

CATALOG NUMBER  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

OH76.1  
Abraham, Roland  
1988

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Roland H. Abraham  
**DATE:** October 5, 1988  
**PLACE:** At the St. Paul home of Mr. Abraham  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Abraham grew up on a farm in Renville County. His active participation in the 4-H Club led him to his first job as an office assistant to the county agricultural agent. Abraham then went on to attend the University of Minnesota and received his degree in animal science and agricultural education. Following his undergraduate education, he began working as an agricultural agent. In 1951, he went on to earn a master's degree in public administration. After completing his degree, he was named district supervisor in the St. Paul office of the extension service. In 1954, he became the assistant director of extension, and in 1962 he was chosen as its associate director. Abraham completed his Ph.D. in extension administration from the University of Wisconsin in 1963. He was appointed director of extension in 1968. Abraham retired in 1979.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Family background in farming and extension involvement. Working as office assistant for county agent. Comparison of agricultural teaching practices at the high school and college level. The evolution of the agricultural extension service--soil conservation; emergency federal farm programs; educational programs--research; farm policy; evolution of programs oriented towards homemakers; youth programs. The changes in perception and image of the extension service. Relationship of universities and agricultural colleges with the farmer. The extension service's ability to adapt to new technology and research information. Farm crisis--theory as to why the recent crisis occurred and why it ended; background of agricultural crisis. Family farming--what is it; can it survive; corporate farming. Extension service programs--most significant; least successful programs. Funding of extension service. Key strengths of extension service.

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 2 60-minute cassettes  
**Original :** 2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 1/2 hours  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none  
**TRANSCRIPT:** 22 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1988.167.01

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.2  
INTERVIEW: Allen, Merle  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Merle Allen  
**DATE:** May 2, 1989  
**PLACE:** The Allen home near Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Born on his father's farm in Clay County, Minnesota, on January 31, 1908, Allen has spent his life actively engaged in farming and its many facets. Due to the poor health of his father, Allen was pressed into helping on the family farm at the age of twelve and did so until 1933. He then moved to his own farm, which he ultimately bought in 1946. Allen has raised potatoes, sugarbeets, and grains, with sugarbeets being his main crop. He helped form the Sugar Beet Growers Association in 1936 and served on its board until 1942. He also served as the local REA (Rural Electrification Administration) chairperson from 1951 to 1972 and as a county commissioner. He has now retired and his sons have continued to farm.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Family background--when and where his parents immigrated, the family farm; the Great Depression--its effects on prices; prices in general for his crops; the trucking industry; sugarbeets--farming, equipment; corporate farming versus family farming; reasons for the decline of the family farm.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 90-minute cassette  
   **Original :**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 1/2 hours

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      27 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**            AV 1988.167.14

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.3  
INTERVIEW: Bernhardson, Eddie  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Eddie Bernhardson  
**DATE:** February 24, 1989  
**PLACE:** Clay County extension office, Moorhead, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Bernhardson grew up in rural Clay and Norman counties in Minnesota. He graduated from North Dakota State University, Fargo, with a major in animal science and vocational agriculture. Following two years in the armed services, he returned to Norman County, where he farmed in partnership with his father and brothers. In 1962, he left farming to become assistant agent for the Clay County extension service, where he directed 4-H, youth, and agricultural programs. In 1975, he was named to his present position as Clay County agricultural agent.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The Clay County extension office organization and responsibilities; the topography and soil composition of Clay County; Lake Agassiz; the effect of soil composition on the production of potatoes and sugarbeets; harvest and storage methods for potatoes; growth of sugarbeet production from the 1920s to the present; sugarbeet processing plants in Minnesota and North Dakota and the formation of sugarbeet cooperatives; using crop rotation to preserve soil moisture and its effect on sugarbeets, grass, and small grain crops; nitrogen usage on sugarbeet acreage; the beneficial use of phosphate and other chemical fertilizers and pesticides in maintaining profitable agriculture production; the 1988 drought; and the impact of the extension service education program on farming methods, crop, and livestock production in Clay County.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original :**        1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      9 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 1988.167.03

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.4  
INTERVIEW: Booker, Tom  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Tom Booker  
**DATE:** March 9, 1989  
**PLACE:** Renville County extension offices, Olivia, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Booker grew up on a farm in central Illinois. He graduated from the University of Illinois-Urbana with a degree in general agriculture in 1958, and in 1970 completed a masters program at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, majoring in agricultural research and development. He served in the Reserve Officers Training Corps as a student at Urbana and later joined the National Guard. Following his graduation from Urbana, he was employed as assistant farm advisor for Macon County, Illinois. Three years later, Booker joined a resource development pilot program for Polaski and Alexander counties in southern Illinois. Upon completion of his masters in 1970, he became an area advisor for research and development programs for the Illinois extension service. In 1980, he moved to Alexandria, Minnesota, and a position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In 1984, he accepted his present position as county extension agent for Renville County.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The 4-H program and its social and educational influences; extension programs in Illinois, including Macon, Polaski, and Alexander counties; a discussion of the Farm Bureau's organization, funding, and its link with the extension service in both Illinois and Minnesota; the education program of the extension service in Minnesota, including the "cluster of counties" concept; the importance of farm management and marketing; farm economy; the family farm and the "corporate" farm; use of computers by farmers to keep current on grain and livestock market prices, futures and option prices; the economy of Renville County in 1988-89 and the effect of the 1988 drought; the present and future use of herbicides and pesticides and their effect on groundwater contamination in Renville County.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**     1 60-minute cassette  
  **Original :**       1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**     1 hour  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     none  
**TRANSCRIPT:**                16 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 1988.167.04

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.5  
INTERVIEW: Cooper, Roger  
YEAR: 1990

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Roger Cooper  
**DATE:** January 5, 1990  
**PLACE:** Cooper home in Bird Island, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** State Representative Roger Cooper grew up in Freeport, Illinois and received his undergraduate degree from Rockford College. He has also attended graduate school at Mankato State University. After working briefly in the private sector, Cooper accepted a position as a teacher in the Bird Island school system. He has served as the Renville County DFL chair, on the Bird Island city council, and on the Region 6E development commission. He also is active in a variety of other civic organizations. Elected to the House in 1986, Cooper serves on the agriculture; economic development and housing; governmental operations; and health and human services committees.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Cooper's early involvement in politics and his election to the Minnesota House of Representatives; rural Minnesota health care--including the scarcity of physicians and medical services, the aging of the rural population, the cost of insurance and the effect of Twin City-based health organizations on hospitals and available nursing care in rural communities; agriculture and the family farm versus corporate and contract farming; genetic engineering and the use of chemicals and herbicides to increase productivity; commodity prices versus cost production; the success of state legislation--such as interest buy-down--during the farm crisis; global farming and the future of agriculture in Renville County; economic development-- including ethanol, sugarbeet and corn cooperative organizations, the Greater Minnesota Corporation and its funding support, small businesses and demographics in rural areas; and schools and school consolidation.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 90-minute cassette  
   **Original :**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    1 1/2 hours  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none  
**TRANSCRIPT:**                16 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 1989.258.2

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.6  
INTERVIEW: Drescher, Donald  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Donald Drescher  
**DATE:** April 18, 1989 (audio interview); June 6, 1989 (video interview)  
**PLACE:** Drescher's farm, near Conger, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Drescher grew up on a farm near Albert Lea, Minnesota. He participated in Future Farmers of America, serving as president of the Albert Lea chapter for two years, and participated in 4-H. After graduating from high school and serving in the army during the Korean War, he started working on the family farm. Drescher has a crop and hog farm which he runs with his wife and one of his sons.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Background. Hog and crop farming. How the local community has changed over the years. The future for the Albert Lea area. How the farm is run. The farm crisis and how it affected the area. Education in agricultural techniques and marketing. Impact of the drought of 1988 on the area. The lack of understanding as to what farmers do and how agriculture fits into the economy on a local and national level. Defining the family farm. The problems with corporate farming. Farming as a way of life and as a business.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**VIDEO RECORDINGS:** **Beta:** 3 20-minute 1/2" Betacam masters  
**VHS :** 1 user tape

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 1 60-minute cassette  
**Original :** 1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour (audio interview)  
approx. 1 hour (video interview)

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 12 pages (audio interview). A shot list and a five-page rough transcript of the video interview are available in the Oral History Office.

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1988.167.10 (audio)  
AV 1999.261 (video)

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.7  
INTERVIEW: Hagaman, Gerald W.  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Gerald W. Hagaman  
**DATE:** November 22, 1989  
**PLACE:** Offices of the Minnesota Farm Bureau, St. Paul  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Hagaman grew up in Illinois and joined the state Farm Bureau in 1953 as a county organization director. He later served as executive secretary of a county farm bureau, as a district representative for sixteen counties, state director for young people's activities, and membership relations director for the Illinois Farm Bureau. He has also represented the American Farm Bureau Federation as area field services director in the Midwest region and as coordinator for the natural resources and environmental division. He has served as chief administrator-secretary of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation and Affiliated Companies since 1978.

Hagaman has been active in numerous church and civic groups and holds the Distinguished Service Award of the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce. He presently serves as chairman of the board of trustees of the Minnesota Bible College in Rochester.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Information on the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Illinois and Minnesota Farm Bureau federations and their split with the federal extension service; environmental issues as related to agriculture, especially water-use claims on federal and private lands, water pollution, groundwater contamination, and wetlands; prevention of soil erosion; the public reaction to advertising and the role of the news media in reporting use of herbicides and pesticides; the need for education on food safety; farm economics including the 1980s farm crisis, subsidy programs, commodity prices, and world trade; low impact sustainable agriculture (LISA). Also discussed is family versus corporate farming and the effects of vertical integration on farming.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original :**      1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none  
**TRANSCRIPT:** 17 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1989.258.1

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.8  
INTERVIEW: Hansen, Gary  
YEAR: 1987

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Gary Hansen  
**DATE:** March 27, 1989 (audio interview); May 12, 1989 (video)  
**PLACE:** Hartland, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Mr. Hansen was born in Hartland, Minnesota and moved to Ellendale, Minnesota after World War II. He graduated from high school in Ellendale. He attended Waldorf College and Wartburg College, leaving school after his junior year. He returned home and accepted job at the Northwestern Bank of Owatonna. He has been a banker with the Farmers State Bank of Hartland for 30 years.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Changes in Hartland since the 1950s; community involvement and spirit; the rural crisis in the 1980s--immediate and long term effects; involvement in the mediation process; working with Federal (FDIC) examiners; debt: purchasing equipment, income tax, liquidation, foreclosure; personal and professional relationship with community members; changing banking practices and attitudes; educational preparation for farming; interest buydown; practices which favor the debtor; defining the family farm; history of the bank; the future of Hartland.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**VIDEO RECORDINGS:** **Beta:** 4 20-minute 1/2" Betacam masters  
**VHS :** 2 user tapes

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 2 60-minute cassettes  
**Original :** 2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 2 hours (audio interview)  
approx. 1 hour, 20 minutes (video interview)

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 30 pages (audio interview). A shot list and a twelve-page rough transcript of the video interview are available in the Oral History Office.

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1988.167.06 (audio)  
AV 1999.261 (video)



CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.9  
INTERVIEW: Kucharik, Charles  
YEAR: 1992

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Charles Kucharik  
**DATE:** March 20, 1992  
**PLACE:**  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Charles Kucharik grew up in Illinois, in the Chicago area. He was graduated from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, in marketing and worked for Proctor & Gamble, Anderson Clayton Foods, Wilson Foods, and Rockingham Poultry before coming to Minnesota in 1989 as president and chief operating officer of Gold 'N Plump Poultry, Inc. He resigned from the position following a restructuring of the family-owned company.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Kucharik gives a brief history of the company founded by E.M. Helgeson in 1929 and describes its growth through the stages of hatching chicks, production of table eggs, retail sale of poultry, and the association of Gold 'N Plump with companies such as Lake Country Farms, Armour, Jack Frost, and JFC, Inc. He speaks of the relationship between independent farmers and poultry processors; the establishment of a structure for financial partnership with farmers for hatching, feeding, and housing poultry; and with retailers for marketing. He talks about the controversy over the issue of "quality inspection" as raised by the media; promotional campaigns; advertising techniques; and environmental issues.; as well as the positive impact of the poultry business on the St. Cloud and surrounding community in terms of corn and soybean production, shipping, and employment.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original :**      1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**      16 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**      AV 2000.12

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.10  
INTERVIEW: Lunde, David  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** David Lunde  
**DATE:** May 1, 1989 (audio interview); June 6, 1989 (video interview)  
**PLACE:** Hayward, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** David Lunde is a farmer in Hayward, Minnesota. He grew up on his family's farm, originally homesteaded by his grandfather in 1870. He and his brother became partners with their father in the farm beginning in the late 1940s, after they returned from military service in World War II. Mr. Lunde also served in the Korean war. In 1960, Lunde purchased the family farm from his father. He continued to farm until 1989 when he and his wife sold the farm to a neighbor and moved to town.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Lunde family history; selling the family farm; serving on the board of directors for Mid-America Dairymen; political aspects of farming; Workmen's Compensation; hiring help; military service; purchase of farm from father; growing up; involvement in 4-H; dairying; testifying before the House Subcommittee of Dairy, Poultry and Livestock for the 1985 Farm Bill; necessity of a two-income family; ethnicity and religion in the Hayward area; the Federal Land Bank; the co-op movement; mediation process; the 1980s farm crisis as part of a cycle; marketing; young people in farming; corporate farming; dairying in Arizona, California, and Florida; Hayward's businesses and future; the environment and use of chemicals; the seed corn business; 1959 Wilson Plant strike in Albert Lea; appreciation of farmers; dairy and growth hormones; the future of family farms.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**VIDEO RECORDINGS:** **Beta:** 4 20-minute 1/2" Betacam masters  
**VHS :** 2 user tapes

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 1 90-minute cassettes  
**Original :** 2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1½ hours (audio interview)  
approx. 1 hour, 20 minutes (video interview)

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 26 pages (audio interview). A shot list and a twelve-page rough transcript of the video interview are available in the Oral History Office.

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1988.167.13 (audio)  
AV 1999.261 (video)

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.11  
INTERVIEW: McCaffery, Ralph  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Ralph McCaffery  
**DATE:** May 4, 1989  
**PLACE:** At the Olivia, Minnesota, offices of American State Bank  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** McCaffery grew up in Doesman, Wisconsin, on his parent's dairy farm. After attending the University of Wisconsin and serving in the armed services, he worked for the Production Credit Association. He began working for the American State Bank in 1977.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Background. The bank--involvement in agricultural loans; how banking has changed since he first arrived; impact of the farm crisis; impact of new state laws; procedures of loan applications; effect of 1988 drought. Effect of 1988 drought on farmers. How the community of Olivia has changed. Appreciation in value of farmland. Economic impact on Olivia due to the larger communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. Definitions of family farming, and its viability. Younger farmers vs. older farmers.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original :**      1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      6 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**              AV 1988.167.12



CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.13  
INTERVIEW: Richter, Herbert  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Herbert Richter  
**DATE:** March 16, 1989 (audio interview); May 12, 1989 (video)  
**PLACE:** Richter family home, Conger, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Herbert Richter grew up on the family farm north of Conger, Minnesota. His father, August Richter, and uncle, Charles Richter, owned and operated the Richter Hardware store in Conger from 1906 to 1946. Herbert worked at the store while attending high school in Conger, helping with services, repair, and other aspects of the business. In 1942, he entered the armed services; upon his discharge in 1946, he returned to Conger where he took over the family hardware store in partnership with his brother. The store, now known as the Richter Trustworthy Hardware, still operates under this partnership in 1989. Richter has been active in Conger's civic and school affairs for over sixty years.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Charles Richter's stone-blasting accident in early 1900; a description of the early years in the hardware business, including information on services rendered to farmers, machinery set-up, and harness repair; a description of the original platting and businesses in Conger; the labor shortage during World War II; changes in merchandising methods through the 1960s to 1980s and the effect of discount and wholesale firms on small-town independent businesses; government regulations, including workers compensation and income tax; the 1985-1988 economy and its effect on rural businesses; dairy farming and creameries; consolidation and cooperation of schools and services in rural communities.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**VIDEO RECORDING:** **Beta:** 2 20-minute 1/2" Betacam masters  
**VHS :** 1 user tape

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 1 60-minute cassette  
**Original :** 1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour (audio interview)  
approx. 40 minutes (video interview)

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 11 pages (audio interview). A shot list and five-page rough transcript of the video interview are available in the Oral History Office.

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1988.167.05 (audio)  
AV 1999.261 (video)

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.14  
INTERVIEW: Schewe, Jim  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Jim Schewe  
**DATE:** May 4, 1989  
**PLACE:** Schewe farm, Renville County, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Schewe grew up in rural areas near Sleepy Eye and Redwood Falls, Minnesota. The son of a dairy farmer, he worked on his father's farm through high school and until drafted into the armed services following his eighteenth birthday; he then spent a fifteen month tour of duty in Germany. After his discharge, Schewe was married and for ten years was employed as a truck and tractor mechanic. He and his wife, Marcy, then purchased their present farm in Renville County, where together they manage a combined farming and dairy operation.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Information on procedures for obtaining loans from the Farm Security program, the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), and private banks; the difficulties in starting a family farm; the importance of accurate record-keeping and the use of computerized records; working with the Farm Security Board and the mediation process; the importance of diversified farming; dairy cattle and hogs; discussion of farm-family life, responsibilities, schedules, restrictions, and children's school activities; rural neighborliness; survival of small-town businesses; groundwater and use of pesticides; and the impact of government regulations on farming.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:** Marcy Schewe offers several comments during the interview.

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 90-minute cassette  
                                  **Original :**      2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   1 hour, 10 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    none

**TRANSCRIPT:**               29 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**      AV 1988.167.11



CATALOG NUMBER  
INTERVIEW:  
YEAR:

OH76.15  
Swoboda, Delores  
1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Delores Swoboda  
**DATE:** January, March, and May, 1989  
**PLACE:** The home of Delores and Eugene Swoboda, in Renville County  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Delores and Gene Swoboda have been farming in Renville County, just outside of Redwood Falls, since 1959. Besides working on the farm, Delores has been heavily involved in a variety of church and community activities. She also has been a volunteer in efforts to improve telephone service and to prevent environmental degradation in her rural area. Delores has served with the farm activist group Groundswell since 1983. Among her many positions, she has worked as a media contact, newsletter editor, grant writer, and steering committee member. She also has counseled numerous financially troubled farmers.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Growing up. Swoboda family history. Farm and trailer court. First involvement with rural activism--telephone company issue. Working with MINNFAIR. Groundswell--early days; January 1st, 1985 demonstration; how it came into being; goals of National Farmers Organization; working with the state legislature; effectiveness of interest buy-down program; mediation process; right to first refusal; impact of legislative programs on farmers; foreclosure demonstrations; Paul Sobocinski's arrest; how farmers deal with their financial problems and the "conspiracy of silence"; helping farmers deal with their problems; women's support group and the difficulties for rural women; the rural crisis and the growth of social services; Bobbi Polzine leaving; current structure of; grants process; LaRouche organization; clothing center; toy project.

Vertical integration; corporate farming; use of growth hormones with livestock; consumer reaction against pesticide usage; concern regarding pesticide use and the impact on the family farm; impact of interest rates on the family farmer; the farm crisis and vertical integration; farmers who lost their farms and what they're doing now; farming as satisfying work; farmers' attitude towards the extension service; 1989 legislation; improving understanding between rural and urban areas; effect of FmHA notices sent out this year; Minnesota's farm advocate system; long range goals of Groundswell; defining the family farm; renting vs. owning land; farming as a way of life.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      3 90-minute cassettes  
   **Original :**      6 60-minute cassettes

OH76.15

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 6 hours  
**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none  
**TRANSCRIPT:** 75 pages  
**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1988.167.02

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.16  
INTERVIEW: Tepfer, Gloria  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Gloria Tepfer  
**DATE:** April 11, 1989 (audio interview); June 1989 (video interview)  
**PLACE:** Tepfer home, rural Danube, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Gloria Tepfer spent her childhood years in Appleton, Minnesota. Her family moved to Danube, when she was a senior in high school, and she was graduated from there. She married Wayne Tepfer in 1955. Following her husband's two-year tour of duty in the armed services in 1958, they moved to a farm near Danube and started a dairy/farming operation. Gloria Tepfer has been a full-time partner with her husband, sharing both the physical and financial responsibilities for their business. She has been involved in school, 4-H, and community affairs, and during the farm crisis, played an active role in the Groundswell organization, the Renville County Farm Bureau, and political rallies and protests in support of the farmers. Since 1985, following economic reversals in their dairy business as a result of the rural crisis, she has been employed outside the farm. The Tepfer farm is now owned and operated by Wendy and Ron Kluver, their daughter and son-in-law. Wayne Tepfer works for the local sugarbeet co-operative, and the Tefpers now live in Renville.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Information on family life and a family dairy farm operation, farm management and record keeping; farm loans, foreclosure and auction sales; negotiations with the Farm Home Administration, the Federal Land Bank, and American State Bank; mediation procedures; the Groundswell organization, Renville County Farm Bureau, and the Renville County extension program; farm protest activities; reaction to the farm crisis by the media, the Twin Cities area, and small-town businesses; the future of family farming in America; environmental issues including groundwater contamination and herbicides; the status of women in farming; corporate farming and the farm activist movement.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:** Wendy Tepfer Kluver participates in the video interview.

**VIDEO RECORDINGS:** **Beta:** 5 20-minute 1/2" Betacam masters  
**VHS :** 2 user tapes

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** **User copy:** 2 60-minute cassettes  
**Original :** 2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 2 hours (audio interview)  
approx. 1 hour, 40 minutes (video interview)

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 23 pages (audio interview). A shot list and eight-page rough transcript of the video interview are available in the Oral History Office.

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** AV 1988.167.07 (audio)  
AV 1999.261 (video)

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.17  
INTERVIEW: Tonsfeldt, Dean  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Dean Tonsfeldt  
**DATE:** May 3, 1989  
**PLACE:** At the Comstock, Minnesota offices of Mr. Tonsfeldt  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Tonsfeldt was born and raised on a farm east of Comstock, Minnesota. After serving in the military, he worked on the farm of his father and uncle. He then acquired an Amoco bulk fuel delivery agency, delivering light oils products while continuing to work on the farm. He now works as a jobber and owns several businesses, including Dean's Barrel Reconditioning.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Starting in the bulk fuel delivery business. Expanding petroleum business. Working as a jobber instead of as an agent. Satisfying federal government requirements as a jobber--pollution insurance policy issue and the super fund to deal with potential spills or leaks. Impact of gasoline tax increase on businesses. The independent retail gasoline business competing with franchise convenience businesses. Competition in the bulk business. The interrelationship of the bulk business and the farming economy. How the community of Comstock has changed over time. The economic relationship between Comstock and the Fargo-Moorhead area. Defining the family farm. Having the farming fever. Corporate farming.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original :**      1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      1 hour

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      12 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**              AV 1988.167.16

CATALOG NUMBER: OH76.18  
INTERVIEW: Ulven, Ron  
YEAR: 1989

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Ron Ulven  
**DATE:** May 2, 1989  
**PLACE:** At the offices of the State Bank of Hawley, Hawley, Minnesota  
**INTERVIEWER:** Margaret Robertson

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota Farm Economy Oral History Project

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Ulven grew up near Hawley on his parent's dairy farm. As a youth, he was involved in Future Farmers of America and 4-H. He received a degree in agricultural education from North Dakota State University. Before returning to Hawley, he served in the army and the Wisconsin National Guard and worked as an extension agent. Since returning to Hawley in 1963, he has worked for the State Bank of Hawley.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Family farm. Schooling. Army service. How he got into banking. Changes in banking since starting in 1963--interest rates; regulations; the farmer. What it is like to be a banker living within the community. Impressions of when and why the farm crisis began. Experience with the mediation program. Impact of interest buy down on the bank. Conservatism and the rural crisis, and the impact on extending credit. The education of the young farmer. Changes in the community of Hawley--businesses, services, population, competition with convenience stores. The family farm--defining; the viability of; management of. Corporate farming.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original :**      1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      50 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      none

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      18 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**              AV 1988.167.15