

**Transcription By: Janell Willie**  
**History 310**  
**Spring 2001 Semester**

### **Abstract**

This interview takes place on February 21, 1983 between Minnie A. Odlund and interviewer, Lynn Wilkinson. Lynn encourages Minnie to talk about her past, and the people in her past. Minnie describes her relationship with her first husband, Sam Odlund, in some detail. Her account of their life together includes testimonies, family stories, and references to larger historical events. At times Minnie sounds tearful when she explains how she met her husband, and describes their life together.

Minnie Odlund also talks about her own family history, discussing such topics as her father, Daniel Steen, where they grew up, and what they did for a living. She talks about her adopted children, when they came to live with her and Sam, how they were, etc. Minnie makes a lot of references to the work of God in her and her husband's life, and attests to God's goodness and faithfulness at their Evangelical Free Church.

During the interview a new voice enters the scene; Bill Johnson is one of Minnie's relatives. (He calls her "Grandma.") He enlightens the conversation with specific dates and new stories. In their conversation places like Norway, Enchant, Deer Park, Bethany, and Fort Langley come up. Also, there is a short account of Minnie's friendship with Carl Fosmark. All in all, Lynn's interview with Minnie and Bill is an insightful glance at one very blessed life!

**Oral History Transcript****1:0:00**

Interviewer: This is--

Minnie: (unintelligible) just have a word of prayer first (whispering)

Interviewer: --this is February 21, 1983, and I'm with Minnie Anina Odlund; she will be the narrator on this tape, and my name is Lynn Wilkinson. I'll be the interviewer. And Minnie Odlund and I are just going to bow our heads and have a word of prayer before this *uh* taping session begins.

Minnie: Should we do that?

Interviewer: Yes. Would you like to lead Minnie? In prayer?

Minnie: Father, we're so glad that you know all about our past and our--

Interviewer: yes God--

Minnie: --our present time.

Interviewer: um-hm

Minnie: And you know that we want to be a blessing for your sake and for your cause.

Interviewer: Yes

Minnie: So as we talk today may we know that the Holy Spirit is leading us and guiding us--

Interviewer: Yes

Minnie: --causing us to remember and to give thee the honour and grace

Interviewer: um-hm

Minnie: --for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Interviewer: Amen—em. Minnie Odlund is living at 22 Major Street in Fort Langley and *uh* before we get started on *uh* your-- the role that you and your husband played in the Evangelical Free Church, Minnie, could we talk a little bit about your home life first of all where you were born and, and your parents? (laughs) What was your father's name?

Minnie: Daniel B. Steen

Interviewer: Okay, and what kind of a man was he?

Minnie: He was a man that loved the Lord, and--loved to give his testimonies to the Lord, and in our early years here we first came from Youngstown why, he did quite a bit of, should I call it preaching?

Interviewer: Um-hm

Minnie: Talking to the people about the Lord.

Interviewer: Was that here in Fort Langley?

Minnie: No, that was in Enchant.

Interviewer: In Enchant. Oh yes.

Minnie: That's in Alberta, where we came to when we came from the homestead, but of course the homest-- we had the homestead so long then that it was our home -- our house; we had sold it then and moved to Enchant.

Interviewer: So you *ah* were telling me just a minute ago that you were born in Deer Park, Wisconsin (both say Wisconsin together) uh-huh, and your mother's name was Thrina(??) and then you and your family left when you were sixteen.

Minnie: No, I was only thirteen.

Interviewer: Oh, was that thirteen?

Minnie: Yeah.

Interviewer: You left Deer Park and you came to Youngstown, Alberta.

Minnie: To homestead.

Interviewer: To homestead.

Minnie: Um-hm.

Interviewer: And so that's the home that you really called home for so many years

Minnie: Well that's all we had to, yeah (laugh).

Interviewer: (laughs) Okay *um*, what about your brothers and sisters?

## 2:0:00

Minnie: I had *uh* three brothers and three sisters. We were all living then but they're all gone now excepting my sister just a little older than me, and I'm the younger one--youngest one.

Interviewer: Are you the youngest in the family? (unintelligible)

Minnie: (Whisper) Baby.

Interviewer: (laughs) Nice to be a baby though. (laughs) Okay and um now you're uh living in Fort Langley and uh I should ask you when you met your husband? Uh.

Minnie: That was in 19 -- was it 17—er-- I can't remember so long ago. (laughs)

Interviewer: Um-hm, what were the circumstances? Of your courtship and your marriage and--? (laughs)

Minnie: Well, just like ordin--other people, you know, you fall in love and you get married, but uh remarkable thing about him was that he had been really used of the Lord to start the church in Enchant, the Evangelical Free Church.

Interviewer: Um-hm, did, when you say he was willing to be used of the Lord, did he have other opportunities then that he--

Minnie: --well he was a farmer.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: He farmed quite largely.

Interviewer: Um-hm, I see. Okay. But now, you said you were married twice. Is this your first--second--first sec--

Minnie: No this is my first husband yes--

Interviewer: --first husband um-hm, what was his name?

Minnie: Sam.

Interviewer: Samuel Odlund--

Minnie: --no not Samuel, just Sam. (sound of pencil scratching)

Interviewer: Sam. And eh -- I'm really interested in what you did, you and he did together, and, to start the church?

Minnie: Well I, he had already done it when I met him.

Interviewer: Oh he had eh? Was he a pastor when you met him?

Minnie: No, no, he's just a farmer (voice rising).

Interviewer: Yeah?

Minnie: When I was visiting out here in '16 I-- all my relations were around Enchant, which was about 135 miles from our homestead home, and *eh* so I went to see them all, and while I was there they told me about this preaching--preacher-farmer; he was the one that was helping them all, you know, and finances.

Interviewer: Oh yes--

Minnie: Well I never met him. One day, can I tell this?

Interviewer: Sure you can. I'd love to hear it. (laughs)

### 3:0:00

Minnie: We had bought-- father had bought a farm--I'm sorta going back--in Enchant and it was right across the road from a family that-- he was the one that used to pastor the people there, the Christians, there was a group of Christians there you see--

Interviewer: Um-hm, um-hm.

Minnie: And *uh*, this man he was he was the one, this-- pastored them and they were having the Ladies Aid there one day and my sister and I, we went over to the Ladies Aid, and you know in those days the ladies (sound of airplane) couldn't drive themselves, so the husbands had to take them to WM, to women's meeting and he, this Sam Odlund, he was there. I didn't know that. But anyway, when my sister and I came there, why the place was so full 'cause it was full of men and women and everything, we couldn't find a room in the living room-- we had to go to the bedroom and this lady had a curtains across the so we couldn't see anybody in there. But however, the, they had this service there and *uh*, they were having a wonderful time. We were feeling it (both laugh) and there was somebody got up and gave a testimony and what he said impressed me so much that I peeked through the curtains a little bit to see who it was (both laugh), but I didn't recognize him. He was a young man, but he was telling--may I tell the little story he told because I have never forgotten it--

Interviewer: --sure. Good. That would be lovely. (both speaking at once)

Minnie: He told of a place where there was a group of fishing men. They had gone out to fish this day and while they were gone a bad storm came up, and they *eh* didn't come home. It got late and dark, and the people decided to go down to the, to the edge of the water you know, and and build fire, bonfires so that these fishermen could see it out there on the ocean (Interviewer: um-hm). But they-- [third person enters room] should I stop?

Interviewer: Keep going--no, just go ahead and finish the story.

Bill: Can I make a cup of coffee for you both?

Interviewer: We're on tape right now, Bill. (Bill: Sorry.) Uh, but that's okay though, I'd love one, (Bill: would you?) I just thought I'd better let you know (Bill: yep)

(interviewer laughs). Thank you.

### 4:0:00

Minnie: This isn't on the tape.

Interviewer: This is on the tape. It goes right on (laughs). But you were right in-- saying the men were building bonfires-- (sound of door closing)

Minnie: --yes, and they kept building it, the bonfires, and it got later and later, and they got tired of building bonfires and waiting there. I suppose they put their fires up right and then went off. Excepting one lady, and she was a newlywed, and her husband was one of the men out on the water you know, and she couldn't go home with her loved one out there on the waters. So she kept on building her fire all night long. Towards the morning she noticed a boat coming in and you know, it was her husband. And he told her that it was her light burning that had kept him knowing where he was going. And what I could never forget, about this story was what Sam said about the story. He said, "that's just like us. As Christians we want to keep our light burning. There is somebody that will see it and wouldn't of made shore if we hadn't been faithful." And he tried to be faithful. Well I didn't meet him that time.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: But later on I did meet him. Well let me go back just a little bit. No--yes I have to go back a little bit. To tell about the beginning of the work in Enchant 'cause they had started it when we came back again to Youngs--Enchant after my visit there and gone home. And they had built a church.

Interviewer: Ah yes, um-hm.

Minnie: And they told us, Sam Odlund, Sam told me himself, how he had-- had an errand to go to Minnesota.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: And he went to Minneapolis to, because he had a friend from Norway that lived in Minneapolis. He had an office there because he was publishing a paper called a Norwegian bood or (?), which really meant, "A Message and a Greeting."

Interviewer: Oh?

Minnie: And so he thought he would go there and find out if he could be told where he could find a school to go to, because he wanted to go to a Bible School.

### 5:0:00

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: I'm afraid I'm jumbling this up pretty bad.

Interviewer: No, that's fine eh, so this is in Minneapolis then?

Minnie: In Minneapolis.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: When he got there, the, his friend was not at home. But his daughter was at home. And she told him that she knew of one just a few blocks away.

Interviewer: And what one was that about?

Minnie: And he went to that school. And when he got there, why you know he spoke to the lady – let me jump just a little bit – the second year his brother John went along, and he met the one that received Sam when he came, so, and they were married.

Interviewer: Oh for heaven's sakes (laughs).

Minnie: And that was his first wife. Well anyway, she said she was sure he could go there, but just wait a little while and then the professor would be out. You see they didn't have so many students and everything in those days.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Minnie: And after a while he did come, and Sam told him he wanted to go to school, he wanted to learn the Bible a little more. "Oh you can go here," he said. Sam started to go to school there and he thought it was a Lutheran school, (interviewer laughs) and he was there a few days before he found out, was told-- he heard the students talking about the Evangelical Free Church. But he'd never heard that name before. (interviewer laughs) So he asked about it and they said "Sure that was Evangelical Free Church." (interviewer laughs) Small world, isn't it?

Interviewer: So that was his connection.

Minnie: Anyway, he enjoyed himself so much, people and everybody. And so that when spring came and he had to go home, (airplane noise) he wanted the Professor to come out to Enchant when the summer came and the holidays, and organize these group of Christians that were there into a church, Evangelical Free Church. And that's what happened. And by the time we came, in the fall--sometime in 1917, well here they had the church built.

Interviewer: So did he stay at school in Minneapolis then for a year--

Minnie: Two terms.

Interviewer: Oh, two terms. Two semesters--

Minnie: The second time his brother went along. Well anyway, that's what had happened. And later on Sam and I were married.

## 6:0:00

Interviewer: When did you actually meet him? Was it that--

Minnie: It was one day in church (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) Did he single you out or did you single him out I wonder? (laughs)

Minnie: (laughs) I don't know! I don't know how it works! (both speaking at once)

(laughs) We met and we were married in '18.

Interviewer: 1918?

Minnie: 1918. And in the summer we had to -- yeah in the summer -- we didn't have any pastor, permanent pastor, so there was a school teacher in Enchant he was the principal and he was a Nazarene, and he told us that he was sure that we could have one of their preachers, you know, come out and hold tent meetings, and we did. And *uh* he used to tell us-- and you know I was saved when I was a little girl back in Wisconsin.

Interviewer: Yeah, I wanted to ask you about that. What, how old were? Just a minute; I want to turn this over. [tape cuts] So how old were you when you were saved?

Minnie: It was about twelve years old I imagine, or something, shortly before we came out. But I hadn't stayed true to the, I'd stayed true but not going on, because when we lived on the homestead there was actually nothing to go to.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: When they-- we first came here there was nothing, no school house no nothing. I never went a day to school since I was thirteen years old because we never had a school to go to. But anyway -- I lost myself --

Interviewer: The *eh* well you were saying *em*, it was 1918 and in the summer (Minnie: unintelligible)

Minnie: --when this lady came up and had some, eh, tent meetings.

Interviewer: Oh yes, right, yeah.

Minnie: And I was saying, went back to say that I wasn't really staying true to the Lord.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: And, but I came back to the Lord, but I never could seem to get that assurance again.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: I tried so hard--

Interviewer: --as a teenager and--

Minnie: --when we came to Enchant--

Interviewer: --yeah--

Minnie: --we had services to go to. And this lady she, she told us that you could know that you were saved, and she also told us that there was a second blessing to have.

Well you know none of us preachers' folks could get it, I don't know why?

**7:0:00**

Interviewer: (laughing)

Minnie: But I remember when it was, it was Saturday, and the next day was the last day of the tent meetings, and boy did the people come out.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: And I thought I was alone that day; we were married then and I thought I'm going to go to the bedroom and I'm going to ask the Lord to give me that second blessing.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: Bill, we're still at it.

Interviewer: That's okay. Now, and then what happened? Did you get down on--

Minnie: --I don't know; it was as if he told me "You never had the first. How can you get the second?" (Interviewer: yeah) Then I got desperate then I told the Lord, "You've got to tell me Lord; I'm like Jacob I won't leave you till you tell me," and all of a sudden it seems he took me by the hand and he said, "Your sins are forgiven and your name is written in the Lamb's book of life." (airplane sounds)

Interviewer: So you already had that (unintelligible) for sure--

Minnie: Oh I never was so happy in my life, the joy of the Lord is the most wonderful thing.

Interviewer: And did you share that with your husband at that point?

Minnie: Oh yes.

Interviewer: And had he felt the same way *er*—

Minnie: Well he had more or less, he said that he saw one night as he'd gone to bed he was pleading with the Lord, a hand writing, "Your sins are forgiven," or something like that. I can't remember just exactly what it was.

Interviewer: Um-hm. He thought he saw that, yeah, and that was his answer. That's very touching.

Minnie: The Lord has been very very good to us, and even today I can say, "My sins are forgiven." (both speaking at once)

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: Full of faith, as Bill knows.

Interviewer: (laughs) Thank you very much Bill, this is very nice. Now in 1918 when you were married, and that was the end of the war, *eh* did that effect your lives? Was there work in Enchant?

Minnie: We never had any trouble.

Interviewer: No, there wasn't eh?

Minnie: After a while you know it got pretty much of a shortage at the end of it. But the Lord provided so wonderfully.

Interviewer: Do you take cream in your coffee?

Minnie: Yes I do. (knocking sound)

Interviewer: And then tell me about your family now, you, you adopted six children? (laughs)

Minnie: (whispers something) (inaudible)

Interviewer: So you have, how many are alive today? Of your children?

Minnie: All of them excepting the one boy. (airplane sounds)

Interviewer: Oh really? So you still have a large family? Um-hm. Tell me a little bit about your, the family that you and Sam, uh, raised.

**8:0:20**

Minnie: We had so many children. We took care of so many, but they were just temporary. So when we got these that we could keep for our own, legally adopted them. It was such a difference.

Interviewer: It made a big difference, in your life then.

Minnie: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were you still farming then, was he kinda a pastor-farmer at the time, or just a farmer?

Minnie: Just a farmer.

Interviewer: (laughs) What did you farm?

Minnie: I used to-- grains, and different kinds of-- (unintelligible) we had a-- one-year I know we had over 2000 lambs, you know. I don't know how many quarters of lamb. It was in the thirties. (unintelligible) I forgot.

Interviewer: Thirty quarters, that's a lot of lamb. And eh what about the depression days do you remember? Did that hit you hard as a family? You were a large family then.

Minnie: No, it didn't. The Lord always provided, but I did used to think that Sam was pretty liberal in his giving to the Lord's work because he was always giving. And I wondered sometimes, what are we going to live on? Until the Lord showed me, that it's the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, and not what we give that makes us poor, when we give to the Lord. But really its what we keep for ourselves. That really belongs to him. That makes us poor (whispering). Poor, poor, poor, poor (both laugh).

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you believe in the law of reciprocity? I think that's the right way of saying it?

Minnie: What do you mean?

Interviewer: Where ah, everything that you give comes back to you tenfold?

Minnie: I don't know. I never reckoned with that. Nor do I give the tenth. I give what I can. Because, you know, I had Sam's will broken, when Sam died, because he hadn't willed it the way that I wanted it (laughs). So it was all divided among the children there.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: And eh, I hadn't had the abundance, (unintelligible) but I had enough. And I trust the Lord to bless it as I use it for him.

Interviewer: That's very nice. I'm just wondering about you yourself; you've said a lot about Sam. Where did you fit into his work in the church? Did you find a ministry-- (both talking at once)

**9:0:42**

Minnie: --well I was the Sunday school superintendent, I was Sunday school teacher (laughs); always busy.

Interviewer: Always with the children too.

Minnie: And WMS, I was President, not to be in with my sister-in-law, Don's wife, she was President, and I was vice-president. I always worked in the Lord's work. These are the longest time that I've stayed home from church. Ever since I started to go to church. I mean this time right now.

Interviewer: Um-hm. Is that 'cause you're not feeling well or--

Minnie: Yeah, my heart I guess.

Interviewer: Just keeps you close to home then.

Minnie: I was in the hospital you know for-- my doctor told me he'd let me stay in there for a week, but he only let me stay in there for, a little over, oh about Monday to Friday.

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Minnie: But I don't know; I think I'll have to go back again pretty soon (laughs).

Interviewer: Oh dear.

Minnie: Unless the Lord touches me.

Interviewer: And then when-- would you like to stop this for now?

Minnie: (whispers something) (unintelligible)

Interviewer: Sure. [Tape clicks off]

Interviewer: We can start with that again. You were saying it wasn't all roses? (laughs)

Minnie: No, because you are a Christian, doesn't mean that you're not troubled, have heartaches, and disappointments in life. You have a Saviour. You can go to him (cough), he's always the same. We change, our feelings go up and down, but he is the same. And the same today; Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today and forever. You know, we were on a trip to Norway-- well I've been there three trips. And the first time I was there they made me have to speak at the services they had. Carl Fosmark was along with us.

Interviewer: Oh.

Minnie: And they, he would speak every service, and him and I would sing together. Oh they just loved it. We'd sing these old songs that they had sang when they had a revival and these were songs that we sang when we had a revival, but they're in Norwegian.

**10:0:58**

You know that our church was just Norwegian to begin with.

Interviewer: Um...that's right.

Minnie: There was English in the evening, in Enchant. But Norwegian in the day, in the morning you know. Course we had a Sunday school too.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: Yes, and (sigh) I was going to tell you something, Oh yes, when I had to speak, I remember one sermon I spoke on, it's on Norwegian but it's the same. First I took that

verse in ah, oh my memory, it says that, “for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: “But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.” And he says in the same chapter, “and I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Interviewer: Those are lovely promises.

Minnie: Isn't it good to have those promises?

Interviewer: Um-hm. And, and what was (door slamming)-- Carl Fosmark em I know he had a lot to do with the church in Enchant.

Minnie: Oh yes.

Interviewer: Did he work beside your husband there? Or--he was superintendent at that time wasn't he?

Minnie: No, no, he was a young man when he was saved. It's very interesting that this book to tell--to hear--to read about Carl.

Bill: Can I pour you coffee?

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Bill: Absolutely.

Interviewer: I *eh*, did *em* a tape with Carl Fosmark--

Minnie: Yes?

Interviewer: --a little while ago, and *eh* I didn't realize that there was a connection between you and him, you know. So tell me a little bit about *eh* how you knew him.

Minnie: --well he grew up as a young boy there you know. It is very interesting if you read it in this book.

Interviewer: Yes, I know his history, yeah, what I was getting at was what did you do together in the church? Or how did you become such— (sounds of dishes clattering for several minutes)

Minnie: He wasn't there so much in the younger years, he was going to school, he went through Bible School too you know.

Interviewer: Um-hm. Same one your husband went to.

Minnie: Same one my husband went to, yeah. And *eh*, but then when he was a full-fledged pastor, he, well he used to come out to Enchant too, on his holidays. He'd always spend his holidays in Enchant. I remember so well his first message that he gave in Enchant; he was a student home for Christmas.

**11:0:48**

He spoke about the home in Bethany; oh it was so good.

Interviewer: The home in Bethany? Can you remember a little bit of it, or--?

Minnie: Well he spoke about how nice it was to come home, and then how that Jesus had come to Bethany, you know, to Mary and Martha.

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: And what a blessing he was in their home. So he is in our homes too.

Interviewer: So that's nice. Yeah.

Minnie: I can remember many messages he used to speak. He was so good. You know the church used to be full when he was there. He's a relation of his.

Bill: He married my Dad's sister.

Interviewer: Is that right *eh*?

Bill: Yeah, his first wife. She passed away--two children were born. He was my Uncle Carl then (both laugh).

Interviewer: We've been joined by Bill Johnson just now. I just put that on the tape, so.

Bill: They'll know why-- that you're on.

Interviewer: Um, and you went to Norway with Carl then?

Minnie: First time that we went to Norway we went by boat, and eh he went along with us. Sam insisted upon him coming along with us. He could meet these Norwegians there. Ha!

Interviewer: And speak in the tongue, well I guess you all spoke Norwegian--

Minnie: --he spoke Norwegian very good too you know. No trouble at all getting along.

Interviewer: And so eh did you visit relatives and eh--

Minnie: I beg your pardon?

Interviewer: Did you visit relatives there or?

Minnie: Oh yes, oh yes, lots of them. But I didn't get to go north the first time, where my people came from. They come way north.

Interviewer: I see.

Minnie: My brother said they came as far north as Galdhöpiggen Peak(??).

Interviewer: (laughs) Right on the top of the mountains eh? (laughs)

Minnie: Yeah, but Sam's people they came from around, well not too far away from Stavanger (??)

Interviewer: So did you enjoy did you enjoy visiting?

Minnie: Oh did I ever. Now the first time I went with Sam by boat; the second time I went with John, he suddenly passed away then.

Interviewer: Is John your second husband then?

Minnie: Yes.

Interviewer: I should ask you about John, and what was his last name?

Minnie: Odlund.

Interviewer: Oh Odlund was the--

Bill: He was the brother of Sam Odlund, the brother of Sam Odlund.

Interviewer: Oh for heaven's sakes.

## 12:0:14

Minnie: Yes. Sam went away, I mean Sam died first, and then John's wife died. They were living out here at the coast.

Interviewer: Um-hm. And so Mary and John--

Minnie: And then we got married, we were left the two of us, and we got married and we went to Norway on plane, and what a wonderful trip we had.

Interviewer: What year was that?

Minnie: Ah, Lord knows.

Interviewer: In the sixties?

Minnie: Sixty, sixty-two I think it was, or three? I'm not definite, I forget.

Interviewer: That doesn't matter, just-- (laughs)

Minnie: Well anyway it was wonderful on that plane. You know I just couldn't sleep at nights. It took us more than one day to go you know, like that. Now you can go there in a few hours. But anyway, I remember I couldn't sleep. I had to sit in the window and

watch, and oh it was beautiful. I remember we could see the stars so plainly up there, the Dipper, you know, it showed up so plain. And it wasn't long and we could see the dawning coming. Oh it was so gorgeous, and after a while here comes the sun. And I started singing in my heart, "Wonderful morning. Wonderful morning. When with my Saviour I've loved here so long." I forget the words-- (unintelligible)

Interviewer: You must have been quite a singer then? Did you do this--

Minnie: --Oh I used to sing--

Interviewer: --in your time in the church, you did?

Bill: Yeah, she sang solos.

Interviewer: Oh isn't that nice?

Bill: She sang with the group, they had a group singing--

Minnie: --and I've sang at weddings, and funerals--

Bill: --string bands there, they always had string bands in those days.

Minnie: Oh you should see what they used to have in those days.

Interviewer: Tell me about it.

Minnie: Oh I'd love to hear a service again. (sound of teaspoon clinking)

Interviewer: With a string band eh?

Bill: Yes. Well the Fosmarks, there was usually two or three of the Fosmarks around and they all played a stringed instrument. You know--

Minnie: --his father used to play--

Bill: --either guitars or, Carl had another instrument like a guitar called an octaphone, it had double strings on it, it was played strummed. (clinking)

Interviewer: --would be nice.

Bill: And then eh, my father played a violin (sound of clattering dishes), sorry.

Interviewer: Lovely.

Minnie: Bill ah, your coffee wasn't very hot?

Bill: I didn't dump out all of yours; that's the trouble.

Minnie: Oh yeah it would be.

Bill: But I had it hot but I brought it--

Minnie: --it's all right, it's all right. I like to kick you know. This isn't on I hope?

Bill: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah it's still on.

Minnie: (gasps)

Bill: (laughs)

Interviewer: That's okay. (laughs). We want to know you're a real person you know (laughs).

Bill: (laughs)

Interviewer: Not just the saint (laughs).

Bill: Still alive (laughs).

Minnie: You know-- would you like to know, hear how I come to meet these people? These folks?

Interviewer: Sure.

### 13:0:20

Minnie: Well you know the second year we were married, I had the women's meeting at the home, and you know in those days we didn't have only just cake and coffee, (laughs)

we had all kinds of good things to eat, fixed up for them. But there was a very few that came.

Interviewer: Was this way back in 1920 now?

Minnie: This was in Enchant, yeah.

Bill: Before 1920, 19--

Minnie: No--

Bill: Yes--

Minnie: Well anyway--

Bill: It was eighteen--

Minnie: No, eighteen we were married--

Interviewer: You said two years into that, yeah.

Minnie: So I think it was twenty about.

Bill: But we moved to Enchant in 1919 Grandma? So you'd have to meet us before then?

Minnie: We won't talk about the year, I don't remember. But anyway, we had so much food left. And John Odlunds, they lived just about two miles from us, and eh there was a place we could go and fish, it was called the Forks. That was how far away from Enchant?

Bill: Oh about twenty-five to thirty miles.

Minnie: Yeah, so we decided on we would pack up our lunch and we'd go fishing. Johns and us. And we stayed over night, and we slept on the ground with no tent or anything, and bless me, in the night it started to rain. We had to get up and get in the cars. But when morning came and we was going to go home here, our car wouldn't start! And Sam couldn't get it to start (laughs). So we had the two cars, so I just decided that I would go along with John's and go home, and Sam of course, would just have to stay there and get his car fixed--

Interviewer: --or push it, I guess (laughs).

Minnie: Well after a while along comes a couple of Johnson boys. And they came to fish, to fish, to-- I suppose or something? And of course you know Sam - he loved to talk to Norwegians, tell then all about Enchant and the church there. And here they had lived only about twenty miles from Enchant--

Bill: It says about twenty-five miles from Enchant.

Minnie: Few years?

Bill: And about twenty miles from your place.

Minnie: He was only a lad of five years then. And they had never heard of that church in Enchant. And his grandfather lived with them and couldn't talk anything but Norwegian. And Sam was so delighted to tell them all about the church and the work in Enchant, because that was his middle name. (laughs)

Bill: Because it had only been going a few months, the church was just built in seventeen.

Minnie: Yeah, I know.

Bill: So it had just been going a few months.

Minnie: But they had never heard of it. But they never heard of that group of Christians that were there too.

Bill: No, that's right.

Minnie: But anyway, the next Sunday here they come.

Interviewer: (laughs) Did they apologize? the \_\_\_\_\_(??) Johnsons--

Minnie: And they came ever since.

Bill: Well, we moved up there soon after. When we found out--that my father went into business there.

Minnie: There were a whole group.

**14:0:69**

Bill: He was a mechanic and there was a farmer that had a garage in that area. I can hear him talking about this. (laughs) (whispering in background; sound as if someone bumps the tape recorder) So he bought a garage in Enchant, so we moved up there. We were there in 1919; I know 'cause my brother was born there then.

Minnie: You came in the fall; see, this was in the spring.

Bill: Yeah.

Minnie: Yeah.

Interviewer: Hm.

Bill: (whispering) I came in the fall.

Minnie: So we had a big addition to our church.

Interviewer: (laughs) This is a pretty large family--

Minnie: And eventually we lost our daughter on the deal though. (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) Probably only too glad to see it?

Bill: Every rainstorm brings some good. (laughs)

Interviewer: Well you know she's in good people well anyways. (laughs) As long as they can speak Norwegian. (laughs)

Minnie: You know she was going to Three Hills, she graduated from Three Hills. And she wanted to go, this is Josephine I'm talking about, and she wanted to go as a missionary in Japan, and she went as far as Chicago, was it Chicago? Oh not that far--

Bill: No, she only got to the border--

Minnie: --the border?

Bill: --and then at that time it was close to like four years. At that time they demanded that they have so much money, and he had planned on sending the money on ahead and not let her carry so much to eh, down to Chicago. But they turned their back from the border and at that time when you turned back from the border then you weren't allowed to make application to go in again for a year.

Minnie: And you know there was somebody there to pick her up.

Bill: Yup.

Interviewer: Uh-ha.

Minnie: With a ring even! (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) Now who's Josephine? Was this?

Bill: That's her oldest daughter--

Minnie: Yes.

Bill: And my wife.

Interviewer: Your wife, so that's what I thought. No, I just wanted to make that clear. (laughs)

Bill: Well we had an understanding at that time, but we eh decided if things worked out then she would go, but otherwise we were planning on being married.

Interviewer: Ah.

Bill: Because before she graduated that Christmas when we were home we settled that matter. (laughs)

Interviewer: She almost slipped through his hands though. (laughs)

Bill: But eh, it was felt that it was the Lord's way of changing her future plans. So it worked out that way.

Minnie: I've been thinking of that verse I think in the Bible, where, "the Lord moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform."

Interviewer: Um-hm.

Minnie: You look back at them afterwards and you can see "that was the hand of the Lord."

Interviewer: Um-hm. So true.

Minnie: You don't always-- (both speaking at once)

**15:1:19**

Bill: That meeting down at the river, it's the forks of the little bow down at the river, and eh after that meeting we became very close friends with the two Odlund families that lived up on the farms about twenty miles north of there and eh of course it was in later years that the family came along in twenty-eight.

Interviewer: It was 1928; is that when you and eh, legally adopted--

Bill: The girls came. The four of them came in twenty-eight. Wasn't it? (both speaking at once)

Minnie: I can't remember the year.

Interviewer: Now whose children were they?

Bill: They were Sam's brother's, other brother's children.

Interviewer: Other than John, um-hm.

Bill: Yes, Sven.

Minnie: But the two, the two we got from the--

Bill: The two later ones--

Minnie: --provincial government.

Bill: Yes. They were the two later ones, but there was four. There was two boys and two girls; they were really aunt and uncle to them.

Interviewer: Right.

Bill: And so they brought them into the family there. They came up from Minnesota where they had been living with their grandparents.

Interviewer: And how old were they at that time? Were there any teenagers, or were not-

-

Bill: Just eh, I think Josephine was just about twelve years old, it was thirteen. Twelve or thirteen, about twelve years old.

Interviewer: She was the oldest eh?

Minnie: Because Charlotte was the youngest and she was four.

Bill: And then there's the two boys, they were all younger, down the line.

Interviewer: Well that was a nice ready-made family for you wasn't it? (laughs)

Bill: Yup.

Interviewer: She was telling me how much she loved the children.

Bill: Yeah. Well I love one of 'em quite a bit. (laughs)

Interviewer: Any other stories that you can tell me about your husband? I love that one about his testimony. Is there anything else? Any special occasions maybe? Or maybe a time where you really saw the working of the Lord, you know?

Minnie: Well I saw that so many times.

Interviewer: Did ya? Can you remember a few?

Bill: Have you told her the time when the Lord spared your fields in that storm?

**15:0:30**

Minnie: Oh yes. We used to have those bad hailstorms you know, and Sam and John, his brother, had been in Lethbridge that day and ordered a Holt Combine. And the understanding they had with this guy was if it hailed before we got it out they wouldn't have to take it because they couldn't pay for it. And that night when they got home here it starts to cloud up something terrible. And the first thing we knew it was hailing, and I said to Sam we have to take the pillows and put them on the windows or they'll break. Sam said, "No, we're going to go down on our knees and we're going to pray the Lord will spare us from hail." And we did! And he did!

Interviewer: Hallelujah! Was there hail all around you?

Minnie: We never got a bit of hail and it hailed all around us, and John was--

Bill: The hail just missed their place.

Minnie: And John hailed out.

Bill: He was hit down below. He was two miles south, this farm of theirs. And it hit there and it hit the other neighbours, but theirs was missed completely.

Minnie: It was so wonderful how he spared us. So John, he couldn't get a combine, and didn't we, I think we got the 'Sunshine' that year didn't we?

Bill: I believe that's what happened. He switched and bought a smaller machine.

Minnie: Sunshine was a smaller combine that was all run by the one engine; it didn't have two engines or two propellers like the most of them did. But it was all self-propelled. Cute little thing. The only one that had a name: "Little Sunshine." (laughs) Out there.

Interviewer: Remember about what year that would be? Was it in the twenties or thirties?

Bill: It was not in the thirties; it was still in the twenties, about twenty-seven or twenty-eight, it was either twenty-seven, I think it was twenty-seven?

**[SIDE 2 of cassette tape]**

**16:0:00**

Interviewer: Your Dad, he was a machinist?

Bill: Machine agent, as well as a garage proprietor.

Minnie: And then a mover, he moved so many buildings.

Bill: That's in later years, but in the hard years like the dirty thirties (laughs) that's when he switched to doing other things too, such as house moving, whatever he had trucks and so--

Interviewer: He had heavy equipment I guess?

Bill: Yes he had, we built up our equipment for that, we made up our equipment for house moving.

Interviewer: Well John eh sorry, Bill, I should talk to you a little bit and just find out—  
**[tape continues with Bill Johnson interview – see transcript by Jennifer Wyness]**

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