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Feature)

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Emil Kroening Interview, ca. 1976

Emil Kroening

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Well, we always figured it was. I t looked like in your steer shows that you Angus was amongst the top steers in any show that was held among the United States.

Q: Did you do much of showing your cattle to different shows?

Yes, we showed at a good many county fairs and my grandson showed at the state fairs. He had the grand champion heiffer at the Pope County fair for 6 years straight.

Q: Tell us for all the different things that you've done, it seems that you've done just about everything. What type of job or what type of work did you enjoy the best of the different things that you've done?

I think this Angus deal was about the best deal that they were more homing, you had something you could talk to and cuss them to. If you talked to a tire, it wouldn't talk back.

Q: So there's something different all the time?

In the Angus busianess there was somethingg different all the time, when you tryed to get a hold of the better blues all the time and to the extent of our money.

Q: Well, what are you doing now. You mentioned you sold out your stock two year ago?

Yes, we're retired now. We sold all our land except 50 acres and we keep that so I can run around that and chase rabbits I guess is all I'm going to do.

Q: One thing that I always ask people as a final question and that's how old you are.

Me, I'm 73 years old.

Q: Have you enjoyed living around this area?

Yes, you better have. It's a nice community to live in.

Q: We've been talking to Lewis Elder of Hancock.

Emil ~~Kraening~~ Kraening

We've talking now with Emil Kroenig of Morris. W Emil which county were you born in in Minnesota?

Winona County.

Q: That's down by Winona Mn?

Yep

Q: You came to Stevens Co. around this area around when, 1920x?

1920s, Yexp.

Q: When you started farming, you actually started farming ~~xxxxxx~~ on the west side of the Morris airport near a creek. What's the name of that creek?

Muddy creek.

Q: And that creek is still there?

Oh, yeah.

Q: Then you left for a while and you ~~wx~~ went up to where, Parkers Prairie, MN. What did you do ~~x~~ up there?

Well, just lived in town there, I didn't farm there at all.

Q: You decided you wanted to come back to Stevens County and it wasn't too many years later that you came back then?

Yes, I come back to Morris.

Q: Then you ~~xx~~ got a farm on this side of the air port then?

Yeah, this side of the airport then.

Q: What different things have you been engaged in in farming? Has it mostly been livestock or grain or both?

A little of both, farming and milking cows.

Q: Which did you like the best, the field work or taking care of the livestock?

Well, the livestock has a little more work to it than the way the farmer is now, it's a whole lot easier compared to when I started.

Q: When you started farming, you know there was so many things that had to be done by hand and one of the things you remember is pitching hay and pitching it up into the barn that used to take a pretty good set of arms.

Oh, yeah, I did a lot of that ~~pitch~~ pitching on the wagon and hauling it to the hay shed, that's what they called it.

Q: And milking cows never used to be an easy task either. I ~~x~~ imagine you had to do them all ~~x~~ by hand?

All by hand, yes, milk all by hand, that's right.

Q: How many cows was the most you ever had?

Well, it ranged to 10 to 15.

Q: You mentioned something about your cows, they ~~x~~ knew when to be milked ~~xx~~ and you had some ~~xxx~~ pretty good cows that cooperated.

Yeah, they was. They come right up where the milking place was, ya they come right up there the way they should til they were milked.

Q: you didn't have to ^{watch} ~~work~~ them, they knew exactly . Well, tell us about the work day back in the early days, did you have to have a clock? Did you know when to go to work and when to stop?

The sun was our clock. We went by the sun.

Q: So it was sun up to sun down?

Sun up to sun down, that's right. All by hand work.

Q: Tell us, you had one year in which you thought was a pretty good crop of corn, what kind of a price did you get for it?

Oh, I couldn't remember but we didn't get much for corn.

Q: Something about 5¢ a bushel?

Yeah, from 5 - 12¢ a bushel of corn.

Q: You remember the 5¢ corn? Many times during the winter there's times when you don't have to do as much. Did you get a chance to go into town much? Has that changed a lot?

Yeah, that ~~x~~ changed a lot, a big change in that.

Q: Back in those days when you did go to ~~x~~ town, you didn't stay long because with the horses in the winter time you have to find a place to park ~~x~~ them.

Yep, we had them on a post, tie post. You didn't dare leave them there in the cold weather.

Q: You didn't want to leave the horses ~~x~~ standing out in the cold. ²

Yeah, that's if you thought anything of your horses. Some fellows didn't, they come there in the morning and the horses stodd there in the afternoon yet, so I didn't like that.

Q: What did you use your horses for and how many did you have? Did you have more than a pair at a time?

Oh, yeah four we had. We had 4 machinery, 4 horses _____ that's what we used ~~xx~~ it for and gang plow.

Q: So you had ^d to ~~xx~~ use four horses at a time then?

Yeah, ^m mostly four horses.

Q: Were your horses pretty cooperative or did you have any times when they wanted ~~she~~ ~~gx~~ to go their own way?

I had ~~one~~ team, ~~they~~ if they had a chance, they'd runaway but I never really had a run away.

q: You mentioned one time when ~~you~~ ~~x~~ were moving your binder from one field to the next you had a little problem.

Oh, yeah that was bad. When the binder went in gear and it went ~~x~~ so quick in gear, then the horses run away and run into the woods, I was all broke up.

Q: You were riding in this when this all ~~x~~ happened too?

I fell down, it was rough there and I fell down through the bottome of the binder and ~~x~~ let them go.

Q: Maybe it's a good thing that you fell off ^h when you did?

I think so, yeah.

Q: You farmed ~~when~~ at a time when you did quite a bit of work ~~gx~~ by hand and today they've got quite a bit of machinery and it seems like they work just as long hours some times but would you trade your farming ~~x~~ days for the farming days of today?

Well, I don't know, we ~~xxx~~ were ~~o~~ satisfied the way we was going. We didn't spend that much money for machinery at all.

Q: In other words you wouldn't miss paying \$40,000 for a new tractor?

No, I wouldn't pay that much. *I didn't have that kind of money.*

Q: Maybe if you were still farming you would today. Well, Emil there's always one question I ask the people on the Reminiscing program ~~and that~~ and that's how are you are.

I'm pretty old.

Q: Well, we've talked to some that are in their 70s and some that are in their 80s and some...

How old do you think I am.

Q: Nobody's asked me that. That's a gooe question. You look like you're 65 or 70 and I know you're a little bit old. Now tell us how old.

I'm 95 now.

Q: 95 years old. Emil you're the oldest one we've talked to so far on the program and we'd like to thank you very much for ~~zz~~ talking on Reminiscing ~~on~~ W C MN.

Yeah, 95 years old the ~~2~~3rd of May.

q: Thank you. We've been talking with Emil Kroening of Morris on Rem. in WC MN a Saturday KMRS ~~x~~ News Feature.