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JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH KOLARIK

CONDUCTED BY LAURA DERR

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JOSEPH KOLARIK

Joseph Kolarik was born on December 27, 1889, in Cedar Rapids, at home on First Street and Twelfth Avenue East, the son of John Joseph Kolarik and Frances Sedlacek Kolarik. His parents had immigrated to Cedar Rapids from Czechoslovakia as young adults. He attended Polk School. Except for 1910-1917 when he commuted daily to Chicago for a mail service job, Mr. Kolarik has spent his whole life in Cedar Rapids. After marriage in 1911, he and his wife raised two children, Frances and Bob. As a young man, Mr. Kolarik played semi-professional baseball around Iowa representing various community teams. He also held several jobs, including retail store clerking, a position in the government mail service, and an apprenticeship at Lawrence Press (1918). In 1920 he started his own business-- Kolarik's Bookbindery-- and operated it successfully for 55 years. At one time it was the largest bookbindery in Iowa. Since retirement, his son Bob has moved the bookbindery to Springville and runs it there. Mr. Kolarik currently lives with his daughter's family in Fairfax, Iowa. His memories include the Interurban, early businesses in CR, baseball, and Czech immigrant background.

INTERVIEW TOPICS
CEDAR RAPIDS: THE EARLY DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Interview with Joseph Kolarik

Date of Interview: March 7, 1985, 6404 Cemetery Road, Fairfax, Iowa

Interviewer: Laura Derr

Transcriber: Leslie Onthank

LD: This is Laura Derr on March 7th, 1985, and I'm in the home of Mr. Joseph Kolarik at 6404 Cemetery Road in Fairfax, Iowa. Mr. Kolarik, will you tell me when you were born?

Kolarik: When I was born, the 27th of December, 1889.

LD: Where were you born, Mr. Kolarik?

Kolarik: I was born right in Cedar Rapids on First Street and 12th Avenue East.

LD: And you were born in your home?

Kolarik: Right in the home, yeah. Everybody was in my day.

LD: How long have you lived in Cedar Rapids?

Kolarik: All my life except when I moved out here, about 90 years I guess somewhere.

LD: About 90 years, that's long enough. Were there any periods of time when you were out of Cedar Rapids, either for a job or for schooling?

Kolarik: Yeah. I worked in the railway mail service and was gone about 50 percent of the time and then when I got through learning my trade, I went out "booming" as they called it. The apprentice always had to go booming to get more experience.

LD: Now what does "booming" mean?

Kolarik: Well, in other words, they pushed you out of the nest, your home shop, and you had to go somewhere else to learn something else, and they call that booming. Well, I boomed a little bit. I went up to Minneapolis and over to Milwaukee, and I got as far as Pittsburgh and then I think I come home then to come back and worked in the same shop that I started.

LD: Would those years have been around 1917?

Kolarik: Well, let's see, I went to work when I was eleven. It was earlier than that I think. I don't remember the years of them. When it comes to work, I can forget awful easy.

LD: But then after that period of apprenticeship, you came back?

Kolarik: Yeah, then I came back, and I worked for Welch people up at Anamosa for about almost two years in the big bindery. They had an awfully big bindery up there. And then I came back to

Cedar Rapids, and I think, yeah, I went to work and then I started my own bindery in 1920. And I had a partner, but he didn't stay with me very long, only about six weeks I guess.

LD: That is a short time. And so from that point on. . .

Kolarik: Then I had to struggle. I had a little struggle. It didn't do me any harm, but it wasn't very pleasant. I had two little kids, this one and another one, and they were only about, oh, they couldn't have been over ten or eleven years old, maybe not that much. And I lived in a shanty you might say and when my partner ran away from me, it put me in a kind of a bad spot. I had a place rented on First Street right across from the old auditorium from a lady by the name of Mrs. Smith, and we were only in there a month. It isn't dinnertime yet.

LD: Thank you very much.

(Other voice) Prunes, black raspberry, and applesauce.

LD: Mr. Kolarik, now I want to come back and talk about those early years with the book bindery in detail, but let me back track just a moment and get some more biographical information. What were your parents' names and where did they come from?

Kolarik: Well, my father's name was John Joseph, and my mother's name was Frances Sedlacek, and they came from Klatove' in Czechoslovakia. That used to be Bohemia. It wasn't Czechoslovakia in them days. But they came here--they were sweethearts over in the old country, but they didn't come over here at the same time. My mother came over first, and she located in Chicago and then she came to Cedar Rapids, and Father came afterwards, and they got married in Cedar Rapids, and they lived down on 12th Avenue and First Street, I guess, that little street that runs off next to the river. That's where I was born.

LD: Can you remember, generally, what the dates were when your mother and dad came over, or the decade that they came over?

Kolarik: Oh, no. No, I'm afraid not. I don't think I ever knew that, but they came over here quite a long while ago.

LD: But they grew up in Czechoslovakia, and then they came over when they were young adults?

Kolarik: Yeah. They came over--in those days, of course, it wasn't Czechoslovakia; it was Bohemia.

LD: Right. You told a story the other day about your mother and about how she came here at a very young age without knowing any English. Would you repeat that again?

Kolarik: Yeah. She came over here alone, and I don't think she knew anybody in the United States except a man by the name of Joseph Blahnik. He was a tailor and in New York City, and she came over here, and he kind of looked after her. She was some distant relative of his, I don't know remember just what. But then she migrated to Chicago and went to work for some people there, and she tells about that and sometimes I'd, you're not Jewish are you?

LD: No, sir.

Kolarik: Well, I'm going to have to tell that then. She came over here and, of course, immigrants weren't too fluent with their vocabulary, and they took her out somewhere, and she could never figure out where. They had a camp somewhere where they done a lot of fishing and hunting, and she used to have clean ducks and fish just about all the night and then she had to scrub maple floors. She said they had maple floors in the whole house where they had it on a lake, and I never could figure what lake that was, and she never knew, but I think it was Lake Geneva out of Chicago. And I said, "Well, why didn't you run away?" Well, she said, "Where could I go? I didn't

even know where I was at." Well, then when she got through they wasn't going to pay her, but fortunately she had a, I don't know whether he was a cousin's boy or something like that I don't remember--but he was an attorney in Chicago, and he went after it for her when she got--I thought, if I remember right she got \$300. They owed her that. They weren't going to pay her that. So those immigrant people, I take my hat off to them. Well, in this day and age we think nothing of going from here to Chicago, from here to Omaha, from here out to San Francisco, but can you imagine coming from Czechoslovakia, going through Germany over to Bremen and get on a boat and come over here all alone and land in New York City, a woman--a man is bad enough--but a woman not knowing anybody. I just don't understand those people.

LD: Did she ever talk about why she made that trip?

Kolarik: Well, yeah, she did. I don't think it's much of a persecution problem over there. She just, I don't know, she just thought it would be just nicer over in America because she didn't have any folks. See her folks died when she was three years old, and she was raised by her, well, I think it was her grandmother, and of course, life was pretty rough over there in those days, and she came over here all alone. Imagine that.

LD: How did she raise money for passage, do you know?

Kolarik: Well, she worked out there. There used to be, well, I forget what they did call those people in Bohemian, but they raised a lot of geese, and they used to pasture them. And she had to go down there, oh, I don't know how far she went, and on the pasture then she got paid for that. Now she saved all that money and got her passage. And then that Mr. Blahnik, he was kind of a second cousin of hers, those were the contractors' boys here--that live here--and Bob, and he helped her come over here. They were relatives, and he was at that time in New York City, and he was a tailor, and she came over here, and he got here started, and he got her to Chicago, and she went to Chicago to some people by the name of. . . yeah, that slips me, but she didn't stay with him very long. She kind of went out on her own there somewhere and got to working for those people. They were Jewish, and I'm sorry to say I don't have very much truck with Jewish people. They abused her very much.

LD: I can see how that would affect your feelings. You had mentioned earlier that she was about seventeen when she made this trip?

Kolarik: Well, let's see, she could have been about, I'd say about seventeen, eighteen years old, somewhere in there.

LD: And you also mentioned that she wore a badge when she traveled on the train. Would you repeat that for us?

Kolarik: Yeah, they used to all do that. See the immigration people when they come into the country, put a little sign on you, name and your destination and so if you couldn't talk, well, somebody could pick you up and get you started on the right direction.

LD: Right.

Kolarik: I know I was in the government service, and we used to have pens about as big as this whole room, like that Northwestern depot in Chicago over on old Kinzie Street, and they had, oh, maybe four or five of them. They fenced in with a fence like that, and they had benches all around, and they put the immigrants in there. When they had a carload of them going, oh, the Czech people, Cedar Rapids has been the destination for about 90 percent of them, and the rest of them were going out to Clarkson, Nebraska. That's another big Czech settlement. And you'd be surprised the things that they teach you. Almost everybody, every group, had an accordion player, and I worked in railway mail service, and we used to park, oh, maybe closer than here to the street from there, and some guy had an accordion, and they'd get to dancing. Once in a while they'd get to fighting too.

LD: And they had a real social situation there.

Kolarik: It was Italians, Czech people, you name it, Germans. I used to dead head home from Chicago. I'll never forget, and I used to get into Cedar Rapids about 5:30 in the morning when I was dead heading home, and I used to go up a car in what they call the, oh, immigrant car I guess they'd call it. I don't know what they did call it. It was just a regular car, but they put all those people in there, and I'd go in there, and I'd say "Dobretto," which is Bohemian and is good morning, and you never saw an avalanche come off like they did. Everybody all over the place, and they wanted to know where they were. They had no more idea where they were, where they were going, or what for. Can you imagine that? They'd have a little sign on them, Cedar Rapids or someplace out in Nebraska.

LD: Why did so many of them come to Cedar Rapids?

Kolarik: Well, I think that they, the Czech people especially, were always kind of a frugal lot, you know. They hard working people, and they had that emperor over there, Franz Joseph, I guess my father used to call him. He called him other things, but that wouldn't be nice to put in this, but he oppressed them quite a lot and took about everything away from them that he could, and they just resented that and most of them

came over here and that's what they came over here for. They used to come, well, I think, oh, I might say that in those years that probably 25 to 50 percent of the men when they came over here were boys. They didn't come to Cedar Rapids. They came to Solon, Iowa. There was people by the name of Kohout there. We called him Grandpa Kohout. He wasn't really my grandfather, but we always called him that. And he owned a big farm there. He had about, oh, I don't know, about 160 acres which was a big farm in those days. And they'd come over here, and they'd sleep in the hay loft, and he'd provide them with a pair of overalls and a blue shirt, and they'd stay with him, and they'd work for their food. He didn't pay them anything, I don't think, not very much anyhow. Well, he couldn't; he didn't make much in those days. And he'd keep them there til they got so that they understood that if they'd say, "John, come here and do this," then he'd fire them out, and he taught them a little English along there along the line, not very much, but. . .

LD: He was kind of a half-way house for them.

Kolarik: Well, yeah. There was always three or four, five of them down around there, my dad included. Oh, I can name you a dozen of them I guess that came from there, and then they graduated up to Cedar Rapids. Like Mr. Blahnik. He became a tailor. My dad became a painter. He come up here and went into the

Rock Island shops, and he became quite an artist. He used to paint the Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Northern. You wouldn't remember that, but that's what Rock Island used to be, you know. And they used to paint that on the coaches up there, and they put that on in gold, actually gold. They put it on with gold leaf. And they put the numbers on the motor, on the engines, and it was all gold leaf, actually gold leaf. I know because I didn't know at that time, but the gold leaf comes in books, three and three inches square, and there's a leaf of paper and then a sheet of gold in between there, and I used to go over with my dad when he worked over at the shops, and he'd give me them empty books. Well, I never knew that they come that way til I got in the binding business, and we use the same kind of gold, and it comes the way, and that's what them little books are from. They actually put those big numbers on them things in actual gold in those days.

LD: Now, would they take those sheets and then cut the letters?

Kolarik: No. They'd take, for instance, they'd put varnish or something on there and then they'd have kind of a flat, little brush that they'd rub it through the hair, and they could pick that whole sheet of gold up, and they just lay right on there and then when they got--then they'd brush it off and all the rest of it would come off. That's the way they put it on.

LD: So it really took some talent then?

Kolarik: Oh, yeah.

LD: To make it come out uniformly.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah, come out really light, and then they had a little hairbrush and went over the top. In the binder we use the same kind of gold, but we don't use it that way. We put it on with heat. They didn't. They put it on with varnish, and, oh, some of them guys got to be quite handy with that stuff. You got to be handy with that. That's .1267" thick. You go like. . .

LD: So if you make a mistake. . . it's very fragile there Then it could really be difficult.

Kolarik: Well, in the bindery we have a cushion, calf skin cushion, and we take a slip, and the gold comes in books, and we take a knife about that long with a wide blade. It's not sharp, and we pull that sheet out and then flip it over on that cushion and then they blow on it to flatten it, and they can take that same knife, and it isn't sharp. We can cut it off into strips, an 1/8". Well, I would say you can, but you better know what you're doing cause otherwise you're going to have a mess. And they use the same system only instead of pulling it out with a knife and laying it on a cushion, they just opened that book

with that thing and then run that thing through their hair, and they had kind of a fine hairbrush, and they'd pick that whole sheet up and just lay it right on there.

LD: That's fascinating.

Kolarik: That's easy, very easy, if you know how.

LD: How many children did your mother and father have?

Kolarik: Just one, I'm the only one.

LD: You're it. I'll be darn.

Kolarik: Yep. I'm the only specimen, and I can't say that I'm very proud of that, but I had nothing to do with that.

LD: That's unusual for those days.

Kolarik: Yeah, of all the people that I knew that came over here with my folks about the same time, I think I'm the only one that I know of in Cedar Rapids, and I used to think I knew about 55 percent of the people in Cedar Rapids, that only had one youngster in the family. I'm the only one.

LD: Did you grow up in the same house you were born in?

Kolarik: No. I was born down on First Street and 12th Avenue and then we moved from there up to about where the parking lot for Saint Luke's Hospital used to be, an old house sat behind the houses in there, and we lived there with some people that used to rent to us by the name of Hajny. And then the folks built a house on D Avenue and 13th Street. I think the number was 1316, yeah, and then from there we moved out on Madison Street, and I . . .

LD: Was that Madison south?

Kolarik: That's on the northeast side. That's over about, well, you go out past Heabel's, and you go out to Coldstream Avenue.

LD: Do you remember, just generally, the periods when you were moving from one place to another? For instance, were you still a child when you were over where Saint Luke's is now?

Kolarik: I remember living on D Avenue just barely. I remember we lived with old man Hajny. He owned a place in front and then he had a kind of a shanty in the back where we lived. And I remember I used to like to dig pretty well, and I was digging holes, and he didn't like that, and I remember him giving me a going over almost daily for digging holes in the yard. That I

remember and remember he had a beard. That's about all I can remember.

LD: So much of your memories would be on D Avenue then, with the. . .

Kolarik: But then we moved from there to D Avenue. The folks built a house at 1316 D Avenue, and we lived there, well, I lived there til I got--let's see did I get, yeah, I guess did get--I lived there til I got married. Then the folks sold that, and they moved out on Madison Street next to me. They bought an acre, and I had six acres out there, and they bought one next to me, and they lived there til they passed away. Dad did and then when he died I took Mother over with me, and she lived with me til she passed away.

LD: What year did you get married?

Kolarik: 1911.

LD: When you were growing up, what language was spoken at home?

Kolarik: Well, in the home, you mean?

LD: Yes.

Kolarik: Well, we had a rule that when we sat down to eat a meal, the family and it wasn't only me, of course, we talked Czech, nothing else. If they didn't talk Czech, the table wasn't too big, and my dad would reach over nicely and kind of smack me one. You'd better talk Czech, and I used to kind of resent that, but as I got older I thought it was a wonderful idea that we should all, not only the Czech people, but everybody should do that to not forget their background, and you know, I know so many people, well, not too many there ain't too many alive like me, but the Czech born and full-blooded Czechs, and they can't talk it, and that's terrible. I think it's terrible. I can talk it pretty fluently, and I can read it, and I can write it, but not too good anymore because I don't practice enough, but I think it's wonderful. I think you should--I think it--I don't care whether Czech or Italian or you name it; I think you ought to have carried it on.

LD: Keep that heritage.

Kolarik: Cause that linguist, it's not a bad idea. When I was a youngster, we used to could get a job working in stores pretty easy if you could talk Czech because it was about 55 percent of the people in Cedar Rapids were Czechs, and the whole lower end from about Third Avenue down and all the west side was all Czech people. And those days they'd come over here and

to be naturalized. I know because I interpreted for my dad and my grandfather when they got the naturalization papers. I was a nine year old kid, you know, and I had to interpret it for them. They couldn't talk good American.

LD: I was gonna ask about that--if they actually became American citizens.

Kolarik: Yeah, I interpreted for them. I found that paper the other day, and I don't know what I've done with that. I must have it among my stuff in there somewhere. They were over here, oh, I don't know a good many years before they were naturalized. I don't know. Of course, nowadays you have to do it right at, in a certain length of time, but in those days you never did. There was about half of the Czech people in Cedar Rapids never were actually naturalized. Then after a while they got so they wanted to vote and that was it.

LD: And that just took naturally.

Kolarik: Well, that naturalized them. I remember going--that judge that we went before to naturalize my grandfather and my--he was the name of Gibertson, Judge Gibertson, and he lived over on, oh, let's see that was about A, B Avenue about in B Avenue, oh, about Third or Fourth Street somewhere in there. He had a girl. Her name was, I think her name was Nelle, and she was a

great Christian Scientist. I knew that because when I was binding books she brought in a whole lot of Christian Science stuff. And she was oh, I don't know, some big shot in the Christian Science Church. I forget. I think her name was Nelle. I forget some of those things. I don't recall them often enough.

LD: I think you're doing real well, believe me.

Kolarik: I can remember what time it is when it gets around noon hour.

LD: That's important. In your home when you were growing up, did you maintain traditions that were important in. . .

Kolarik: Oh, definitely.

LD: Can you remember some of those for us?

Kolarik: Well, the first tradition we had that when we had a meal, we'd talk Czech. We didn't—I didn't dare. My dad, he could talk good American and read it and write it. He was a fairly well educated man in his way, but we'd done things kind of like they always did in the old country, that is, as far as I know what they done in the old country. I mean, I never was over there, but we kind of adhere to that and in those days ethnic groups kind of stuck together more than they do now.

In the lower end was mostly all Czech people and on the west side, over about 16th Avenue west of there, and they always kind of hung together. We had our own lodges, like the ZCBJ and CSPA, and they kind of were all clannish you might say. More so than they thought they ought to be, but they were, and the lower end, say from Fifth Avenue down on the east side, that was predominantly Czech people. And then when they got a little more fluent and all, they gradually moved out of there and then they finally got up to Vernon Heights. Well, I think they kind of, so them people resented the Czech people coming up to Vernon Heights. I don't know why, but they did. I think we had a fellow that was, man and The Gazette people, oh, he got into a lot of trouble with The Gazette. He was—I forget his name now.

LD: This was a Czech person?

Kolarik: No. He wasn't, and he lived on Vernon Heights when Vernon Heights was something to behold in those days. It wasn't like it is now. It was kind of a swanky place. I remember he built a house there and kind of a second cousin of mine wanted to build a house, when my second cousin was still alive he was the biggest building contractors in Cedar Rapids now—has been for years, him and his son. They wanted to build a house next to him, and he was gonna stop him. He didn't want any Czech people out there.

LD: Was that Loomis?

Kolarik: What?

LD: Was that the Loomis Construction people?

Kolarik: Yeah. Well, they built the house anyway.

LD: Oh, good. When would that have been?

Kolarik: Huh.

LD: Would that have been in the teens, in the '20's or. . .

Kolarik: Well, the name of the guy that was gonna build a house was Lumar, and the guy that didn't want him to build it was the editor of The Gazette.

LD: Well, that's so often the case that people that are in the positions of power they want to keep very. . .

Kolarik: No. Well, there used to be a lot of friction among the ethnic groups in Cedar Rapids--like the Czech people and the Italian people.

- LD: So there was friction between the groups, not just between the people who lived up in the Vernon Heights area, but even between the new immigrant groups.
- Kolarik: Yeah, but it seems like they came together more in the first World War. I think it brought everybody together. The German people had the, I think the hardest time because Germany happened to be the enemy of the United States at that time and, of course, anything that anybody was a German that was just too bad, but we had a lot of friction there. I don't know why because I worked with a lot of people that were Germans in those times, a fellow by the name of Bill Meyers, one of the best friends I ever had, but they had a sneaking idea that they were over all of us. That's all they could think about that they was going to be over all of us. And then it went on that the kids were that way too, provoked quite a lot of fights.
- LD: When you were growing up, what holidays were the most important in your household?
- Kolarik: What kind of what?
- LD: Holidays.
- Kolarik: Well, I suppose without any question is Christmas. We get presents, but I think Fourth of July was the biggest one. We

didn't have any law then. You could shoot blanks in revolvers, and you can't do that now, but everybody had a revolver, and you'd get blanks that go "bang, bang, bang," and oh, it was terrible, but. . .

LD: But fun.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. I want to tell you the things they done. You'd get right behind somebody and shoot that thing, and oh, it would scare you half to death. We thought it was fun, but you look at it in sober mind, it wasn't so funny at all.

LD: Probably just--it's really good we don't do that anymore, yeah.

Kolarik: See when we used to have a big celebration in Cedar Rapids, I'll bet you couldn't make one guess at exactly where we had it.

LD: Where you would go? To Ellis Park?

Kolarik: No. There wasn't any Ellis Park.

LD: No?

Kolarik: We had up there where the Central Park Presbyterian Church is.

LD: Oh, really.

Kolarik: Yeah. That was all timber and like a big park.

LD: This was when you were growing up?

Kolarik: Yeah. I was kind of a kid there and that's the first time I ever saw an ice cream cone. A fellow was making them there. He had kind of a thing that he'd roll it around there and put them on a fire and bake them, and fill them with ice cream cones. Oh, boy. We thought that was something only we didn't have any nickels to buy them with. We just had to look on.

LD: You just watched. Was that a park then, that area?

Kolarik: Well, it wasn't exactly a, oh, let's say an authorized park, but it was a big place where there wasn't any buildings, and that's where we had a ball diamond there right across from the Polk School about a block, a ball diamond there. We played ball there, and we used to hold the Fourth of July picnics there, about where the Central Park Presbyterian Church is in there. That used to be all prairie in there. And we had a race track down about, it'd be C, about C Avenue and 15th or 16th Street right in there somewhere.

LD: Oh, really.

Kolarik: Yeah. That used to be kind of a county track before they moved the thing to Des Moines.

LD: To race horses there?

Kolarik: Yeah, race horses there.

LD: Did you have a regular season?

Kolarik: Yeah and then they moved it out to the west side, and they put it in about where F Avenue is, F Avenue and about, I don't know, Eighth Street somewhere in there. I know Charlie Adams lived--and then we had an old ball diamond. The old ball park there. Charlie Adams lived on F Avenue and, I don't know what street. He used to say my garage sits right on first base. It did, yeah. That's a funny thing. That's nice kind of getting back to remembering those things, you know.

LD: It's a good way to identify where you live, isn't it?

Kolarik: Yeah.

LD: First base.

Kolarik: Course we lived on, we lived on the east side. I never lived anywhere else but on the east side, and we lived on D Avenue when we moved up there from the lower end and from over on A Avenue. Folks bought a lot and built a house there, and my grandfather built a house right next to us, and we lived there, oh, I guess well, about the time I got married. I got married when I was in the service, and my wife lived with my folks for, oh, I don't know not very many---few months til we got organized, and I bought that land out there on Madison Street, and we built on it and moved out there.

LD: Did your grandfather come over with your father?

Kolarik: No. My dad came over alone. My grandfather came over afterwards, Grandfather and Grandma. My dad come over alone. You know love is a great thing. He fell in love with my mother over in the old country, and she come over here alone and moved to Chicago. She come to New York and then she went to Chicago, and he come over after her. Now that's what I call love. They lived together for, oh, gosh I don't know, 50, 60 years, and they were very compatible people. I don't think I ever saw people as in age that were as devoted to one another as they were. After they were married, my gosh, and I was grown up. They made a great show of affection.

LD: In your household, did you mother and father have definite roles that they played? In other words, what was your mother's responsibility versus your father's in disciplining?

Kolarik: Well, my dear, if I told you that my father never paid a bill. He never went downtown until he was pretty near, I don't know how old. He worked over to the shops for years and years until he went out on a strike, and I forget what year that was, and then he went down to work for Cherry's. And he worked for Cherry's for about 25 years til he retired, and my mother paid all the bills. He didn't know what they paid, he just brought the money home and give it to my mother, and she paid all the bills.

LD: She took care of all the household budget then.

Kolarik: She paid all the budget, took care of everything. They all did that. Well, I went to work learning a trade. I don't know, I didn't even get that much. I think I only got about a dollar, but my mother says, "You're gonna go into a store, and you're gonna be clerk," she says. "Wear a white collar and a white shirt." My dad says, "He ain't going to do anything of the kind. He's going to go out and learn a trade and get his hands dirty. If he learns his 'remasaw' (as they called it in Czech)," he says, "he can get a job anywhere, but as a clerk he can't." So I became a 'remasaw'. I learned the book binder's trade.

LD: So your father held sway there.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. Mother was more or less the financial secretary, but Dad was the king of the roost. You know, I used to laugh at him. I was quite a ball player in those days and had quite a reputation for being quite a ball player, and he never thought much of that. He thought I ought to be home and hoeing the potatoes or mowing the grass or something and sometime I think I went to West Branch or West Liberty. I was hired out as a catcher. A fellow by the name of Tanda went down. I took him down; he was a pitcher, and it was on a holiday, and we got \$25 and our expenses. That's a lot of money.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: And I came home the next day, my dad used to come home from the Rock Island Shops for dinner, and I used to work at Lawrence's, and I came home for dinner, and he's belly-aching that I wasn't there all of yesterday and holiday or something, and I says to him, "How much money did you make last Monday?" He says, "What difference does that make?" I said, "I was just wondering." I pulled that thing out. I had it rolled up. It was about \$25, you know, made quite a roll or something. He says, "Where did you get all that money?" I says, "I got that for playing ball yesterday." He says, "You mean to tell

me they pay you for doing that?" I says, "I don't play ball unless they pay me." Well, now up to that time he didn't know what a ball game was, and he couldn't care less only that he didn't have me around there doing the work, but the minute he saw that roll of bills that I got, oh, boy, he was my biggest fan. Everytime I'd go out he'd say, "Can I go with you?" And I said, "Well." There was very few weekends that I didn't go out somewhere like, oh, up to Walker, for instance, Center Point and down to West Liberty and West Branch and well, as far as Ottumwa one time, and we used to get \$20, \$25 and our expenses, and that was a lot of money.

LD: Well, now can I stop you and ask you more about that. How old were you when you started playing for money?

Kolarik: Well, I could have been about sixteen I guess.

LD: Okay, and you were working at that time.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. I went to work when I was eleven.

LD: Did they simply recruit players from all over to come and play a particular game, or were you on a team, or how did that work?

Kolarik: No. For instance, Fairfax was gonna play, oh, let's say Norway on next Sunday. Well, there was a rivalry there. They'd load the team up with semi-professionals if they could and get as many as they could. You know they couldn't get too many. But they'd hire maybe, well, I happened to be a catcher and then maybe they'd hire a shortstop or somebody from Chicago, and they'd bring us in as if we were members of the team, which we weren't, but we were hired, but the other team was doing the same thing so it didn't make any difference.

LD: It all kind of balanced out. So you were going all over the state then.

Kolarik: Yeah, just had a lot of fun doing that then. Well, it made a lot of money which was a lot of money in those days. We'd probably, oh, we'd get \$5 or \$10 and our expenses and both so that's nothing. It was in those days. With ten dollars you could well, if you worked good bookkeeping, you could almost cancel a national debt with that.

LD: Who came to see the games?

Kolarik: Who came to see the game? Well, they'd advertise them, and, of course, there was a rivalry. Oh, it was just terrible. They'd advertise them and then they'd put a bill that they'd have a-- they'd load the team with semi-pros, both sides and like

Center Point and Walker. I used to have almost a standing invitation up there at Center Point. I used to go up there almost every weekend, and it's an enjoyable thing, and you made a lot--well, you made money. It wasn't a lot of money, but then it was a lot of money for those days.

LD: So they had like a park where they charged admission.

Kolarik: Oh, yes. They had their own little parks. You heard like Fairfax down here. They had a little park down there. They don't have it covered, but they go around with a hat and pass it around and pick up a collection during the game, and, oh, they'd get money enough to pay the ones that they'd hired, and they usually hire. I used to kind of have a standing invitation up there to Walker. I used to go up there and Center Point. There was always a great rivalry. Sometimes I'd play the one team; sometimes I'd play the other one.

LD: Well, why not. Well, let's see I'm trying to place this in time then. This would have been around 1905, very early part of the 20th century that you. . .

Kolarik: Well, you're about right about that time. That would be about right, about in there 1904 or somewhere in there.

LD: How long did you continue to play semi-pro?

Kolarik: Well, I went in the government service in 1910, and I think that I, about 1909 I guess cause after I got in there, of course, I didn't have time. I couldn't play anymore in that.

LD: Did you have intercity teams too?

Kolarik: Yeah. We had a league--quite a fast league in Cedar Rapids here at one time. We had Dundee White Sox, that was my team, and then we had the Foam Blowers.

LD: The Foam Blowers?

Kolarik: Foam Blowers.

LD: F-o-a-m.

Kolarik: Foam Blowers, regular Foam Blowers. They were lower end. Everybody lived on lower end and blew foam off a beer. That was, Foam Blower. Then we had Tenth Street Walkers. That was the one on the west side here, and Dundee, that was over where we lived, and then we had another one, oh boy, I'm getting old. My memory is slipping.

LD: You've named four; that's amazing.

Kolarik: About 14, and they had a regular league. They had regular-- every Sunday. We played on Sunday. They had a regular league, and you were scheduled to play on some particular team on Sunday. Oh, yeah, we had that for good many years.

LD: Now, you were not paid for those games, or were you?

Kolarik: Do what?

LD: You were not paid for those games. Those were just for fun?

Kolarik: Oh, no. That was just a rivalry between teams, and it was a real rivalry, I want to tell you. That's where most of us learned how to play baseball, I guess.

LD: Did a lot of people come to see those games?

Kolarik: Oh my gosh, yeah. In the those days we'd have maybe two, three hundred people there. That's a lot of people in those days. There wasn't very many more people than that in the whole town.

LD: Where did you play in Cedar Rapids?

Kolarik: Well, they had a field and what they called Dundee, back of Heabel's, back there. There was a big field back there and

then we played down at Riverside Park and then there was a place over here, let's see, that would be on B Avenue and Eighth or Ninth Street somewhere over on the west side that has an outfield and that, and those are the regular fields that we played on. We had a regular schedule every Sunday we'd play a different team, and they published the schedule.

LD: Who would have organized that? Would that have been the YMCA or. . .

Kolarik: No. I don't think so. I think that fellow that was instrumental in organizing that, his name was, let's see, Batchelder, almost like our kid's name, and he was some kind of a big wig in the

END OF TAPE ONE--SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF TAPE ONE--SIDE TWO

LD: This is Laura Derr, and I am in the home of Mr. Joseph Kolarik. This is side two. I am going to ask you one more baseball question. I have received information from other sources that you were scouted for the pros. Now why didn't you go on and become a pro? Why didn't you go that direction?

Kolarik: Well, I'll tell you it is very simple and there's the cause of it right over there on that top of that. . .

LD: You mean the picture of your wife.

Kolarik: The little picture--she didn't want to marry a ball player so I says, "Well, if you don't want to marry a ball player, I'll do something else." It's just as simple as that.

LD: And you did. That changed the whole course of your life.

Kolarik: That changed the whole course of my life. But that's a good thing because while I loved to play baseball, that's a part of my life. I just loved the game. Oh, I couldn't brag that I was good, but they said I was pretty good, but they said that I didn't, and oh, it got to be where I had to marry that little

girl. I loved her very much. So I said, "Well, so what, I'll do something else."

LD: For the long term?

Kolarik: Yeah. Well, I had learned a trade anyhow and so I figured there's nothing lost, I'd go back at the trade. But before she died I played a lot of amateur baseball after we were married, and she enjoyed that part, but she didn't think much of organized baseball when you're gone and well, I didn't either. I went into government service, and, of course, I was in there about, oh, I don't know it was seven or eight years--seven and a half years, gone about half the time after I was married, and she didn't like that so I got out of that too. She had a great influence on my life.

LD: I want to talk to you about her, and I just have one more question before we get up into those years and that's about your school. You went to Polk School.

Kolarik: Yeah, Polk School.

LD: And you probably would have started there about 1885 or. . .

Kolarik: No, couldn't be that.

LD: No. You were born in 1895 or '96.

Kolarik: Yeah, let's see about in there, let's see. . .

LD: Yeah, around that.

Kolarik: Must have been around in there, see 18--I was going to school in 1898 when the Spanish American War was going because I know I had a bad case of--they said it was catarrh. I don't know what they'd call it nowadays, and I used to have to leave at eleven o'clock every other morning to go to the doctor. It was in 1898 during the Spanish American War. That's when I was in Polk School.

LD: How many years did you go to Polk? Did you finish Polk?

Kolarik: Yeah. I went through the eighth grade there and was going to go into high school and then when we went to high school, they flunked the whole class. They brought up a question. I was going to try and remember that question, but I think it wasn't something that mattered, and I think we only had two or three questions in that particular test. They didn't give you ten like they used to. They just give you maybe two or three, and the whole class flunked it, but out of Polk, the only school that flunked it, but they never gave us that particular thing. So I was only eleven years old, and they come along

about in August, and we got a notice from the school board that all that class was to come in and take another test to pass us, and I think, "Why should I bother the teachers? I know more than they do anyhow." So I went to work.

LD: So that was the end of your schooling?

Kolarik: That was end of--11 years old, that's the end of school. Too bad, I should have had more sense, but well, I didn't get too much of an education, but I was always a great reader, and I took several courses--correspondence courses from interstate schools and international schools. Czech people--I can't say that for me--but the Czech people are kind of hungry about education, all of them. It's just kind of a yen with the people, and my folks encouraged me. They paid--I think they paid, I think if I remember right the interstate schools, I think my dad paid \$49 for each course there. And \$49 was an awful lot of money, but he said, "The kid ought to have a good education." I don't know whether I got one or not, but I got through.

LD: When you were at Polk, were most of your classmates Czechs, or were they from a lot of different ethnic background?

Kolarik: No. I don't think there were very many Czech people--Czech boys--that I remember, very few. I don't know why they--so I

guess they probably weren't hungry as I was for an education. Most of them, they were satisfied if they got a job in the mill or in the shops when they were about eleven or twelve years old, me included. I went to work, but I always kind of had a hankering that I liked to read, and I liked to study and I was kind of a weirdo, I guess.

LD: Well, it depends on the point of view. So you left school when you were eleven. That would have been 1900.

Kolarik: Yeah.

LD: The year 1900.

Kolarik: See 19--, yeah, about 1900.

LD: Where did you go to work then?

Kolarik: Lawrence Press Company.

LD: That's when you went to work for Lawrence Press.

Kolarik: Yeah. I stayed there and it's the only place I ever--well, no. I'll have to take that back. You wouldn't remember the Noah's Ark Store.

LD: No.

Kolarik: That was on First Avenue between First and Second Street on the south side of the street. It is a notion store. You could go in there and buy toys or a little red wagon or you know what. Run by the guy of the name of Loganstein, and I worked there, and I was. . . let's say I was the head big shot I guess, and we used to have steps out in the front of the store, which was not unusual, a lot of places had. Every morning I had to get there at 6:30 in the morning, maybe this morning we'd put up tubs, maybe tomorrow morning we'd put up baskets, and you name it. That was my job and then I'd have to take that all in. I'd have to get down there at 6:30 in the morning and do that then we'd take it in at 6:30 at night so we worked about 12 or 14 hours a day and if I remember right, we used to get \$1.50 or \$2.00, \$2.50 a week.

LD: A week.

Kolarik: A week, not a day. But it was a job, and we had, let's see, there was a fella by the name of Busch and Tilly Hajny. She became Mrs. Slapnicka, the detective's wife, and a girl by the name of Emma Novotny, and I don't know what ever did become of her. I suppose she. . .

LD: And did they all work there?

Kolarik: Yeah, we all worked there, Busch, and I, Joe Novotny, and Hajny. That's old man Loganstein; he was the owner of the shop.

LD: Was that before you went to work for Lawrence Press then?

Kolarik: Yeah, that was before.

LD: So that was about your first job.

Kolarik: That was my first job I had.

LD: How long did you work there?

Kolarik: Well, I don't know, not very, probably four or five months I suppose.

LD: And then what did you do?

Kolarik: Then I had an uncle that worked in the Lawrence Press Company. He was a pressman, and he said they needed a boy in the bindery, and my mother said, "No, you're going to be a clerk. You're going to wear a collar and a white shirt." My dad said, "I don't think that. He's going to learn a trade so he can get a job anywhere, but as a clerk, that don't mean a

thing." I learnt the book binder's trade. Well, it is a good trade. I loved it. I love books, and I have--I don't like to brag about that, but I've got some books in the bookcase that I've had people from all of Iowa come in and see.

LD: When you were starting out at Lawrence, what did you get to do?

Kolarik: Well, most of the time I swept the floor and made paste for the rest of the book binders.

LD: Mostly just observed?

Kolarik: Yeah. They said, "Kid, come here, make a pot of paste or go sweep that autolathe there." Well, I had a good boss by the name of Keffler. Henry S. Keffler, oh, he was my ideal anyhow. He was a great fisherman and a great outdoorsman, and he used to go up to Vinton and float down the river, and he took me with him. I don't know how many times. I was kind of a favorite of his, and I was one of those kids that liked that kind of stuff and great boy. Oh, he was a wonderful guy. He became the park commissioner of Cedar Rapids and was for, oh my gosh, I don't know for ten or twelve years. Yeah, he finally went into--that came about--I forget that man. He was a--in those days we had, I think they called them city clerks, a little different administration. We had aldermanic system in

those days. You know, we had an aldermen, and he absconded, and Keffler, he was the president of International Brotherhood of Book Binders, internationally, and he was also quite a politician in his way. So he got out of the bindery, and he took that job. They had trouble putting somebody in there. They couldn't agree on it. So he went in there as a dark horse. He got the job, and he stayed in that the rest of his life and became a commissioner of parks and was for, oh gosh, I don't know, about 10, 12, 15 years til he died. Well, I guess he didn't die. He moved out to Omaha and died out there. But he was quite a fellow.

LD: He was your immediate supervisor then?

Kolarik: He was the boss.

LD: He was "the boss" so he was over the whole shop?

Kolarik: Well, no. He was boss of the bindery, the Lawrence Press Company on Second Avenue between First and Second Street. And see the binders in those days were big. He had, oh, he had about, oh, probably ten girls working in there, and he had, let's see there was a ruler and a binder and an apprentice, about three book binders in the shop. Of course, it used to run bigger in those days. It was all handwork, of course, and we bound books for Jack Wrall. He was the mayor of Cedar

Rapids for a good many years, and he got and patented, oh, lodge books. He was a great lodgeman. He had what they called "minute books" and different things. All you had to do was just fill them in. Oh, he had kind of a national reputation, and that's about all we done. We bound those things by the 100's and 100's and 100's of them, and he sent them all over this country.

LD: Well, now then this Mr. Keffler—did I say that name right, Keffler? The man that was your boss.

Kolarik: Well, Keffler was my boss.

LD: He would have been a member of the labor union then. He would not have been management.

Kolarik: No. He not only was a member of the labor union, he was the president of the International Book Binders.

LD: Okay. I've got that straight in my head. I wasn't quite sure how that worked.

Kolarik: I think he'd have been quite proud of me. He was the president of the International Brotherhood of Book Binders, and I followed in his footsteps, and I was also the president of the International Brotherhood of Book Binders. And then on top of

that I had a guy by the name of Wencil Satinsky that worked for me in the bindery until he died. He became the same thing.

LD: So you set up a destiny then.

Kolarik: That was what I was thinking. We set the procedure of the whole thing, which wasn't some times so good, but it was good for us. You have to have a racket in the labor union business.

LD: You have to get in there and take care of yourself, right?

Kolarik: Well, I still belong. I still have a card of the International Brotherhood of Book Binders. They don't call it that anymore. I don't know what they do call it nowadays. They call it so many things in the last few years. It keeps consolidating and all of that, and I don't know what they do call the blame thing anymore.

LD: How old were you when you became president?

Kolarik: How long was I president?

LD: How old were you when you became president, or what year was it?

Kolarik: Oh.

LD: Thirties or. . .

Kolarik: Let's see about 1911, '12, oh, I must have been about 19, 20 in there somewhere.

LD: Oh, then you were still pretty young.

Kolarik: Yeah. I wasn't very old.

LD: How extensive was the union? Did it cover beyond the United States or. . .

Kolarik: Oh, yes. It was an international thing.

LD: How did you go about getting elected president then?

Kolarik: Gift of gab.

LD: But you must have. . .

Kolarik: No.

LD: They must have voted in a lot of different places so they had to know about you.

Kolarik: Well, understand me, we wasn't the international president.

LD: Oh, you were the local president.

Kolarik: Local president.

LD: Okay. I was going to really be impressed. Why did you leave Lawrence Press?

Kolarik: Well, I went in the service, and I . . .

LD: When would that have been? About 1917, maybe?

Kolarik: It was before that. About 1911 or '12 somewhere, '13.

LD: The mail service.

Kolarik: Yeah.

LD: That's when you were in Chicago?

Kolarik: I can remember the month, July 10, but I think it was in 1910.

LD: What possessed you to go into the mail service?

Kolarik: Well, I don't know why I went in the mail service. I guess it was because it was a case of a week on and a week off. The week off you didn't have to work.

LD: That's pretty good, yeah.

Kolarik: But you had to do an awful lot of studying and take an examination every six months. And when we took an examination, understand me, when you take an examination, they give you one, two, or ten questions. But when I went in the mail service, well, Iowa had 1,040 some odd questions, and they asked you all of them, every one of them, and if you missed more than three, you got a little jecker, the lay ones. If you got less than three, you went up, you got a demerit mark. Oh, I took examination on all street numbers and carriers in the city of Chicago.

LD: Oh, for heaven's sake!

Kolarik: Yeah, and I don't know how many years, about four years, three years I guess for that, every six months part of the town. And I've only--all those examinations I had for all those years, I never made a score of less than 99 only once. I made 98 3/4 on the state of Nebraska. And that I was to blame for that. I didn't study it, and it was about, I think there was around ten hundred and some towns in Nebraska, and I didn't

study at all until I was dead heading to Chicago, and I was trying to learn it going in there, and you know, that, of course, then I used to have a pretty good memory. I could learn things pretty fast. I could forget them too. And I met a fella, got on in Clinton, by the name of Harry Wade and I used to have a little cards and punch them, and we'd have them keyed up on the back so we could see whether they were right or not, and he said, "Do you want me to turn them for you?" And I says, "I don't know." He started to and he said, "You don't know that at all, do you?" I said, "Not very much." He says, "When are you going up for examination?" I says, "In the morning." He says, "You're crazy boy. You're never going to make it." I says, "Well, I'm going to try." So I stayed up til about midnight in the hotel room that I had then I got up about five in the morning, and I crammed til about 8:30 and then I got breakfast and then I went up, and I made over 99. I think before I walked out of the house I didn't know where the wall was.

LD: Oh boy, I'll bet. Sounds like the way I studied for college tests. You used the term "dead headed" a couple of times. Now that's not one that I'm real familiar with. What does that mean? You dead headed to Chicago.

Kolarik: A "dead head". That's when you are going into Chicago to go to work. They'd go from Cedar Rapids so that's where you

headed out from so you dead headed in there, or you dead headed to Omaha or wherever you were going. But I lived in Cedar Rapids and headed out of Chicago so when I got done in Chicago I used to have to dead head home. See we used to work a week on and a week off, but. . .

LD: Then that would have been then probably the years about 1911 til. . .

Kolarik: Yeah, about ten years.

LD: How long did you stay in that?

Kolarik: See I went in the service in 1910, and I stayed in that some-time in 1917 I think it was, somewhere along in there. I don't know.

LD: Were you involved in World War I then in any way?

Kolarik: No. I don't think only to hide under a bushel basket. That's about. . .

LD: Well, you were probably a little too old.

- Kolarik: I was a little bit old for that, I guess. I didn't even get drafted. Then I was married, and I had a family. If it had went on long enough I probably would have got in there.
- LD: So that brings me to the point where you were talking earlier about starting your own bindery business. Could you talk about some of the--where your bindery business was located first of all and then how did you finance it? How did you get started?
- Kolarik: Well, how did I get started, you mean in the business?
- LD: Yes.
- Kolarik: You mean actually in the business or starting the business. . .
- LD: Well, I guess starting the business cause you had to buy a lot of equipment, didn't you?
- Kolarik: Well, a fellow by the name of Bill Hruska and I worked together, slept together, when we were, oh, I don't know you might say like brothers all our lives. We started learning a trade together, and we went out on a strike, and we decided that maybe it's about time we were doing something for our own, but Metcalf wanted me to go to work for them. They didn't go out on a strike, but Lawrence's did, and the Torch Press did, but Metcalf couldn't go on a strike because they

done all the work for the railroad conductors, which is a union organization, and they couldn't go on a strike cause they would have lost all that business. So I went to work over there, but I didn't particular care what—I didn't like the way they kind of work they done there. It was sloppy work, and Lawrence's was a trade bindery. I just loved that because you get things that you had to figure them out and do them and at Metcalf's they just handed it to you—not a very nice place to work. I didn't like that. If you liked the trade, you didn't like to work there, that's all. So Bill and I, we had worked together all of our lives practically. We decided we were going to go into business. So we did. Oh, we didn't go in business, we didn't stay very long. He got cold feet on me one day, and I don't think we was in business more than two weeks. We didn't have all the stuff in the shop even on First Street. He come down one morning, and he said, "I'm going to get out." I said, "Wait, hold everything. What do you mean you're going to get out?" Yep. Well, I found out afterwards he had been up and got his old job back up at Lawrence's, and, well, not very much I could do.

LD: You were stuck.

Kolarik: I was stuck with the rent, \$50 a month rent down there, and a couple of kids like that at home in a shanty to live in. But my dad came to rescue, and he says, "You can't stay down there."

So I went over to a lady by the name of Mrs. Smith, and I says --I think we was paying \$50 a month or \$100; I don't know, and I went over and gave her half of it. She says, "Joe, that isn't all of it." I says, "No, you're going to have to get the other half from my partner. He run away from me. I'm not going to pay his part." She got it all right, but I moved out, and a friend of mine--well, my dad says, "Don't you worry, I got a place out there." He built it, kind of a where he built his house to live in. He says, "You can move this stuff out here. If you got anything to do, you can do it. If you ain't, you can shut the door, and it won't cost nothing." Well, I didn't have very much choice.

LD: Now where was that located?

Kolarik: Well, out on Madison Street. So I had a fellow that lived right across the road from me. He ran a dray line, and he hauled for people around town. He says, "You get a couple of guys to help you. We'll come down some night when I'm on my way home and load it all up on my dray, and I'll haul it out there. It won't cost you nothing." So Bill Hand, I think, was foreman at The Torch Press at that time, and I think Harry Simon was at Metcalf. They said, "You let us know, we'll come over and help you move it." So they did. They just come over and I loaded all the stuff up and hauled it out. They said, "Well, I'm afraid that kid ain't going to make it out there. He'll never

make it out there, running a bindery out in the country." And that was out in the country in those days. I used to have to walk from Madison Street and Coldstream Avenue clear down to Heables, if you know where Heables is, to get my mail. And when I had to do business with the public library, I had to do it by mail. I didn't have no telephone. And they said, "The kid wasn't going to make it." But they didn't know the kid. I'm bull-headed as all hell, you know. You tell me I can't do something and that's a goal. I'm going to do it in spite of hell and highwater. Damn good trait sometimes, I'll tell you that. I had a couple of little kids to go along with it, and I lived in practically a shanty. Well, I took a crack at her, and I had some ideas that nobody seemed to want to pay much attention to, but I had a chance to put them over. Some of them were good. Some of they were terrible, but they worked for me, and I made a goal. I have to kind of brag about that. Oh, I wouldn't say I made the whale of a success. Let's not put it that way, but we didn't starve. I built a home. It cost me around 4,000 some dollars, which is an awful lot of money in those days. And let's see, we had two bedrooms and a bath and a living room, the dining room, and the kitchen, and I had all hard wood in there. That came out of the little old bindery.

LD:

Did you have to borrow a lot of money to get started?

Kolarik: My dear girl, if I told you, I don't think I ever borrowed a dime in my life.

LD: So you just gutted it through.

Kolarik: I just had to do it on my own. I went in one time, and it was the only time I needed money. I went to the Bohemian Savings and Loan, and I had an account there. Mr. Hrbek was secretary of it. I don't know whether it was a building a house or something, but he says, "You don't have any room for a bathroom." I says, "I got a bathroom built, but I ain't going to put any fixtures in it." "Oh, well, you ought to fix that up. Take a little more there." I says, "No, I've been taking a bath in the tub behind the stove for all my life, and I think I can do it a little longer until I get money enough." So I did, I got money enough and then I tried to put--bought a tub and a lavatory and fixed it up. Oh, not such a good way to do it, but that's the way I wanted to do it.

LD: I worked for you.

Kolarik: It did for me, and of course, I don't know.

LD: How did you become interested then, or at what point did you start learning and using the hand tooling and some of the in-laid techniques?

Kolarik: Well, we never done any hand tooling in Cedar Rapids. I don't think there was ever a hand tooled book in Cedar Rapids, might have been, but I wouldn't know, and I should know. I've been in it all my life. I don't think there was ever one made in Cedar Rapids that I know of. Nobody seemed to have an interest in that; only to go down and work from eight to five or whatever it was in the bindery and get paid on Saturdays and let it go at that. Nobody seemed to take any interest, but I was just a little bit different from that. I kind of wanted to do something and then I got acquainted with Mrs. Douglas. Do you know Mrs. Douglas?

LD: Yes, sir.

Kolarik: She's quite a book binder.

LD: She was, wasn't she.

Kolarik: She wasn't such a good book binder, but she was a good tooler and when she died, I inherited all her tools. There was a whole box full of them. I had a lot of tools too, that I gathered all over the country, but I got all of her tools. Funny thing, she willed them to me, but I didn't know that, and it went along for a couple of years after she died, and Morris Sanford was alive, and I think he had something to do with it.

Morris was quite a booster for me. He always liked books, always had something I needed to do for him, and he said, "How come you never got those tools of Mrs. Douglas's?" And I says, "I didn't know anything about any tools." "You're suppose to get them. They were willed to you." I never heard of that. He said, "I'll get in touch." So he called--I think her name was Barbara. She called me, she says, "We sure got them tools here. I wish you'd come and get them." I says, "I'll be right over."

LD: How did you first meet Mrs. Douglas?

Kolarik: How'd I meet Mrs. Douglas? Well, kind of a funny thing. I liked to raise roses, and I, oh, I don't know about 50 varieties or more, hybrids. We had quite a garden as big as a whole room. And she did too, and she found out about that one time, and she came over and was looking them over one Sunday morning. I didn't know her before and then she says, "You run a bindery." I says, "That's right." So she went in the bindery, and she says, "You know, I'm kind of an amateur book binder too." I says, "That so." I didn't know that either. So that was the start of it. She was the salt of the earth. Oh, she was a wonderful woman. She says to me I--there was a book case, oh, half the size of this room. I was admiring it one day, and I just casually says, well, I didn't know her hardly anymore than I know you. I says, "I think my wife would get quite a kick out

of seeing this." She says. "Now that's an idea. Why don't you bring them out. I'll have Mrs. Stout come and make lunch for you, and you can spend the day." Just like that, just out of the blue. I think that's the first time I ever met the woman. Well, her husband was just the same way. He was an awful nice fellow.

LD: So did you come back?

Kolarik: No. My wife was one of those kinds. She always thought she was imposing on anybody if anybody would do anything for her so she wouldn't go, but I went up there. I wouldn't say she was my idea of a high-class book binder, but when it came to tooling she really was good. But she could lay out, oh, a pattern for something and then she'd send the pattern into the toolmaker and they'd make the tools for her. The tools for the book would probably be \$3 to \$4 a book, and she spend \$35 to have the tools made. Now she could afford that, but I couldn't. When I made a design on my books, I had to kind of bear in mind the tools I had to do it with. I couldn't buy them because they're terribly expensive. One of those tools cost you \$67, and I had, my gosh, I don't know I must have about 109 or 110 of them, and they cost a lot of money.

LD: Your hand tooling then and the gold leaf and things that you've shown me, you did that primarily as a hobby then? On your own time or. . .

Kolarik: Well, yeah. Well, those books there, of course, those are made primarily for show purposes. People come in, and they say, "Well, I don't know what I want, but I'd like to have it fixed up nice." Well, you know there's something you can do for a couple of dollars, and something you can do for \$200 and unless you know what you want you could put in a lot of time, and we'd both be disappointed. So I used to make a lot of those things then I'd show them. I says, "Now pick out something. Pick out a corner. If you like the corner, any derivatives of it, let me know, and I'll draw a little thing that I'll know what to do with it and then I can make it anyway you want it." So that's where that comes from, and well, it's a little ego too. I like to show it off.

LD: Well, did you do much of a business then just working with individuals like that?

Kolarik: Well, we had the reputation at one time as the biggest outfit in the state of Iowa.

LD: Who were your customers then?

Kolarik: Who were the customers? The Masonic Library was the biggest one. Cedar Rapids Library was next, Coe College, Cornell College, Luther College, Stevens College down in Missouri, and, oh, I don't know how many libraries. I think around 12 or 14 libraries in the state of Iowa.

LD: How did you get those customers? Did you advertise?

Kolarik: Yep. We had an advertising system at--quite an elaborate one toward the last. I used to buy folders, and one year I had--it was a four-page folder, and the front of it was in color. We'd buy that and then we'd fill in the other part with our own advertisement, and every month it'd have a different thing like Mother's Day we had a grandmother's picture on there, and Fourth of July, raising the flag and what not. Yeah, we sent that out every month and then I had a blotter system. I had pictures of presidents and notables and different kinds of people, and the little thing blotted, and the blotter service and we'd send that out every month. Oh, I had a lot of different things. I used to be pretty good on that. I worked up quite a business in that. I must of, I bought a nice home out there.

LD: That's right. I want to establish now the dates. You started your own bindery business. In what year would that have been?

Kolarik: I think it was in--I think about 1920.

LD: And how long did you stay in that business?

Kolarik: Oh, about 55 years.

LD: About 55 years, and now your son. . .

Kolarik: It's still going there, and Bob runs it out there to Springville. He's got a beautiful bindery there.

LD: Now at what point did you move the bindery from--was it Madison out to Springville?

Kolarik: Oh, when we moved out here, I don't know how long we've been here. I wasn't very active in the bindery only on kind of a, oh, supervisory capacity if you want to call it that. And then when he moved it out there to Springville, why he was kind of on his own there, but he does an awful nice business there. In fact, I think he does more business than he'd like.

LD: Why did he move?

Kolarik: Well, we had to. See the Interurban, or the I don't know, highway put us out of business there, moved it out. We had to sell

out, get out. That's why we moved out here. See they took over the land there, and, of course, we had to get out.

LD: Oh, it was 380, okay.

Kolarik: So they moved us out, and he went out there. He always wanted, oh, he liked to be on a big place and have a couple of cows, beef cows, and he did have for awhile. He had seven there, young stuff, and he got—I think he's got 13 acres out there. Oh, it's a beautiful house, big farmhouse up there on the hill, but he don't do that anymore. He just runs the bindery and not much of that anymore because he got quite a reputation for fine binding. I have to brag on that a little bit. I think we had a reputation of being real fine binders, high-class stuff. And the kid loved that, and he went in right out of high school with me, and I can't say I taught him everything. I bore down on him pretty hard so he's pretty good. I can tell you he does some awful nice work out there, but he don't care about too much work cause he don't have to. He's well fixed. He sold that place out there on Madison Street, his home, to the highway people, and I don't know I think he got around \$90,000 more or less.

LD: That's quite a legacy for you from where you started to. . .

Kolarik: Well, I started with an orange crate and some hay wire, and I ain't a kidding you. I had to make most of the things outside of the heavy machinery. I had to make all of the tools and my bindery when I moved it out there cause I couldn't buy them. A round cornering machine, for instance, cost \$174 at that time. I suppose was \$400 or \$500 now. I couldn't afford it, so I made one.

LD: You made one.

Kolarik: And so there was a lot of things like that. I just had to do it that way, but, well, you have to be resourceful if you want to succeed in life. You just can't bear having everybody bring anything to you. You got to kind of do something for yourself. And I think it don't hurt a little bit to suffer a little along the line. It makes you appreciate it.

LD: That's for sure. Well, you had mentioned something just a minute ago that leads me into the next topic that I wanted to talk to you about and that's your memories of the transportation systems that were in Cedar Rapids in the early part of the 20th century. And I guess we could start, if you want to go back as far as you can, to the horses and the buggies and your memories of when the Interurban came in and how you. . .

Kolarik: Well, I can remember when they had horses on the streetcars.

LD: When they had horses pulling the streetcars?

Kolarik: Oh, yeah, a fella by the name of Joe Telin lived right next door to me, and he used to have a team of blacks, and he'd pull the car around. Of course, that's kind of vivid--that's going way back when, and I remember coming down the First Avenue hill, and that First Avenue the hill used to be like this. It isn't like it is now.

LD: I've heard that it was really steep, yeah.

Kolarik: See they took and graded that down, and they took all that dirt from that, and they built that road, well, I can almost tell how old you were, but if you know that, you wouldn't know what we called a new road, and that was the new road. It was built from the Illinois Central tracks right along the slough there right over to the foot of Coe College. It's closed now. You go around the curve, but that was right straight through there and that was what they call the new road. Anybody says, "I was down at the new road," I'd know just how old you are cause nobody remembers that anymore, and they hauled all that dirt from First Avenue, and they cut it down, and they made that new road. See that slough used to go clear over

there to 13th Street over where about Heables is. That's just all water in there.

LD: And they filled that in.

Kolarik: Yep, and they filled that across there, cut the water out and then they drained that out, and they gradually filled that in where--and there's a flower store in there, and I don't know what else. Yeah. We lived right around the corner on D Avenue there. Of course, that's my old home place there, and we lived on 13th Street and D Avenue there about first, second, and third, fourth house from the corner.

LD: Did the Interurban and the Electric Interurban follow the horse-drawn train cars?

Kolarik: Well, see the Interurban come down there from Waterloo, and they come down, and they were about at the end of Madison Street and Glass Road almost, and a fellow by the name of Bentley was the right-of-way man for that. He was also a big insurance man, and he kind of took a liking to me for some reason or other, I don't know maybe because I was--I don't know why, but he always wanted me. He was a big insurance man up in Waterloo, and he says he wanted me to come up there and go in that business. He says, "I'll turn over I don't know how many thousand dollars worth of insurance business

to you," and I couldn't see that. I couldn't sell insurance. I couldn't sell peanut butter if you was hungry.

LD: That wasn't your line.

Kolarik: That wasn't my line.

LD: Of course, you could have worn that white collar.

Kolarik: Yeah, then Mother would have been proud of me, but I didn't go. But anyway, the Interurban come down, and he said they were gonna put Interurban out there. My neighbor come down by the name of Smith, and he says, "They have to widen the road." Madison Street was only 40 feet wide. They have to widen it to 60 feet. That's the state law. You can't go down the street unless it's 60 feet wide. Well, he came down with that fellow, and he says, "We're gonna all give that to." I says, "Well, you can count me out on giving. I'm not very much on giving. I got 660 feet here, and I just can't give 10 feet off that 660 feet. That's a lot of land to give, and I haven't got it paid for," I says. Well, Mr. Hedges I bought it from, he come out, and he says, "Oh, you ought to be civic minded." I says, "Mr. Hedges, why don't you just take that 60 feet off there off of my contract, and you give it to them." "Oh," he says, "Mr. Kolarik, a contract is a contract." I says, "Sure when it's in your favor." I says, "There gonna pay me or I'm

not going to give it to them." Well, my dad had an acre on--two acres I guess it was--on the other side of me, and a fellow by the name of Vojt had a couple of acres south of me, and they said, "Well, I'll tell you what you do. Whatever deal you make will be all right with us. You just handle the whole thing." I says, "Okay, maybe I won't come out the way you want it to." "Don't make any difference, you just take care of it." So I did. Well, they took 10 feet off of there. I don't know what I did get. They haggled around, haggled around, haggled around, and Interurban said they couldn't pay me because if they didn't pay the other people on the other side of the street. And I said "Well, I don't care anything about that." I says, "You're gonna pay me, my dad, and Mr. Vojt," I says, "or we ain't gonna let you have it." "Well, then we'll condemn it." I says, "You're gonna have to pay for it if you condemn it. You can't condemn it for nothing. We'll get something." And I'm not asking only I figured out how many feet I was losing, and I was charging them by what it cost me by a foot. It wasn't very much, but I didn't have that paid for, how could I give that away. Well, I hung out and finally they said one day they said, "You go up to Mr. Hedges there, and he'll give you a check." So I went up and got a check for my dad and Mr. Vojt and me. Well, first thing I done, I ordered--I think before I even went home--I ordered about \$250 worth of lumber to build a barn. The neighbor come down. He says, "I bet you got paid for that." I said, "Sure I got paid for this." He says,

"They didn't give us nothing." I says, "Well, that's your hard luck." I says, "I didn't. . .

END OF TAPE ONE--SIDE TWO

BEGINNING OF TAPE TWO--SIDE ONE

LD: This is tape two with Mr. Joseph Kolarik, and we were talking and I just wanted you to finish this story, Mr. Kolarik, about what happened when your neighbors attempted to be paid for their Interurban right-of-way.

Kolarik: That's a long story. We have to get into court records for that.

LD: But, as you were saying, they did not succeed.

Kolarik: No. They didn't get anything for it, but I did and my dad did and Mr. Vojt. I hung out. A fellow by the name of Bentley was their right-of-way man, and he ways, "Well, Joe, they all give that." I says, "I don't know. I can't quite see the benefits of it." "Oh," he says, "you'll have a streetcar coming out here." I says, "Yeah, but that's going to be an Interurban. That's not gonna stop for me, is it?" "Oh, we'll have a local car." I says, "Yeah, but I'm still gonna have to pay to ride on it."

LD: That's right.

Kolarik: And I says, "Why should I give that to them?" I says, "I haven't got it paid for yet."

LD: Do you remember what year that was?

Kolarik: Yeah. That was about 1911, I guess, somewhere in there, '14 ('13, '14). And so he said, "Well, you ain't going to give it, we'll have to do something else."

LD: And so they did.

LD: This is Laura Derr on March 20th. Am I right? Today the 20th?

Kolarik: Today? I think it's about the 21st.

LD: Is it the 21st already?

(Other voice) Twentieth.

LD: I wanted to make sure. I was wrong the last time, on March 20, 1985, and I am in the home of Mr. Joseph Kolarik for a follow-up interview session, and I think we are ready to begin. When we left off the last time, Mr. Kolarik, we were talking about the Interurban and some of the transportation methods that were current during those days, and you had given me the information about when Interurban came out to your area and

how you were paid for that property. How did the Interurban affect your book bindery business? Did it make a difference? Did it help?

Kolarik: Well, my dear, when the Interurban came through there, I wasn't in the book binding business.

LD: Oh, you had just move all your things out there?

Kolarik: No, I lived out on. . .

LD: That was before that, okay.

Kolarik: I lived on Madison Street, but at that time I was in the government service, and I went in the book binding business after that. I went in the book binding business in 1920 and if I remember correctly, but, of course, I had been in the binding business for, oh gosh, I don't know, about 18 years before I went in the government service, and I suppose, I don't know just how old I was when I went in, but somewhere along in there. I don't know. I can't think back quite that far, but I remember a fellow by the name of Bentley. He was a comer, nice fellow though. He came down, and I was in the government service at that time, and my ambition was that I was going to become the postmaster general. A big shot at it, you know. And he come down, and he was from Waterloo, and he

was an awful nice fellow. He was buying and getting the rights for the Interurban to come down there. And, of course, I had about a strip close to 700 feet there, and they wanted ten feet to widen the road. I says, "I don't have any objection to that. I'd like to have the road widened anyway, but I got to get paid for that because," I says, "I haven't got it paid for yet, and I can't give it away." Well, they said they wasn't going to pay anything for it. "Well," I says, "that's too bad because I couldn't let you have it because Mr. Hedges owns it yet. I just got a contract on it."

LD: You told me how Mr. Hedges wasn't willing to give it away.

Kolarik: Oh, no, Mr. Hedges says, "Oh, the contract is a contract, I couldn't do that." I wanted him to take it off my contract and give it to them, but no, he couldn't do that. Well, that's how Mr. Hedges got to be a wealthy man. But anyway, I don't know, we compromised the deal somewhere along the line there. And we signed up, and they had--my dad had 200 feet on the north end of me, and a fellow by the name of Jim Vojt had 200 and some feet south of me, and they left it all to me. Whatever I done would be all right with them. So we compromised and I think we got, I don't know, I think we got, well, I says, "I haven't got it paid for. All I want is what it's going to cost me and then I'm going to have to pay Mr. Hedges." I think we got \$250 or something and that was what

that amount of land amounted to, but I couldn't give it away. Mr. Hedges said I could give it away, but I says, "Why don't you give it to them and reduce my contract?" "Oh, no, " he says, "Mr. Kolarik, I can't do that. A contract is a contract," and that's a big deal, you know. Well, I said, "Okay. Then I can't give it away either." And I didn't, and my neighbors didn't either. But some of the neighbors up at the other end there, they fell for that stuff. Collins' boys, I think there was two of them boys. They lived up at the other end of the street then, and a fellow by the name of Smith. They come down there and put the pressure on me to give it to them. Well, I says, "Why should I give it to them? I haven't got it paid for. I'm not going to be paying here for the next five or ten years for something that I give away. I'm only asking what the thing cost me." And they got pretty mad at me, but I didn't care about that. That didn't bother me any.

LD: Once they got the Interurban right-of-ways then, how long did it take for them to actually build the track?

Kolarik: Well, you mean to lay tracks?

LD: Lay the tracks.

Kolarik: Well, when they were dicking for that land, they had the tracks laid between Shiloh and the north end of Madison Street.

LD: So they were ready to go.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. They were just about ready to come down, and well, I didn't know that they had a fellow by the name of Bentley. I think his name was Sam Bentley. I don't know. He took kind of a shine to me, and he advised me about giving it away, and he shouldn't have done that because he was the guy that was trying to get it. But he wanted me to come up to Waterloo. He was a great insurance man up there, and he says, "You come up to Waterloo, and I'll give you, oh, I don't know how many thousands of dollars worth of insurance business." Yeah. He was bound and determined, but I couldn't see it. I couldn't sell insurance to a man that was dying if he didn't have any. I couldn't sell any insurance.

LD: Once the Interurban was in then, did you use it quite a lot personally?

Kolarik: Yeah. I did quite a lot. See, they weren't really honest about that thing when they put it in there. They said, "Look it, you're going to have streetcar service out here." Well, they sold that proposition to most of the neighbors, but not to me

because I couldn't quite see how they were going to do that, and they didn't do it. They did have--you could ride out for, I think, a nickel from downtown out to about Coldstream Avenue and then they let you--but there was only one car a day, and in the morning about 8:30 or so, around 8:00, and then there was a local going down about 3:00. There was other cars going there, but they wouldn't stop. Those were express cars. In fact, people don't realize that, but that Interurban from Waterloo is quite a ritzy idea. Believe it or not, they run dining cars on that thing.

LD: No kidding.

Kolarik: Just a little bit, and they run that dining car on that thing, and they did for--oh, I don't know, for probably most of the year and then they took it off, of course. Naturally, that's kind of a silly proposition when going 60 miles and they put a diner on there, but they did. They had a diner on there.

LD: Who used it primarily? Was it business men who were going. . .

Kolarik: Well, of course, in those days there weren't too many automobiles and traveling men used it mostly. You know, they'd come from Waterloo down and make connections with the Northwestern and the Rock Island, and they'd go back up there and get on the Illinois Central. Like, well, that was the mode of

travel in those days. There wasn't no automobile. Well, there was automobiles, of course, but nothing like it is today. But they done quite a lot of business. In fact, they run that diner on there for, oh, for quite awhile.

LD: Did you ever use the diner?

Kolarik: No. I never used the diner on that. I used the diner on the Northwestern a good many times when I worked on there, but then that was a little different, but I never--because I never could figure out how you could get on at Waterloo and eat a reasonable amount of food and you would be in Cedar Rapids. You know, and you couldn't put it in your pocket and put it in a sack.

LD: How long did that trip take?

Kolarik: Oh, about an hour, I guess.

LD: About an hour.

Kolarik: Maybe a little more than that.

LD: What are your memories of the CRANDIC Line?

Kolarik: Well, I don't remember quite so much. I remember when it was built because I had a fellow that lived on the corner of D Avenue and 13th Street, and he had a son by the name of Jimmy, and we were pals, and he done the grading for the CRANDIC Line from here--oh, I don't know how far down and then they graded it from Iowa City up. I know when we were just kids--oh, they done it with mules. You know, they didn't have any tractors, and we used to go down on usually on Sunday, and Jim would get a horse, and we'd take a buggy, and we'd go down where they were working, and the fellows that worked on it lived in tents and all that, and they didn't go home every night then. The horses, they fed them and the mules and whatever there was there. We went down there for--oh, I don't know, I suppose it took six months or a year to work down there. Of course, it was all done by horses and mules. It wasn't done by tractors like it is today.

LD: Do you remember who the people were that were building the line? Were they immigrants or were they. . .

Kolarik: The ones that worked on that?

LD: Yes.

Kolarik: Oh, no. They were not immigrants. They were all people that lived along the line there, a lot of Cedar Rapids people, and

they had--I don't think that thing run more than one year and had a wreck over there. I don't know what year that was. It wasn't running very long and they had a wreck. I don't think they killed anybody, but a lot of people got hurt somewhere around Swisher or somewhere. I don't remember just what town it was, and I wasn't in it because that's why I don't remember.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: I had a fellow that I worked with by the name of Bill Richards. He was in it. They were going--he was quite a sokol, and they were going--it was a holiday. I don't know where they were going. Down at Koenigs Mark was a great place that they used to go. The had kind of a picnic ground there, and I think they were going down there to put on an exhibition of the sokol, and he didn't get hurt. Well, I don't think they killed anybody, but several people got hurt.

LD: Do you know why it wrecked?

Kolarik: No. I don't know why. It seems like they just jumped the track there or some malfunction or something.

LD: What are your memories of Union Station? You must have come in and out of Union Station?

Kolarik: Union Station. Oh, boy, that was old home base for me for a good many years. That was quite a place, I want to tell you. Yeah, there's a lot of traffic in that place. Oh, just terrible, and you see one of them Northwestern old land trains come through there. They'd pull out of there by the hundreds, you know, going to Chicago or going west. That was the only transportation there was. I was in the service at that time, and I, of course, used to dead head into Chicago, and we used to have some awful lot of big trains. A lot of times--I seen the times when, well, our number five and twelve used to be about a--oh, a five car train, and sometimes they'd have to put on at least two extra coaches to carry the people off. . .

LD: To carry everybody, yeah.

Kolarik: Well, I used to dead head home, and they used to have an immigrant car. It was comical. There's a lot of immigrants, you know. And over in Chicago over at Kinzie Station where we used to be on the west side there. They had pens about as big as this room here and the benches all around, and the immigrants would come over here, you know, and they'd put the Swedes in one, the Czechs in the other, and the Germans in the other one. They'd herd them in there until they got the car ready to put them in to send them off where they were going. Cedar Rapids was a Czech unloading place, most of

them here. But they had some awful fights in there too. Boy, they'd flash knives and everything, and we used to work, oh, maybe not quite as far from here to the street from there. Of course, we could see that going on and usually they had an accordion player, and they'd dance and, oh, they'd have a high old time in there.

LD: Would they spend long hours there, I mean. . .

Kolarik: Well, they'd come in from the east on the Pennsylvania Line. And they'd put them over the Chicago Short Line and bring them over to the Northwestern, those were going out west or out to Cedar Rapids and Nebraska, and, oh, I don't think they were in there more than, oh, maybe two or three hours or kind of between train times, you know. They'd herd them altogether. They wouldn't let you go like you and I would go, we'd go on our own. They'd have the whole gang. They would bring the whole car over there and switch it over there and unload them and put them in there. And there was a fence about that high all the way around with benches all the way around and, oh, the place was about as big as maybe that room and this room here. And they'd have maybe, oh, let's see, there was about, oh, I guess there was about three pens, I guess there may be four, and that's where they'd herd them.

LD: What happened to those folks when they got to Cedar Rapids?
Do you remember?

Kolarik: What happened to them?

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: Well, I'll tell you. I'm the product of one of them, I guess. Most of the Czech people in my father's day, of course, I'm a native born. I didn't come from the old country, but my dad did. And just about 75 percent of the people from old Bohemia as they used to call it in those days. They came here to a place they called Kahouts down in Solon. Old Grandpa Kahout. We called him Grandpa. He really wasn't my grandpa, but we always called him that, and he run a big farm down there, and those fellows would come here when they couldn't talk, of course, and they couldn't understand, and they'd take them in. They'd give them a blue shirt and a pair of overalls and maybe a pair of shoes, and they'd put them to work out there. They didn't pay them nothing, but they'd give them their food and a pair of overalls until they got so they could say when you'd say, "John, come here or Jim, you go over there." They got so they understood that, they'd farm them out. Oh, that fellow was a real estate man, and he had an office on First Avenue between 12th and Tenth Street there. He was one of those down there that run a farm, and he used to, my dad started in

there with him too. And the old man used to like pie, and they didn't always have pie, and he and my dad used to kid about that. He'd say, the old man would say to my father, he'd say, "John, have a piece of pie." When they didn't have any pie. He was kidding the cook. That was comical. Some of those things are kind of comical when I get to thinking about them.

LD: How did the Czech immigrants find Mr. Kohout? Did he actually come and meet them at the station or did they just hear about him and. . .

Kolarik: No. Well, the way they assimilated--mostly they'd come to Cedar Rapids. They'd have an uncle or some relative or something like that, you know, and we'd meet them down at the station. They'd have a sign on them, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and they'd take them off a boat and put them on a train, and they'd go around like a lot of cattle to get down here. I had quite a hand in that, and we'd take them out, and we'd farm them out. Oh, we had a couple stayed with us, and their daughter was the main sales lady for Lates for years and years until she died. And oh, the old Czech people that were here and were kind of organized, they'd get together and they'd buy them a bed maybe or a couple of chairs and get them started and give them a job over at the shops or down to the packing house.

- LD: So there really was a strong community effort to help those people get established?
- Kolarik: Oh, Czech took care of their people. I want to tell you they never, I never heard of a case where they were in bad straits. They looked after each other pretty well.
- LD: So your mom and dad did that too then. They brought people to. . .
- Kolarik: My mom and dad was a little different. They were sweethearts over in the old country, and my mother came over here. She had no folks. Her folks died when she was three years old, and she came over here when she was about, oh, I don't know, about 16, 17, maybe 18, all alone. And she came by boat in the steerage, and she came to New York. She didn't know a soul except for a fellow by the name of Mr. Joe Blahnik, Blahnik's father. There's a Blahnik Construction Company here, and it's their father. We were some shirt tale relatives, and she came over, and he met her in New York, and I don't think she was too long in New York and then she moved over to some people over in Chicago and then she went to work for some people. . .
- LD: Yes, we talked about that--that were far, far out. . .

Kolarik: Jewish people.

LD: And then finally came to Cedar Rapids.

Kolarik: Then she came to Cedar Rapids. My dad came over here. He came over here alone. His father and mother didn't come til after that. He come over here alone and settled here and went to work in the Rock Island shop, old BCR and N shops in those days, and he was a painter. He done striping and. . .

LD: Oh, yes. You told me about the gold leafing, yeah.

Kolarik: Yeah, gold leaf striping and, you know, he was self-taught and then Mother came out here from Chicago, and they got married down on the lower end of First Street and 12th Avenue. I don't suppose you remember where the Vessaly Carriage Work was?

LD: No.

Kolarik: The building is still there, there across the street, and I was born there. First Street down there runs next to the river. You'd never know there was a First Street there because I don't think you can drive it. I think it's just a walk through there and that's where I was born, down there. They tell me, I don't know. I can't remember that.

LD: That I can understand. Well, your mother and father must have helped other Czech people too.

Kolarik: Yeah. See they were sweethearts over in the old country and then they got over here and they got married and. . .

LD: So did you often have people who came and lived with you for awhile?

Kolarik: Yeah. We raised my dad's nephew and a niece of his. Joe Buresh was a nephew of my father's, and he practically raised him. Joe was older than I was by maybe six or seven years I suppose maybe, and he got over here and they got him as an apprentice. I think it was the Lawrence Press Company. I'm not sure about that. No, no, no, Winkert and Leefer's, that's where it was.

LD: Winkert?

Kolarik: Winkert and Leefer's.

LD: Leefer's?

Kolarik: Winkert and Leefer's, yes sir. Used to be a print shop, and he went to work over there, and he learnt the pressmen's trade,

and he lived with us til he got married. And then his sister came over here, Mary, and she lived with us for oh, gosh I don't know, several years and then she went to work for the Wolfe people on First Avenue and 12th Street, right on the corner. Let's see, Wolfe was, I don't know what he did do. He was kind of a big insurance man or something, and she worked there as a domestic til she got married and then she got married. She married a guy by the name of John Ehrenberger, and they had two children--three children, two girls and a boy. Let's see the, oh, the boy's dead too, one of the girls is still alive, lives down here on the west side.

LD: So your family was responsible for helping people. It was helping the population of Cedar Rapids grow, yeah.

Kolarik: Yeah. They weren't anything unique about it. It seemed like they all helped out. I remember that girl that work for Lynch, her folks come over here. I forget what that name of the folks was now. I remember the folks and the boy each got together and then they bought them a bedroom suite. They didn't have nothing when they come over here and then the others done that. We had those Czech lodges here, you know. They helped out, you know, and we just--they kind of took care of their own. They done pretty well.

LD: Were you a member of one of the lodges?

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. I belonged to one. I've belonged to the ZCBJ. That was one my father helped establish, and I'm one of the original holders of that policy.

LD: Now tell me about that. What did you do in the lodge? Was it primarily social? Did you have charitable purposes or. . .

Kolarik: Well, we didn't do like maybe today, you know, everybody social gathers in formation of a lodge or--we didn't do that. We just--I don't know how those lodges form. My dad instigated the ZCBJ which is still going strong, and I don't know, I forget how they did start. They just wanted to get started, I guess, just grewed like topsey, I guess. My dad was, what was he, he was custodian of paraphernalia or something. I don't remember what it was.

LD: But it was somewhat like the Elk's lodges and things of that sort, and I'm familiar with that.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. Fraternal, they're fraternal organizations, yeah. Take ZCBJ, which is still going strong, and Western Bohemian Fraternal is what ZCBJ used to be. Used to be, you wouldn't know that, but it was.

LD: Oh, dear. Okay.

Kolarik: And now it's Western Fraternal. Well, same thing translated, that's all there is to it.

LD: Western?

Kolarik: Fraternal. Fraternal, and they have a big building out on First Avenue there about 19th Street, I guess, big office building there. No, I belonged to that for, oh, practically, oh, before I was married, and my wife belonged to it, and my father was some kind of custodian there. I don't remember what, but. . . Well, the Czech people in the olden days they had a tendency to congregate together, kind of clannishly, more than they do today, and they kind of, well, they're real clannish to the very devil. They don't do that too much today.

LD: It's understandable when you think of the language barriers and the different. . .

Kolarik: Well, see nowadays to become a citizen of the United States you got to get up before a judge. You got to name who the president is, and who the senator is, and you name it, and it's quite a little thing, I know. But in my day, of course, I didn't have to do that, but in my day I took my grandfather and my father up before a judge by the name of Gibertson. He lived over on Third Avenue west, and I had to get up there and

interpret for those two fellows to get citizenship, and I was about, oh, I couldn't have been over nine years old, I guess.

LD: That was quite a position for you to be in.

Kolarik: Yes. Well, I got up there and swear—I didn't know what I was swearing about, but then that's what they had me to do and so I did it. So my dad became an American citizen, and I can't say that he couldn't read and write. He could, but not til afterwards.

LD: Not at that point, yeah. Did your father have, and I'm kind of shifting back now to transportation again, did he have a car? Did he have a horse and buggy?

Kolarik: Oh, no. He had both.

LD: He did.

Kolarik: Yeah. My dad had both then, but way long later in life, even after I was married. I bought six acres of land out there on Coldstream farm's addition, and my dad bought a horse. And then eventually he bought a Model T and then he got rid of that touring car and he bought a Model T sedan, which he had until he died and then when he died, why, of course, I in-

herited. I was the only one in the family. So I give it to my son, Bob, and he wore it out.

LD: What did you use the car for in those days? Was it just. . .

Kolarik: Well, my dad used the car mostly for transportation because we lived out on Coldstream Avenue and he worked down at Cherry's and that's a long ways down there, you know.

LD: So he'd drive.

Kolarik: And so he drove that car down there and I had an aunt that lived on Tenth Avenue between about Ninth Street, and it was only a couple of blocks down to Cherry's old place when they were down on Ninth Avenue, and they had a garage, and he used to leave his car there and then he'd walk the other block or two. No, he drove the car there until he died.

LD: When did he get his car? You were already married though, you said, when he got the car.

Kolarik: When he got his car? Let's see, I think the first car he had was, oh, must have been along about 1920. I know the first one I had was in 1914.

LD: So you got a car before he did.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. Definitely.

LD: Did you use it for business or for transportation or just for fun or . . .

Kolarik: When I got my first car, I was in the government service, and it was a pleasure car almost entirely. It was a Model T, and we could put the top down and cover it all over with things but when it rained we had to put the top up, and it took two guys to put it up--one guy couldn't do it--til finally Mr. Ford got the brilliant idea that he should have a one-man top so one guy could put it up, and he did. But I never got around to that.

LD: You had the earlier model.

Kolarik: No. I think I graduated there. I think I got my first Studebaker. I was a great Studebaker man. I had seven of them, all new ones, and I was just thinking the other day if I had all the money I paid for them damn Studebakers, I could have. . .

LD: Yes. You could buy another farm.

Kolarik: Oh, yes.

LD: Where did you go for pleasure? What were the roads like?

Kolarik: Well, the roads were—they weren't like they are today, of course, but they have what they call the cannonball route and then they had, I forget the name of that other one was. It went along about what's number 30 now, but them were all just all graded roads. They weren't paved at all.

LD: What was the cannonball route?

Kolarik: That's the one that's number 30. They used to call that the cannonball road.

LD: Do you know why?

Kolarik: I don't know. I thought maybe you could go like a cannonball, which is 30 miles per hour. That was pretty fast. I went down to Shellsburg to visit my aunt. I took my mother and father along with me, and I had a Model T touring car, and I wasn't taking any chances. I took headbolts that hold the bolts down on the head of the motor. I don't know why, but I took them, a bottle of oil, and I took, I think I had three extra tires. We used to hang them on the outside and go down here about 15 miles and now I go 450 miles, I say, and I don't even pump the tires up.

LD: It was a whole different kind of experience.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah.

LD: When did you get your first telephone? Do you remember that?

Kolarik: First telephone, oh, yeah. See I worked in the bindery up at Anamosa for the W. M. Wells people. See, what year was it, must—I just don't remember what year that could be.

LD: Well, we know it would have been probably around 1910, maybe '11 or so.

Kolarik: Could have been something in there.

LD: Before you started your own bindery.

Kolarik: Yeah.

LD: And before you went to work for the mail service?

Kolarik: Well, not before I went to the mail service.

LD: Yeah. So it would have been before '10 or '11?

Kolarik: Yeah. I know I've had a telephone put in. I wasn't married, of course, and I put a telephone in down home so my mother could call me up in Anamosa if she--well, I was the only one. She worried about me, you know. Poor old soul. She worried a lot about me that wasn't necessary.

LD: That's the prerogative of mothers.

Kolarik: Oh, well. Golly.

LD: How did that telephone work? Was it a hand crank?

Kolarik: Yep. It was zing, zing, zing and then you call John Joe, and you'd go zing, zing, zing, zing--three or four short ones and one long one or something.

LD: Oh. So you did that yourself. You didn't have to go through an operator?

Kolarik: Oh, no. You done that yourself. You just zing, zing, zing, whatever, you know. How they made the connection, I don't know.

LD: Was it a party line? You had so many. . .

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. We had a party line. Then there was two, three, or four on the party line, you know. When I went in business out there and I wore that guy pretty near to frazzle down there. I forget what his name was at the telephone company. I wanted a telephone and I just couldn't get. He said, "We don't have any wire down there." I says, "Why don't you put one down there?" No, he couldn't, it's too expensive. Well, we had a wire along Center Point Road but not on Madison Street. Well, I kept after that guy, like to drove him crazy and finally a fellow by the name of Bistion, was a telephone man, and I knew Fred quite well. He done outside work. He come down there one day, and he says, "Jack," he says, "I'm building you a line." I says, "You are? Clear from Center Point Road?" "Yeah, but," he says, "I'm running out of wire. I got no wire now." I says, "Well, can't you get some more wire?" "Well, not unless I steal it because we're only allocated so much wire and," he says, "I run out." "Well, go down and try to steal some." So he did. He put me in a telephone wire. Yeah, and then I had—I forget that guy's name, he didn't like me too well. I drove him too much, I guess. But he got even with me. He says, "Well, I'll put you in a damn phone." I says, "Give me a number." "Well, I'll give you a jack perstation number." And I says, "Now what that's suppose to be?" Well, he give you a number today and maybe somebody else would want the number tomorrow. He'd take your number off. You never had a number, you know.

- LD: Oh, you mean you just had temporary numbers.
- Kolarik: Well, we had a telephone in there, but you never knew from one day to another what the number was going to be.
- LD: That's not very useful.
- Kolarik: Not very good. You could go out all right, but. . .
- LD: They couldn't call you. Did you use it much in your business?
- Kolarik: Yeah. We did. Of course, that's the only contact we had. When I first started the business out there, I used to correspond with the public library by mail, and I used to have to go way down to where Heabels is to get my mail, but I had. . .
- LD: The phone would have been a great help to you.
- Kolarik: So he finally put a phone in there for me. Well, I drove that guy nuts down there. I was ready to have. . .
- LD: Now what did he call that number he was going to give you?
- Kolarik: Jack perstation, he called it. I don't. . .

LD: Jack perstation.

Kolarik: Yeah. I don't know what that meant.

LD: I'll be darn. It was his own little personal. . .

Kolarik: I suppose that meant that they just push it around wherever they had a place.

LD: Now, you mentioned when you were talking about telephones that you put one in originally before you were married. What year were you married in?

Kolarik: 1911.

LD: 1911.

Kolarik: Twenty-third of August of 1911.

LD: So you were about 22 years old then, right?

Kolarik: I was just coming up to 22, I think.

LD: How did you meet your wife?

Kolarik: Huh?

LD: How did you meet your wife?

Kolarik: Well, like all folks, I met her at a dance.

LD: Where did you go to dance?

Kolarik: We used to dance at the old CSPA Hall. That's--you know where that is.

LD: Yes.

Kolarik: Yeah.

LD: Down on Third Street.

Kolarik: But I didn't meet her there. I met her at the old--at a dance, but at the Turner Hall and that was the old Turner Hall. That used to be up about on Third Street between Fourth Avenue, I guess somewhere in there, right in there somewhere. I met her there; that's where I met her.

LD: Was your wife Czech?

Kolarik: Yeah, 100 percent,

LD: Was she an immigrant or had she been born here?

Kolarik: No. She was born down in Ely, Iowa. She had two sisters and a brother, and they were all born in the old country, but she wasn't. Her father was a tailor and he immigrated to America, and she was born down in Ely and then he died when she was, oh, I thought she said about three years old, I guess, when he died. And she was quite a gal. One in a million.

LD: How old was she when she married?

Kolarik: Well, she was older than I was. I had trouble talking her into marrying me because she said she was too old for me. Her birthday was in October and mine don't come til December, and she was afraid she was too old for me. I says, "Well, I don't care about that I can." I think I told her, I says, "I can understand old people or something." We had a wonderful life together.

LD: Did you move to that place on Madison Street about that time?

Kolarik: Yeah. Let's see, I bought that--it seems like I owned that land out there. Yeah, I owned that land before I got married and then when I got married I was on the road and I was gone about 75 percent of the time so she moved in with my folks til

we finally decided what we were going to do, and she didn't live there very long. I guess a couple of months. Of course, I was in and out all the time and then we moved out there and built—well, we didn't build a house that was out there now. But we built a little house. We lived out there for, oh, all of our lives. Well, Frances wasn't born there. Frances was born down on D Avenue, but Bob was born out there.

LD: And Bob was the first child?

Kolarik: Bob was the one that was born out there in Coldstream district, and Frances was born on D Avenue.

LD: We were talking about the radio. Did you have a radio after you were married? Did you buy one?

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. Well.

LD: Of course, that was still pretty early for radios. They came later on.

Kolarik: The radio. Oh, yeah. I think I had about the first one there was, but it was a homemade one. In fact, I still got it.

LD: You make it yourself?

- Kolarik: Oh, yeah. I made that myself and I think when they moved down here my great-grandson got a hold of it and he still got it. It's operable.
- LD: Is it a crystal set? What they call. . .
- Kolarik: No, no, tubes.
- LD: A real radio.
- Kolarik: No. A regular radio. I think I had three tubes if I remember right.
- LD: How did you learn how to make it?
- Kolarik: Well, I just got a diagram and made one. That's all there was to it.
- LD: Once you got interested in that, yeah.
- Kolarik: Oh, you get interested in a lot of things. I'm kind of a screw-ball. When I see something that other people do I have to try it, you know, and, oh, I don't know. We had the only radio down there on Madison Street. Of course, I played professional baseball, and I'm baseball crazy anyhow. And Mr. Juhl, he was an old gentleman, and I went to school with his whole family,

and they lived kind of kitty corner on the hill from me. He was a great baseball fan, and they didn't have any radio. Oh, hardly anybody did then. I had that homemade one, and we. . .

LD: Was that around 1920 or was that even later?

Kolarik: About in there, about 1920-21, and I didn't have a loud speaker on it. I had earphones, and we worked in the bindery there, and Mr. Juhl used to come down and sit in the chair, and my wife would sit there with a board, and she'd be sewing books by hand. Her and her sister sewed for me all the years I was in business. I had other ones too, but those two were with me all the time. And she had earphones on and she'd repeat what was going on so we could hear that.

LD: So she was your loudspeaker, so to speak.

Kolarik: See we had, well, we had Wencel and May and Aunt Libby and my wife. I think there was four, maybe there was another one in there somewhere. About five of us worked in there at one time.

LD: You say your wife was hand sewing. In those days, were all of the books bound like that?

- Kolarik: Oh, yeah, all hand sewed. See I had a monopoly on over sewing books. I had that patented, oh, years ago, and that put our shop on the map. We were. . .
- LD: What does that mean? Over sewing?
- Kolarik: Well, see usually when you sew all books you open them up there, and they're sewed through here--through the folds.
- LD: Just like a folded newspaper.
- Kolarik: And then if you tear one sheet out, the other side comes out too, see.
- LD: Right, okay.
- Kolarik: Over sewing, I developed one so you go this way and go around this way and you get them altogether you can't get them out. Then you'd add another one from the bottom and you sew that one on to this one and so forth.
- LD: So it was a much sturdier book?
- Kolarik: Oh, my gosh, and they use it today. In fact, they invented a machine that just about took over that stitch, believe it or not. They call it the over sewing machine, and a fellow came

in one time when we were sewing, and he says, "You ought to have a machine for that." And I says, "Wouldn't that be nice, wouldn't it?" And you know, lo and behold, the guy--I don't know whether he patented one and made one, an over sewing machine, and I eventually bought one too.

LD: How long was it before you bought that?

Kolarik: Oh, I suppose ten years anyway.

LD: So it would have been in the '30's that you would have. . .

Kolarik: And it cost me pretty close to \$10,000.

LD: Oh, my goodness.

Kolarik: Eight or ten thousand dollars, I think. Eight thousand five hundred dollars, I think.

LD: But then the labor savings.

Kolarik: Oh, my, I had four or five girls sewing and got rid of all of them but one. We still got the machine. Bob's got it out there at Springville in the bindery now. He sews all of his books on there. It's an indestructible machine, but it cost a lot of money. That was a lot of money. I know I went down to the

bank. They used to have a bank, used to be back of the Montrose Hotel. It's a bank--what did they call that?

LD: Is it one we still have now or was it a . . .

Kolarik: The machine you mean?

LD: No, the bank. Was it a . . .

Kolarik: Yeah, because Montrose was. . .

LD: Guaranty maybe.

Kolarik: No. The Guaranty come afterwards. They were right across the road from the Torch Press there, and it's a Savings and Loan Association.

LD: Oh, okay.

Kolarik: And I went in there and I drew out--I don't know around \$7-8,000 and, "What are you going to do with all that money?" I says, "Well, I'm gonna buy a sewing machine." He says, "My God, what kind of a sewing machine is that?" I says, "Well, Frank, to tell you the truth, I don't know, but I think it' about what I want." So I set it in there. I think it cost \$8,500 or something, and they had to have. . .

END OF TAPE TWO--SIDE ONE

BEGINNING TAPE TWO--SIDE TWO

LD: This is side two of a tape with Mr. Joseph Kolarik on March 20, 1985. Now, we were talking about when you bought that machine, and you think it was in the 1930's.

Kolarik: Yeah, let's see, 1930. Well, I think it was before that.

LD: You think it was before that?

Kolarik: I think so.

LD: Okay. Well, you started your own business in 1920.

Kolarik: In 1920.

LD: So it was several years into the business then.

Kolarik: Well, it was several years.

LD: Well, then you must have been doing pretty well about that time if you had that much money to invest in a new fangled sewing machine.

Kolarik: My dear girl, I don't like to brag, but I always done all that. I never done anything that I wouldn't. Well, people would say, "You've been successful." Well, I wouldn't say that--lucky.

LD: You must have done something right, then. Well, that brings me to what I think is just a real critical area that I want to ask you some questions about because at the end of the '20's and the early '30's when we were in the periods that we all call "The Great Depression" now, times were hard for a lot of people.

Kolarik: Oh, boy.

LD: And I've heard many stories about how it affected peoples' businesses, and I'd like for you to talk about how that period affected your business and your family.

Kolarik: It made it!

LD: It made it?

Kolarik: It sure did.

LD: Will you explain that to me?

- Kolarik: Well, we were in the book binding business of making old books new, and everybody was taking their old books and making them new, the libraries especially, instead of buying new ones.
- LD: Instead of buying new ones.
- Kolarik: Sure, they'd rebind them.
- LD: They'd rebind them.
- Kolarik: Oh boy, we were loaded. I put on extra help there. I had--I don't know--about three or four people. I put on extra help during The Depression. Big deal.
- LD: Bad luck was good luck for you.
- Kolarik: Oh, sure. That's all luck anyhow.
- LD: Well, obviously you had some money in the local financial institutions when the bank holiday occurred in 1933. How did that affect you? Did you lose any money?
- Kolarik: No, I had my money in the Merchant's National Bank, a checking account, and I had a savings account in what was the Bohemian Savings and Loan, and nothing happened to either

one. And come payday and I had, I don't know, I had to have, I don't know, \$400 or \$500 (I forget what it was now) for the payroll. And I had a fellow by the name of Charlie Adams worked for me. He was one of them that worked for me. And he lived on F Avenue west, and he went home, and I give him my checkbook or the banksack. I says, "My check is to bring money out for the payroll on your way home." He come home he says, "Hey, I got your money out of there, but, oh, man I had a time." I says, "What happened?" "Oh, there was a line all the way out to the street around the bank." I says, "You're kidding." "No," he says. Well, I had it on \$700-\$800 worth of checks that he put in. I says, "What did you do with the checks?" He says, "I put them in." I says, "Well, good," I says. "I'm glad of that." He says, "People get the idea I'm putting money in there and taking some out it must be all right so nothing happened." I don't know whether that helped any, but probably didn't do it any harm.

LD: I'm sure it didn't do any harm. Kind of a panic situation, you know.

Kolarik: You mustn't panic, not only in financial matters, but anything. Never panic because people say I have a habit of getting lost. You say you can't get lost. I can go out here in the yard and get lost. Well, I come home from Minnesota and I take the wrong turn and I get down there, and I swear I was over in

Saint Paul shaking hands with the governor, but I didn't know it. I didn't know how to get out of there. And my boy and his wife were down in, I forget the name of the town, waiting for me. They were out there, but they were ahead of me, and I went back and forth from Minneapolis, you know, and I didn't have any idea where I was at or how I was going to get out there. But I wound up down there, and his wife says, "You know, I'm getting worried about Dad." "Ah," he says, "don't worry. He'll be coming along here pretty soon. Sure enough" he says, "there he comes."

LD: You finally found your way, yeah.

Kolarik: I've done that two or three times.

LD: You know, you told me a story before we were taping that fits into that same line and that was the story about how you as a very young man, were able to get a check cashed, and I believe it was in a Chicago bank, yeah. You should tell that story.

Kolarik: I'll never forget that. I got a government check. It was just a--you know--when I say government check. I went across the street to Continental Commercial National Bank, the biggest institution there is in the world, you know. Well, I thought well, I got a government check, you know, just walk in there,

and I put it on there, and I hadn't messed around more than about a minute guy saddled up alongside of me, and I looked at him. I thought, oh, wonder what he's doing, none of his business in here. And he says, "Having a little trouble?" And I says, "Well, yeah, I got a check here and," I says, "I'm having a little trouble cashing it." And the teller in there says, "Well, you have any identification?" I says, "No, I don't have any identification." What would I have? In those days, we didn't have any driver's license or nothing. I says, "No, I don't have any identification." "Well, now," he says, "I don't suppose you know anybody in the bank." "Well," I says, "I do happen to know somebody in the bank." I says, "I know Mr. Van Vechten." "Oh, you do?" He was the president of the Continental Commercial Bank, and I met him, he was in the First National Bank here in Cedar Rapids, and I worked for Lawrence Prescott when I was apprentice in the bindery, and I used to go up there and deliver stuff to him. And I knew him, that is I knew who he was, wasn't like that, of course. He said, "You know him?" I says, "Sure do." "Well, come on with me," he says, and I went in the room, and he had a private office there, and he didn't know me from Adam. He says, "What's the trouble?" And they told him. And he says, "Well, do I know you?" And I says, "I don't know. I know you, though." And he says, "How do you know me?" And I says, "Well, I used to see you come into the shop." "What shop was that?" I says, "Lawrence Press Company." "Oh," he says, "you know Charlie

Lawrence?" I says, "Yeah, I worked for Charlie Lawrence for seven years as an apprentice and I learnt the binder's trade there." "Well," he says, "that's all right, cash the check for the boy."

LD: That's a real good example of why not to panic in a situation, right?

Kolarik: I don't panic.

LD: Don't panic.

Kolarik: I don't panic at all.

LD: Moving back to that period we were talking about, Depression years. I'm presuming then that your family did not really feel the affects of it the way other people did if you were doing well.

Kolarik: No. The Depression didn't bother me. In fact, business was better during The Depression than it was before. It was all right before. It always has been. I never had any trouble, but it was better because everybody was trying to make the old ones do and that's where we came in. That was our business, making new ones out of old ones.

LD: What do you remember about that period in Cedar Rapids? Did it have an affect that was really hard on the people?

Kolarik: Well, it was pretty rough on some people, I want to tell you. I know some people. Well, you know that brings us to panicking again. I knew one family, I wouldn't mention their names because I wouldn't want them to know that I was telling the story, but they were people, oh, quite a little older than I was. In fact, the children were about as old as my kids are, and they had all their money in the Kenwood Savings Bank up there. We had a savings bank up there in Kenwood, and it closed. Well, I thought they were going to commit suicide. I says, "Well, I don't know, why do you worry about that? I think the money isn't lost. It's just tied up so you can't get it." I says, "There's nothing wrong." Well, I don't know. That's all they had in the world. I says, "Well, just sit tight." Well, they had it in that Kenwood Bank and Trust Company used to be up there. It went along for about two years again, and it cleared all up, and they not only got their money back, but they got six percent interest on that all the while it was in there.

LD: Oh, for heaven's sake!

Kolarik: Yeah, people that didn't panic come out all right. I didn't panic. I didn't have anything really and all I had if I would of

lost it, it wouldn't of made any difference anyway. But I just left it in there and. . .

LD: Do you--go ahead.

Kolarik: They say, "Don't you worry about the money?" I said, "I ain't got enough in there to worry about. If I lose it--ah, so what--I lose it."

LD: Well, you certainly had a trade that was working for you.

Kolarik: Well, I had a good trade. At that time I had, well, of course, I had went into government service for about six or seven years, and I never had any money. I never did have any money. Money don't mean anything to me, just accumulate money. Lot of people say, "You should have sold that or had stock." I says, "Well, yeah, maybe, but I'm not interested in money, only what it can buy.

LD: Right.

Kolarik: I'm not much on clothes. I have a couple of good suits that I never wear, and I always had--I never had a car that wasn't a good one, and I have an Oldsmobile there now. It's old. I bought a new car, I guess, about every four or five years except this one. When you get up over 95, you don't buy a

new car, you know, and I got one out there that's only got 40,000 miles on it so it's going to have to do me unless I smash it or something.

LD: What happened to the other press you mentioned? You mentioned Lawrence Press, Torch Press, and some of the others in the community?

Kolarik: Well, Lawrence Press Company, they were in business up until about two years ago and now I don't remember who bought them. Somebody bought them. They were down on First Street.

LD: Yes. I remember seeing them.

Kolarik: Upstairs. Well, somebody bought them out, and I guess they dismantled the thing and formed some other kind of a company. I don't remember the details of that, but they were about the oldest print shop around this part of the country, them and the Torch Press. The Torch Press, The Republican was an off shoot of that. You remember The Republican newspaper--well, the Torch Press and Republican were the same thing. The Torch Press had the place on Third Street and Fourth Avenue, and Lawrence's was originally, well, Lawrence's was on Second Avenue between First and Second Streets, and then they moved from there on up there to First Avenue next to the Elk's building, or what is it there. . .

LD: Did the Torch Press go out of business when The Republican went out of business?

Kolarik: Yeah. The Torch Press went out of business quite a number of years ago. The Misaks got a hold of it and then they had died, and he had a son-in-law. Paul Strand, he never liked that business very much. He was a lawyer by training, and they sold it all out. That's too bad. It was a nice big outfit.

LD: That brings me to a point that I kind of skipped over and that's newspapers when you were living here in the early part of from 1900 up to about 1930-35. There were two newspapers in those days, weren't there?

Kolarik: Yeah. There was The Republican, used to be a morning paper, you know, and. . .

LD: Which one did you take, or did you take?

Kolarik: We always took The Gazette. I don't believe I ever took-- always took The Gazette. Well, I think when I was a kid we took The Gazette. The fellow that used to run, well, they didn't have monotypes in those days, but they had lineotypes. I forget his name, and he was the mechanic of that. He didn't run them, but he took care of them. They had two or three

machines. That was on First Street and First Avenue. That's where The Gazette was. I forget his name, but he fixed bicycles cheap, that's where we come in. We always rode bicycles and take them over there, and he'd fix them--50 cents or a dollar, you know, that was a lot of money. Fifty cents looked that big, you know.

LD: Shifting again--we were talking about businesses. One of the events that people have generally very strong memories about is the Douglas Starch Works because of that explosion. Do you have memories of that?

Kolarik: Yeah. I sure do.

LD: That was in 1919, I believe.

Kolarik: Well, I lived out on Madison Street, and it happened about, I don't know, around about 6:00 or somewhere in there, and I was just going down from the house to a place where I had a lot of chickens. I had 200 or 300 little chicks and I had them in a little bitty pens. And I saw that big smoke run up, and I says to my wife, I says, "You know, I think the gas company blowed up." That's what it looked like, gas company. Come to think about it, it wasn't the gas company at all. It was starch works. And I had a fellow--I used to raise brown leghorn chicks and I had quite a reputation for them. I used to send

them all over the country, and I had a fellow just the week before that come over and he bought two dozen of them, hens, and he brought the crates out, and he was from Starlight, Saskatchewan, but he had a brother that worked in the starch works. And they came out and got those chicks just about a week before this blowed down, and I was so worried about whether that fellow was in there and got killed. But he wasn't. He wasn't working that day so he was alive.

LD: Did you know anybody who was killed in the explosion?

Kolarik: No, not personally I didn't. That was quite a catastrophe.

LD: What do you remember about its affect on the community?

Kolarik: Well, there wasn't very much to remember because they didn't let out too much because, well, I think that perhaps rightfully or wrongfully there might have been some circumstances there that they didn't want the public to know about all that. And there wasn't very much put out about that. It just blew down, somewhere, we know that because. . .

LD: It does seem to be a mystery as to how it actually--other than it was probably a dust explosion.

Kolarik: Well, dust explosion, which is a--in those days they didn't have them, oh, I don't know what they do call it. They got precautionary stuff that wet the dust down so it don't explode. We had Quaker Oats exploded one time too, you know, and burnt the whole place down too, and that was in. . .

LD: That was about 1905, wasn't it?

Kolarik: Yeah, about 1903, '4, '5.

LD: You would remember that.

Kolarik: Oh, definitely. Yeah. I was working already in the bindery at that time. We lived out on D Avenue and 13th Street, and it's all vacant on that side towards the slope and actually there was so much light from that thing that you could read a newspaper over there.

LD: Cause it was in the evening.

Kolarik: Oh, during the night, you know. Oh boy, that was quite a fire.

LD: What happened to the survivors in those kinds of situations? Did the companies help families out? Do you remember what was done in the community to help those people?

Kolarik: No. The starch works, the Douglas people took pretty well care of them. The Douglas people were salt of the earth. I know that from personal experience cause I had some personal experiences there.

LD: You mentioned you knowing Mrs. Douglas last time and. . .

Kolarik: Yeah, Mrs. Douglas, she's quite a friend of mine. Well, I wouldn't say we were like that because she was out of my class, but she was democratic. She used to come to see me. I used to raise a lot of roses and so did she, and she'd come see mine and invited me up to see hers, which I didn't go. I don't like to do that. She used to say--she's quite a book binder, and I inherited all of her tools. Must be, oh, I suppose a couple \$2,000-\$3000 worth of them, and she come down and examined my roses and invited me up there, and I'm not much on that. She says, "Come up and bring your wife and we'll have Mrs. Tons (I think her name was) get lunch for you, and you can enjoy the whole place all day." Just like that to me, common, plug, book binder. But she was a nice woman. She was a wonderful woman. No, I went up there one time, I don't know why I had to go there, to pick up some tools that I sent and what was his name now that married that Douglas girl? He was a big shot in the baseball here and Iowa Manufacturing Company.

LD: Oh, Mr. Hall.

Kolarik: Yeah. Hall, yeah. Howard Hall, and I got in there one time, and he came home, and I was coming down. They had circular stairway coming down there, and I was just coming down from upstairs. I don't know what we were doing up there, something that I was suppose to see. And he come home and he opened the back door, and he let two dogs in. Boy, they were that high, and they come zooming up there. Oh, my God, I thought. I was ready to jump over the banisters. He says, "They won't hurt you." They didn't. The come up and smelling me. Well, he got down there, and he was quite a democrat. I got to know him pretty well. He was quite a baseball man, you know, that was kind of part of my life too, you know. We'd get together on that, and he says, "Come and sit down a bit." He says, "Would you like something to drink?" And I says, "Well, not particular." He says, "Well, I got to have something, and what will you have?" I says, "Well, whatever you have will be all right with me." And he opened a place about as big as that room there and actually I'll bet he had a bottle of everything that was ever manufactured in that damn place, and he had in one corner, they had a case of pop there, and dozens of cases, and you couldn't buy a bottle of pop to save your soul, you know, just wasn't any to have, but they had it. I don't. . .

LD: So this was in the '30's probably.

Kolarik: I suppose.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: Liquor was dry, you know.

LD: Oh, no. That would have been before then--the '20's then cause, yeah.

Kolarik: Yeah, that's in the '20's. And, oh, he says, "Take your choice." I got--only thing I knew about was bourbon and beer, and I says, "Well, whatever you have will be all right." So I don't know what he concocted, something or other.

LD: Now, he was not living in the big house in those days?

Kolarik: Yeah, he lived up there in Brucemore.

LD: He was in Brucemore?

Kolarik: Yep.

LD: He and his wife, I know, for awhile lived in the carriage, or the gardenhouse, what they call the gardenhouse right off. . .

Kolarik: No. They lived--at that time they lived in the big house. No, I have kind of a personal thing to that. You know, my wife used to work--not my wife, but my mother used to work for the Sinclairs years and years ago, and I remember she had to go up there to Brucemore and wash the floor upstairs. I went with her so that was kind of--it wasn't new to me at all.

LD: Well, now that would have been before--I believe that the Douglasses moved into the Brucemore residence about 19--

Kolarik: Sinclairs lived there then.

LD: 1904-05 or something, so you saw that building, that home, before the Douglasses ever moved in.

Kolarik: Oh, yes, right. Yeah, that was before Barbara and whats-her-name were married.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: Yeah. I know. I was. . .

LD: Can you remember anything about Mrs. Sinclair?

Kolarik: No. Not very much, she was a very nice old soul. I know them and the Sutters--they was part of the family. I don't know

how that Sutters come in there. Whether she was a Sutter or how that was.

LD: Sutter?

Kolarik: Sutters. Well, they lived where Turner's Mortuary is.

LD: Right, right.

Kolarik: Yeah, and then they moved out there in that place out there and that used to be a golf course.

LD: Right, yeah.

Kolarik: I remember they'd go out and they used to wear them golf pants, you know, turned down there. I guess I think that was awful funny when we were kids.

LD: Do you remember if Brucemore looked different when the Sinclairs were there from later when the Douglasses moved in?

Kolarik: No, I don't think so.

LD: It was a pretty brand new place when you saw it the first time, wasn't it?

Kolarik: Yeah, well, it was a show place even in them days. But I don't think they done very much. I haven't been there for, oh, several years. Well, the last time I was up there why they were showing me the grounds, and I don't think there's any difference. Oh, they got that one house where the caretaker lives and then they have a greenhouse there. Of course, I remarked about the flowers on the tables, you know, and they says, "Well, we have them replaced everyday." To me, I thought that was some big deal.

LD: They still do that.

Kolarik: My wife worked for Kramer and Son Florist, and my gosh, you go in there and buy a little bouquet with a couple of dollars, and they had them all over the whole place.

LD: Right. In reference to people like the Douglasses, who were, when you were growing up, who were the people that were just understood to be the leaders in the community?

Kolarik: Oh, well.

LD: Besides George Douglas and. . .

Kolarik: There was Douglasses, you know, and the Witwers, and the Adams family, oh, let's see who else, oh, the Dows people.

Dows people, they were kind of the big shots. Old Colonel lived on First Avenue and about Eighth Street--Seventh Street. It's right on the corner. His father lived on the other side of the street. He was quite a pomp, that fellow, Old Colonel Dows.

LD: Did you know him personally?

Kolarik: Well, like all kids, I knew who he was, but that's all it amounted to.

LD: You mentioned the Adams family. Who were the Adams family?

Kolarik: Well, I don't know what their business was, but I went to school with the boy, and I don't remember what they done.

LD: But they were very well off?

Kolarik: Yeah. They were quite big and then the Witwers, of course. They were in the wholesale grocery business. I went to school --they were my classmates. Believe it or not, George Witwer and I were great friends, and his brother, Lou. They were twins. And believe it or not, I used to work arithmetic for them and the used to feed me chocolates.

LD: That's a pretty good relationship.

Kolarik: Good deal.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: Yeah. They were wholesale groceries, you know. They could get the chocolates.

LD: They could get the goods.

Kolarik: And I could work the arithmetic for them, and we went up there to Polk School. Yeah, old George and I used to get quite a laugh out of that in the later years. Then he had a--used to be Louey and Persey. They called him George later on, but we call him Persey at that time. They were twins, and Louey, he went down into Oklahoma, and he married into an oil family down there. I did see him several times after he moved down there, but he used to come up once in a while and visit with his brother, and we were awful good friends for, oh, all our lives practically.

LD: You also had mentioned a story when we were talking after the tape was finished last time about Farmer's Market, and a fellow you knew named Charlie Miner who carried things to, I presume, to Farmer's Market. I believe he took hay to the market or am I remembering that wrong?

Kolarik: Now, let's go with that again so I get it straight.

LD: The name that I wrote down was Charlie Miner, and I'm relating it to Farmer's Market. I thought we were talking about Farmer's Market.

Kolarik: Well, Farmer's Market, you know, used to start from First Avenue west and go clear down to F Avenue. We used to bring in the rig out there, and we'd back into the curb, and they'd be one right next together. You had no particular place—it got any place you could. . .

LD: No round house. It was just a long. . .

Kolarik: No. They got a place down at the lower end for that now, but we didn't have that. They started in at First Avenue and go all the way down to F Avenue on First Street west, and you'd take whatever place you could get. You got there early, you got closer to the top and so on so. No, there used to be 40, 50, or 60 rigs down there two or three times a week.

LD: Was this when you were growing up or when you were. . .

Kolarik: Oh, I was married all ready. See I. . .

LD: How far back does Farmer's Market go in your memory?

Kolarik: Well, I don't think it run very long, maybe four years at the very most. And then they got so that they got, well, I guess they figured it got kind of messy, and they pushed it down to the lower end.

LD: Okay, but this was when you were married?

Kolarik: Yeah. We used to go to the market there quite a lot.

LD: What did they sell in those days?

Kolarik: At that market?

LD: Yes.

Kolarik: Ah, they had a rule there you couldn't sell anything only that what you raised in Iowa or in the vicinity. We used to work a different scheme when we run that market garden out there for, oh, I don't know for a couple of years I guess that we-- market I had them six acres. My wife used to go take the horse and go down to the market down there, and I used to take the little Model T truck I had and I'd go around and make the grocery stores.

LD: Okay. So you'd get everything you needed and. . .

Kolarik: Yeah, go around the, of course, I don't think they allow you to do that in Cedar Rapids anymore now. But in those days, you know, you could go around from grocer to grocer. Well, you'd maybe take a half a bushel or a bushel of this or some other stuff, you know, beans, or whatever you had.

LD: And you would sell it?

Kolarik: Oh, sure.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: That's what you're in business for. So we made a living that way. I was looking up the other day, I got a book of records where I used to mark off the records on a book how many feet of each kind of stuff I had on that six acres and then the amount of seed, and how much I got off the thing. It was a complete record of. ..

LD: It would help you from year to year to decide what you wanted, yeah.

Kolarik: Yeah. If you get something that wasn't so good, well, do away with it. Do something else.

LD: You would have been here in the community when the Lyman-Stark building collapsed.

Kolarik: Yeah. I had a brother-in-law working on that thing, but he wasn't in it. He was on the outside, but he was working on that building. He worked in the building trades. He married my wife's sister. But he was all right. I was pretty concerned about him.

LD: Do you know what caused it to collapse?

Kolarik: Well, they said that they built it too fast, that they built up too much on the top before the bottom got ripe enough to hold it, and the whole thing come down. No, that was quite a catastrophe.

LD: Were people killed in that collapse?

Kolarik: Well, seems like there was one or two, not very many people killed. I guess, fortunately, there wasn't nobody in the building, only one or two, I guess. I think that one or two people got killed. One I'm sure of, but I'm not sure of the other one.

LD: In 1921 the Public Library had a murder that occurred in it. Do you have memories of that event?

Kolarik: Yeah. That fellow run up the stairs and got shot there. I don't know what happened. I don't know how he got--something went haywire, and he finally went into the library and went upstairs, and they went after him up there and quite a shooting match.

LD: In those days was there much violence in the community?

Kolarik: There was what?

LD: Much violence in the community.

Kolarik: Well, I suppose there was. I suppose there was just as much there is today only the town was smaller and you didn't notice it as much. I don't think it's any worse now than it was then. It's just they blow it up more now than they used to, and, of course, it's sensational now and in those days it wasn't sensation as much. I think when we were kids we done a lot of things that today I suppose they'd put us on first pages, shooting up the town or something.

LD: And I think there was a lot more freedom for youngsters in those days. A number of people have said that to me.

Kolarik: You ain't a kidding. Boy, I. . .

LD: When World War I occurred, now I'm shifting now just to some national things that had to have an affect on the community, you would have been 20 years old or a little younger than that.

Kolarik: Yeah, not very old.

LD: Were you involved in all of the patriotic war fever at all? What are your memories of that time?

Kolarik: Well, I think all the involvement we was in a--I think we'd get patriotic and get a flag and walk up and down the street or something in a parade. That's about all.

LD: You weren't tempted to sign up and go over?

Kolarik: No. Probably tempted, but Dad says no. I think that was the whole thing.

LD: Did it have an affect on any of your friends? Were there a lot of people that you know that enlisted during the World War I period?

- Kolarik: No. In First World War I didn't have very many people that went into the Army. Of course, we were all young, you know, and so most of them were too young.
- LD: Yeah.
- Kolarik: No. I don't think I lost anybody in the first one. I can't remember.
- LD: Do you have memories of Armistice Day as being a very big day?
- Kolarik: Yeah. I got drunker than a hoot owl.
- LD: It had an effect on you then.
- Kolarik: It sure did.
- LD: What happened on Armistice Day? Was it a regular work day? Was it a . . .
- Kolarik: Yeah. It was a work day. I think I had a cow and I was putting her out on a stake before I went down to work. I got down there and I found a fellow by the name of Jim Plumb. He was a cigar maker. He had two boys that I went to school with, and he was a great drinker, and he swore off, and he

was a teetotaler for a good many years, a fine, nice, up-standing, young gentleman. I knew him well--the family. When I got downtown, he was drunker than a hoot owl. He says celebrate. Well, that's a good idea.

LD: Were lots of people doing it that day though, weren't they? I mean, it was a very. . .

Kolarik: Well, it was quite a thing, you know, to get it over with, you know. People had people in there and what not and things were kind of rough, but, oh, I don't know. I hope they never have another one. It's not very pleasant. Even just live through it is bad enough. To go through it is even worse.

LD: Well, and of course, you went though World War II as well.

Kolarik: Yeah, one and two both. Well. . .

LD: You didn't have to have a family member go off to World War II either, did you? You were pretty lucky there.

Kolarik: Yeah, I did, my son.

LD: Oh, your son was in the second World War?

- Kolarik: Yeah. He went in the Navy. He didn't get hurt there. He got part of his ear tore, but they patched or fixed it up there. I don't know which one it is any more.
- LD: So he was involved in action.
- Kolarik: Oh, yeah. He definitely was.
- LD: Do you have memories of—I know in World War II the community—the whole nation was affected by the shortages of goods and things. Was that true in World War I as well? Were there things you couldn't get that you needed for. . .
- Kolarik: World War I, I think, was worse than World War II was. We had ration books. Well, you couldn't get nothing, you know, flour and sugar and all that stuff. Well, they carried it on in World War II, but I don't think it got quite as serious as it did in World War I. In fact, I don't think it affected us quite so much as it did in World War I because World War I the town was pretty primitive yet.
- LD: Yeah.
- Kolarik: It wasn't like it is in World War II. Of course, in World War II it hurt a little more cause I had a kid over there in the Navy, and they bombarded him, and I didn't like that too well.

LD: There's a lot of fear involved and concern, I'm sure. I am going to ask you about prohibition, and your memories of. . .

Kolarik: Well. . .

LD: The way that people survived. How did you get a drink in the '20's if you wanted to drink in Cedar Rapids?

Kolarik: Well, I think I was in the service most of the time then, and my neighbors down below, they used to buy beer in Chicago. I roomed over on Fifth Avenue and Randolph Street, right on the corner. Right across the road there was a liquor store, and liquor store down there were a little bit different from what your liquor store in you mind is. It had bottles all the way around the counter. You couldn't drink it in there. You could go in there, and you'd go in, and the lady would come here with the market basket, and she'd buy a bottle of this and put it in the basket, just like buying groceries. Couldn't drink it in there, but I could drink it in there. I happened to know the proprietor, and he was a frind of mine. We would go in the back room and drink.

LD: Okay.

Kolarik: And he comes one day and he says, "You know a lot of people in Cedar Rapids?" I says, "Practically everybody." "Well," he says, "I get an awful big order--\$400 or \$500 a month." Of course, it was dry out here, you know.

LD: Right. This was even before prohibition, yeah.

Kolarik: And it was dry out here, and he says, "I get quite an order--\$400 or \$500 a month--from a fellow out in Cedar Rapids. What does he do with that?" I says, "Who is it?" "Well, his name is Zikeroth." And I says, "I don't remember." I says, "Have you got a bill here? How does he spell it?" I says, "That not Zikeroth. That's Secora." I says, "That guy is a banker at Merchant's National Bank, Otto." He was a big time fellow. I don't know whether he was president or cashier or something. He says, "What does he do with all that stuff?" "God, how much does he buy?" "Oh," he says, "\$300, \$400, \$500 a month." He says, "I get orders for." I says, "Well, God, I know him well." I says, "In fact, I do banking with him." I says, "I'm going to have to look into that." So when I come home, I got home I went into the bank, and I says to Otto, I says, "How's the booze business?" He says, "What do you know about the booze business?" I says, "Not very much." Of course, it was dry here. "Well," I says, "I happened to walk into a friend of mine that sells a lot of wholesale liquor, and he says you was buying \$400 or \$500 worth of stuff every month." "Oh, God,"

says, "you know what I do?" He says, "Those fellows, Bohemian fellows down on the lower end, they can't order, they can't write good enough to order. So they bring their money up here, and I order the whole damn thing, and I have it sent to them down the freight hall, and they go down, and they get it. I don't have nothing to do with it, only send the order in." I says, "Well, I wondered about that." I says, "A guy says \$400 or \$500 worth of booze. I was wondering how come he could get rid of all that." "Oh," he says, "that. . ."

LD: Thought maybe he was a bootlegger.

Kolarik: Yeah. I thought he was bootlegging. "No," he says. "That's what I do. I just pay for it for them and get it out of the bank and send a draft in there and get the order. They can't write, and they come in here, and they want me to write an order for them."

LD: So Cedar Rapids was dry in those days.

Kolarik: Oh, definitely.

LD: And that was even before prohibition years?

Kolarik: Well, before prohibition we had such idea that you could have a saloon for--what the heck was it? Every, couldn't have been

every 1,000. Yeah, I guess it was for every 1,000 inhabitants or something like that.

LD: Oh. So that's how they regulated. They only allowed so many saloons then.

Kolarik: For so many people, and then they cut it down, and they became only about four or five saloons, and I knew them all well.

LD: Can you tell me what their names were?

Kolarik: There was one on First Avenue there. I don't know what they called that one, and then they had one back of the Roosevelt Hotel. You had to go in the alley to go in there, you know. The sign was "Yes". That's what they called it. They called it "Yes." And there was one on First Avenue and one on First Street on the corner and then Wayne Garlander had one way out on F Avenue and must have been around Fifth or Sixth Street. They had kind of a whole block in there like a park, and they had their home there, and they had the saloon there.

LD: So to get permission to have a saloon was a hard thing to do.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. You had—I don't know how many thousands of dollars you had to pay for a license to have a saloon, and they

finally got it down so that they could only have, I think they have to have one for every 1,000 people or something, so if it's a little town there's only 29 saloons.

LD: I presume there weren't too many women in those saloons either.

Kolarik: Well, all the years that—I can't say with any pride that I used to go around to saloons and buy liquor in there when I was 15--16 years old. I never saw a woman in the saloon in my life.

LD: Yeah. It was a very different kind of a social environment and, yeah.

Kolarik: That's different there now. Oh, yeah. If a woman went into the saloon, boy, that was taboo. That wasn't so good.

LD: Questions have been easy up to now; I'm going to ask you a hard question. I like to ask people that I talk to what they think was special about Cedar Rapids or why you would have chosen to spend your whole life here and whether or not you think the community has changed. Now, of course, you don't live in town now. Whether some of those things still exist in this community that were important to you when you were here growing up and your early adult year?

Kolarik: Well, personally I've been in a lot of towns in my day, big ones and little ones, and I never found one in my life that was comparable with Cedar Rapids. Especially in the older days.

LD: Yes.

Kolarik: Not so much now. It's got so that it's kind of cliquish, you know, and didn't used to be that way. You went down the lower end; you knew everybody. You went over in Time Check; you knew everybody. You go downtown and walk down the street and now you don't know anybody. That comes from a town getting bigger. When a town of 20-22,000 people, well, I think Cedar Rapids--smallest I remember it I think it was around 22,000 people. Waterloo was about 16,000 and there was always a big, old rivalry between them two towns.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: Still is, I guess.

LD: Yeah.

Kolarik: But I've been in a lot of towns, and it's friendlier. Well, you might say that it's friendlier for the simple reason that you know more people here. You get into a town like Chicago, you

know, you live right next door in the room right next door to a guy. You've been there all your life, and you never know what his name is. I know that. I've spent six or seven years in there. I wouldn't live in that town if they give it to me and put a fence around it and kept everybody out I didn't like, I wouldn't take it. I don't like that town. Oh, I like it to go in there and visit or something like that, but I don't. . .

LD: So it was really the relationships between people here that were important to you.

Kolarik: Oh, yeah. Definitely.

LD: You knew everybody, and you felt comfortable, and yeah.

Kolarik: I knew everybody. I go down--you'd be surprised, I can't say that I was such a popular guy, and of course, I played a lot of baseball, of course, you get so, and you go out and everybody, older people and younger people, say "Hello, Joe," and shake hands with you. People well, like Van Vecten and Shaefer, for instance, banker and his grandfather. In fact, his grandfather come out and visited me in the shop one day, and I says, "Well, Mr. Van, you're going to have to ride in the Ford pick-up. That's the only way I got to. . ." "Oh, that's all right." So go downtown to Security Savings Bank and let him out right in the noon hour, you know.

LD: Made quite an impression.

Kolarik: He didn't mind it.

LD: So even the people who were perceived as having lots of money and being the leaders in the community, they didn't have that distance.

Kolarik: No.

LD: That you sometimes feel now, yeah.

Kolarik: Well, I don't know. I used to make a brag out that I knew about 60 percent of the people in town by their first name, and I probably did. But you don't do that anymore now, you know, and it changes the perspective of the whole thing.

