouldn't be no vacation for me--just work. We made Yellowstone and Grand Canyon and all that country out there in California, and up into Oklahoma and east through Mississippi, and all the states between Florida along the coast and Houston back to Fort Worth. But I still like this country best. It's open and free and the people out here are so different--they're openminded and openhearted.

I stay busy all the time. I used to occupy myself doing other things besides my regular job. I have never done a "days work"--I work from 8 regular hours to 16 and 18 hours. When I worked for the railroad here at the local office I'd do maintenance--painting, inside and outside, papering, plumbing, masonry, for some people had rent houses. I'd do those things whenever there was a chance to make money and make myself useful.

I have a little ranch out here in Wise County now--160 acres of land that I bought on nerve practically. I didn't have the money to pay, but I had the money to pay down and I did income tax work to pay it out. I kept an extra set of books; had about 100 clients to make out their annual income tax, mostly around here--the ranch business, cattle business, and individuals.

At the beginning there was a Woody-Kutch Commission Company, and they also had what they call a clearing house. In other words, I'll finance and do your book-keeping and everything, but you do your business in your own name and I'll get a certain percentage of your income. We had Farmers Commission Co., Carson Commission Co., McDowell Commission Co., Bell Commission Co., Wilsford Commission Co. that we cleared. In addition we cleared or financed what they call traders. That's people who go out and buy cattle and charge to our office and their name on order for somebody--some rancher that wants 2 or 3 head of steer says you buy them for me and I'll pay you a commission. They'd buy 'em and maybe mark up 25 or 100 of 'em and ship 'em out here. We'd pay for the cattle here and then we'd collect from whoever he'd shipped. We had about 20 of those traders that we cleared at that time.

Later on some of them had gone out of business, some had passed away, died, some of the traders were getting old and couldn't carry, and the cattle industry had changed a lot because a lot of them bought locally and they used to go out to the ranches and buy their feed and stuff right off the ranch instead of coming through the yard and ship them back to the lot. So we were cut down, and shrunk a lot, and we formed a partnership--Kutch and the farmers together. It was first a partnership and then it was incorporated. And now we are strictly a Farmer's operation, but the name remains because it was incorporated in that name--we haven't changed it.

Everybody had to make an income tax report here--every trader, every member working in the firm. I had more business than I could handle. I worked day and night and what time I had to get the accounts and income tax out. I had a lot of ranchers outside that would bring their accounts in here--big operations. I've only had one income tax return questioned. I knew it was wrong when I made it, on the insistence of the taxpayer that he wanted it that way. It was something pertaining to taking an addition--what they call improvements--and charge it off as repairs, deduct the entire amount instead of setting it up as capital assets and depreciate it just a certain percent each year. He told me that a lawyer friend of his said he could do it, and he wanted it done that way. I said, "Well, you're paying and you're the taxpayer. I'm going to make this report out liek you want it, but it's not right and I'm not going to sign it. You can sign

it and it will be all right." Then about 3 to 6 months after the return was sent in he got a letter from the Internal Revenue to bring his records for that year. And if I had put a red tag on that item over there it wouldn't have been any more conspicuous than what that fellow had on the return. He said he wanted to ask a question about this item. I said, "Sir, explain to him what it is." He told 'em just the way it was, and the man said, "You can't charge that off as repairs. You got to set that up as a capital asset and then depreciate so much per year for the time the structure is intended to survive." When we left the office the old boy didn't say anything to me until we went down the hall and the elevator, and then he said, "Yep, you was right." And from that time on when anybody ever came and asked me about income tax items he said, "Whatever he tells you is right."

Well, I am a Texan and proud to be one. This is my adopted state--nobody forced me--I chose it myself. I've been all over Europe and all over the United States and Canada and parts of Mexico, but this is my home. This is my place, and this is where I'm going to be. I love it. I have a place out here that's already got my name on it. That's my future home, and nothing is going to take me away from Texas. My child was born here and my grandchildren were born here, and they're all Texans and I'm proud to settle down here and choose Texas as my home.

ADDENDA BY JUNE IVERS ("GRAN" IS MR. KIRLI)

In 1974, Gran wanted potato pancakes for his birthday dinner, due to remembrance of this time. Our family (Frank, Nancy, June and Gran) and Dorothy and David Ashley had birthday dinner of these pancakes at the Village Pancake House where they specialized in German pancakes. Mr. and Mrs. Kraus, the managers, welcomed us. They had red, white and blue candles on Gran's pancakes and we sang Happy Birthday. Afterwards we came back to our house for birthday cake (yellow decorated).

Gran had 2 other birthday parties. First was at the Exchange Building at the Fort Worth Stock Yards, with a white sheath cake, white icing, decorated in blue flowers, candles of numbers "80". All the workers from the building and on the yards came by, Louise Fields and his western band played "Happy Birthday", and Wayne Brown from Channel 5 made films.

Next party was at World War I Veteran's Barrack #1469, where Gran is Commander. Veterans who had birthdays in November, December, and January also celebrated. Gran brought WWI mementos to televise--American, French and German helmets, New Testament and American flag Kake had given him before he went overseas. He dipped this flag in every river he crossed.

The T&P Railway Post #477 was organized at the suggestion of Dr. Danforth, who gave Gran his pin when installed. He had been a member of Bothwell Kane Post, and also the Business and Professional Post (Legion) that met at Blackstone Hotel.

CHRISTMAS

Kake and Gran started Christmas Eve in 1920 while living at 405 N.W. 20th Street. Continued when they moved to their own home in 1921 at 1922 Belmont, now 1870 Belmont.

First Christmas trees were gone after and cut down in Cedar Hill. During World War II, we all wrapped all the gifts in colored comic section from Sunday's papers. We would get service men from USO to come for Christmas dinner. Aunt Ollie Orr would send a real Virginia home cured ham and boxes of holly and pine cones each Christmas while she lived.

FARM

Gran bought the famr (150 acres on Salt Creek) early in 1945 from Mr. and Mrs. Nuckles, and cleaned up what was left of the house, and added on. The waterline was laid frist from Lester Kutch's place across road, then dug own well 320' deep, and had electricity run to place.

The highlight of the year was always Fourth of July. Gran and other men would stay up all night barbequeing the meat. Early the next morning, the children would go up on the roof of the house and help Gran put up the American flag. Kake would have all kinds of good food cooked and everyone that came would bring more of their specialty foods. Mr. Ramsey built 2 long tables with benches and a turn top table like people in Virginia used to have. Food is placed on it and can be turned rather than passed. Kake and Kathy would decorate the tables with red, white and blue crepe paper and square American flags. After the dinners were over, the men would go outside under the brush arbor and play dominos and 42.

Labor Day was another gathering time. Often had put remaining Barbecue from 4th of July in Blanke's deep freeze to have for Labor Day to say goodby to summer.

If weather permitted, we went to farm for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. There had to be the traditional black-eyed peas for everybody to eat for good luck and prosperity in the coming year.

CATTLE SALESMEN
Residence Phones

J.D. Farmer . . . 624-2176
Al M. Farmer . . . 626-4053
Benny Carson . . . 439-3111
Pleas Ryan . . . 624-3339
R.K. Dunlap . . . 838-0255

FARMER-KUTCH COMMISSION CO., INC.
112 LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE BLDG. - FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76106
CATTLE - HOGS - SHEEP

HOG & SHEEP SALESMEN
Residence Phones

Alvin Myers . . . 831-1467

PHONES

Office 624-2176
Cattle Yard . . . 626-3726
Hog Yard 624-0679

FORT WORTH, TEXAS.

Mrs. W.A. Schmidt,

Dear Friend:-

Please accept my "Thanks" for selecting me for this interview. I am sorry for the long delay in returning this transcript to you.

You have given me much inspiration for the future. Thanks for the opportunity to go into the past and recall some of the experience that was my good fortune to play the main character.

I am proud if this small contribution hope it can serve some useful purpose for any cause or reason, and if there is anything that I can be of service or help to you or your organization please feel welcome to call on me,

Very Grateful
F.E. Kirli
F. E. KIRLI.