

## Eagle Center

I am Pam Schaeffer, I live at [omitted] I am 16 years old and my ancestors have been here, have been in the parish for 95 years. I would like our group to introduce themselves. Please give your name, address, age, and how long you and your families have been in the parish.

I am Henrietta Hays and I live on [omitted] and I've been in the parish 51 years and I'm 83 years old. I am Rose Schaeffer and I live [omitted] Waterloo, Iowa. I have been a member of the parish for 53 years and my ancestors came from Germany, my ancestors on my mother's side, and I don't know when it was, but a long time ago. I am Rose Driver, and live [omitted] and I've been in this parish ever since I was born 88 years ago, and my grandparents came here, and I think it was 1860 and my great grandmother was one of the first people buried in the cemetery. I am Fr. G??? I don't have any ancestors here, but I came here in December of 1982. Yes, I'm Donald Hayes, I'm 54 years old and I hasten to add that I am not a senior citizen yet, although the years do go by rapidly, I think my interest here primarily is of a historic nature. I did work with Fr. Swift on the publication of the church history back at the dedication of the new church in 1976. I am Blanche McGardy, my parents were Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kirsch of this parish. My grandparents also lived in this parish. My grandfather was born in 1820 in Luxembourg and we think came here about 1860. I live [omitted] and I'm 72. I'm Ted Schaeffer I live at [omitted] I'm 81 years old and I was a member all my life and so are my parents.

Let's begin with the early days of our church. After 2 attempts at building a church it was finally built and dedicated Thanksgiving Day 1874. The church served the parish for over a century. 1877 was when we had our first resident pastor, Fr. English. He also built the new rectory and it was built, it was used until 1914 when the present brick rectory was built. Would someone like to share any memories they might have from their grandparents of these early days? Rose? I can't remember but at that time, we drove horse and buggies to get to church, in fact we did still when I went to school there. And [inaudible] five of my uncles and aunts were all [inaudible] buried right here at the end of the cemetery [inaudible]. Did you all ride horse and buggies to church? Yes. Did it get cold? Our mother had us tuck in warm, hot water and jugs and then my dad would put straw in the bottom of the sled and then they'd put the hot water jugs and they [inaudible] really toasty. Had to wear the old [inaudible] my grandma knitted them, and they were black [inaudible], and black socks, my grandma knitted them, and I hated them, and long-legged underwear, which I hated. Did you have any colored clothing at that time? Oh, yes I did but it seemed that grandma made a whole lot [inaudible]. As we move into the 20th century it was noted that the members of St. Mary of Mt. Carmel were a friendly social group. One of the favorite gatherings was a barn raising, do you recall these days? [Inaudible] Yes, I do. The group would go to the farm place and the men and the women... they served the meals to them and by night the whole barn was raised? Does anyone else remember those? In 1907 the church was enlarged, during this time the Eagle Center picnics began, was it a fundraiser? Yes, it was a

fundraiser [inaudible] and we had a big tent for the [inaudible] and we had small tents where we cooked the food and can you imagine them bringing old stove, or a stove out of your home to cook the food on? And they brought the water in cans, in milk cans, and had to heat the water, and we had all kinds of entertainment. We had paddle wheels, I don't remember what the other game was, but they had tank dunking [inaudible] and they had things for the children too, entertainment. And then we had a [inaudible] and they had a dance and they had canoes and then we [inaudible]. How far did people come for things like that? Well, I don't know anything about that, but it got to be where they came from Traer and all over. But the first thing, it started on the 15th of August and on the first few years it stormed on those days, so they decided that the Blessed Virgin wasn't helping, so we had better change it, so we did, and then it was the week of the 4th after that. How many people would come to these picnics? Oh, quite a few. Of course, as the years went on they had cars and then there were a lot more people. 1907 was also when the first school was built. Could someone describe the building and what it was like boarding with the faculty? The nuns lived in the, had their meal in the [inaudible] everything in the basement, and when we had our rosary meetings in there and then on the top floor was the art school room and behind that was the boys dormitory and then the nuns dormitory and then the girls. And then on the main floor there was two school rooms, and in one schoolroom on the west side there was a chapel with folding doors that they opened during Mass and then they had a music room over in the other part. Sr. Francis would teach us. How was the tuition paid? Our Sunday, your Sunday would offer church support. How many grades were there in the rooms that you mentioned? There were 8 in the whole high school. 8 in the whole high school? Yeah, in one room? In high school at that time beginning there were only one, there were two classes and [inaudible]. How many were there in the whole school? I don't remember. I think it stated in that book that there were 134. In 1920 the convent was built. What was that building like? It seemed like a big building to me at least, and I started to school in 1921 in April and I was a boarder and I remember walking up to the first landing and being met by Sr. Angela, I had my pillow and my bedding with me and she had Winnie Cavanagh help me take it upstairs to the dormitory. And I think it was quite full because I had to sleep with Hazel Beck and they were single beds too cause the first week and then at the end of the week she and I had [inaudible] so we didn't get too much sleep that Spring. Anyone else? I started to board with the sisters in 1925 at Blessed High School when I was in 9th grade, and I just loved boarding, it was just fun. We really had fun. And it seems that, it just almost seemed like every family of the parish brought licorice to the sisters [laughter, inaudible] and we had rabbits too in the wintertime. Anybody bring onions? [laughter] I don't remember that. I never thought that Sr. Angela was a real good cook. Well most youngsters at that age [inaudible]. The last class to graduate from high school was in June 1956. The following year Don Bosco was built in Gilbertville. During this time period the 2nd Vatican Council caused many changes in the church. Remodeling the sanctuary, removing the communion rails, what other changes do you recall? Does anyone remember those changes? Which date are you saying? In 1956. [inaudible] In 1967 it was decided to close the grade school, that building was demolished in 1974, in 1973 a building committee was elected in the parish to study the possibility of building a new church. Fr. Swift was pastor at the time of building. What were those planning days like? Busy. I never went to so many meetings in my life. We went and looked at many churches, newer churches, tried to get ideas and tried to adapt them to our situation, which wasn't always easy. And then after we got a plan and it was too expensive, we'd have to cut it down some, it was a busy time. You know it all came out in the end. There were different opinions of course, some of us didn't agree with everything but

[inaudible]. I might add, where did you look at the churches? Was it where Fr. Swift had been before? Yeah, we went to New Vienna, where he had built a church, and we went to Elma who had a new church, where else, I think we went to Monticello and to St. Pius in Cedar Rapids and then it seemed like there was more....[inaudible]. It seems like important decisions fell on feast days of the Blessed Mother. Architects were interviewed September 12th, Feast of the Holy Name of Mary. September 15th, Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows the firm Seto and Anderson were hired. November 21st, 1974 the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary plans were presented to the parish. December 8th, the Immaculate Conception, plans were made to move ahead. The campaign drive for the new church was very successful. By 1975 there was a great progress, but there were many problems. Mechanical, electrical plans, air, and zoning. Do you recall any other problems? We didn't agree on everything. I didn't agree on the location. August 22nd, 1975 Feast of the Queenship of Mary, groundbreaking ceremonies were held. September 8th, 1975, birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mother, contracts were signed. October 1975 the old school building was removed. Who did the labor on that? Parishioners, I think, pretty much. Joe Beck, Julie Beck, and Father Swift too. He needed a lot of workers. My dad did a photograph of Joe Beck in the church history running a tractor in conjunction with this. I might add an anecdote here, I believe one time there was a someone had called the rectory, Mrs. Swift, that's Fr. Swift's mother answered the phone and someone asked for Fr. Swift, and it seems that I recall the story about that time he was there and he, she could see him and he fell through one floor and she thought "Oh, he's disappeared" and so that you know, he went down a ways, and I think he did have some sore ribs afterwards, but he did actually help the physical work as well as the more technical drafting and all the other.... We did a lot of woodwork, especially the furnishings of the church, or the sanctuary. Yes, he was a master carpenter from the old days, I guess, his previous work. I noticed that special effort seemed to be made to have the important decisions, events, take place on Feast of the Blessed Mother, I presume that it was Fr. Swift's specialty. Was there any delays caused because of that or did they just happen to fall on those dates? No, I think in some cases they were rushed to have them ready for the day. I might just add a footnote with this. The dedication was on September 8th, 1976 and Fr. Swift and I worked on the history with this book and in conjunction with other people of course, and I remember him saying very well, "Don, we have to have this done by September 8th because the Archbishop is coming and we're going to have a grand ceremony and the like these histories have got to be completed. So I was at Maurice Printing in Waterloo for several weeks on intensive effort and I remember very well the first shipment came out, I brought them out that afternoon, and I think the glue wasn't really dry yet, and the 2nd shipment they kept working on them and they came out that evening, because many people wanted them for that September dedication ceremony. So that's a bit of history from the past. There was a steady progress on the church through the winter, by February 1976 Fr. Swift was thinking about ordering pews. May 31st, the Feast of the Visitation, a cornerstone ceremony took place, plus a parish picnic. One year to the day for signing the contract, the dedication of the church took place September 8th, 1976, the birthday of our Lady. After the death of Fr. Swift, August 1980, Msgr. Ryan was pastor after his retirement. And after his retirement, Fr. Goedken became our pastor and is pastor in the present day. You got a little more tape left, anything else? There was Father Bendlage, and Father Ray, and Father Tobin, before Father Goedken, well before Father Swift even. They'll ask if we remember anyone who was in the First World War, I know Bill Siepel was, and he saw a lot of action too didn't he. Yeah, he did. And there was John Mosher, Henry Mosher's uncle. Wasn't there a Struble, Alvin Struble, and he was in World War 1, I think. And Bill Pierce was drafted, he never got across, but he was

got into the service. Walter Rigley. Yeah, I was kind of surprised when I thought about it [inaudible]. Bill Murray was too, but I don't think he was in the parish, was he? He worked here in the parish. He worked for Pete Beckett, yeah. So, he would be.... So, we never mentioned anything about Father Taken. I don't remember Father Taken, he baptized me, but I don't have many memories of him. All the sisters that were here, Sr. Carmalita, Sr. Francis, and Sr. Aloysius.... But they were first ones to the school. Was Carmalita the first one out and then came Sr. Francis, and Sr. Angela. Do you want to tell them about the old barn that used to be down here? Oh yes, we drove our horses and we had a big barn along the fence, yeah, and it was there for years until they built a new one and it was double, it was two sides, the horse on one side and the buggy on the other side, when there was rain or snow. And then we had another barn before that you know, open to the south, east of the school, cause I used to, my grandparents would ride, but they wouldn't ride in it, we got a car in I think 1913, and they wouldn't ride in it and they had a single buggy and horse and I had to take them to church and I got to be mad about that. I couldn't ride in the car. What were they afraid of the car for? They were scared to death of the car, they wouldn't get in the car. Like you couldn't stop it or something? Well My Grandpa Schafer, this was Grandma Seiver, Grandpa Schaefer, his son got a car, the first one I think, 08 or 09 Model T, and they hit a pig down there at Pete Beck's and you remember that, they tipped over? Oh, my God, dad was so mad, and he swore some much in German that you couldn't understand them. Just the other day we had senior citizens here and I sat across from Ed Warner and next to Al Pierce, and Al Pierce, well they both remembered the fact when the barn west of the church, south of the Beck residence burned down, and Sr. Carmalita took the children to the top of the hill and they could see the barn burning, and they told how one horse or pony kept going back even though it was freed from the fire it ran back into the fire and was, it died. Yeah, I was at that fire, I was just a little guy, he took us in a team and wagon and he took a whole bunch of people there and there was a John ??? who lived there when that barn burned.

[End of Side 1]

Yes, Don Hays and Fr. Swift compiled the history. Father wanted the book when the new church was dedicated in September 1976. Every family was to complete their history. Some didn't write, which is the reason why some family names are not mentioned. About in the late 30's when Lawrence Schafer would sing Ave Maria at Christmas time, how beautiful and inspirational it was. The long row of nuns that occupied the pews in front of the church. The big change for us from Latin to English and this was when Fr. Gaffney celebrated his 25th anniversary. It had rained and rained, the big tent in front of the church, some places took boards to step on or your shoes would get soaked. Had to over the long way as the creek was over its bank. When the Eagle Center picnic was over and the money was brought to the parish house, Pete Jones stayed up all night to guard the money, he was the deputy sheriff. It would be about \$3,000 and it had to go a long ways to pay expenses. One of the priests was Fr. Reinert, he was a typical German priest, his housekeeper Pauline Schmitz, resided at his home in Calmar. Father is deceased. We enjoyed going to healing masses with Fr. Heineman and Fr. ????? yes, [inaudible]. Some of our good parishioners were Miss Gertrude Snyder, Mrs. Frank Weber, Miss Murphy, Mrs. Peter

Jones, Mrs. Clara Schaefer, Mrs. Theodore Schaefer, Mrs. Anna Pfifer, and many more. And what about with the other churches? Well, I guess we should have more communication with the other churches. I've been a member of 51 years at the Eagle, and 10 years at Blessing. Everyone enjoyed our breakfasts. There were a lot of marriages between Gilberts and Gilfords. Don, you mentioned earlier about the seats, the pews were numbered. Yes, I think at one time it was called pew rent. Yeah. And then at the end I think there is a pew in the storage area that has a little glass plate on it, and I think on your envelope you'd have a number, I think that you mentioned Gladys that you were number 53. And as I recall as a youngster people liked to, they were assigned to take their pew and that was their place of worship and I think that maybe if a visitor or someone accidentally got into the wrong pew I think it somewhat disrupted their religious thinking because they were in the wrong place, they couldn't pray as effectively, maybe as if you were up in another one. And I think another aspect, I suppose it shows the passage of time that the little buttons, were where you would hold your hat. I can remember a few people I think that had the nice hat at Easter time and perhaps someone would slide over and sit on the hat and squash it and that became a bit of a problem, and I think that's just a tidbit of history. And then talk about that, the head coverings, I'm sure you ladies remembered at one time the church practice of as you went into the church you were to put on a hat or wear a hat in church. And, or a handkerchief, if you did not have a hat you sort of pinned it on your hair and I guess that is history now. Is there anything else that you guys remember? Well, I'd like to ask if any of you remember when we had plays and musicals in the church? Yes, I sure do. Yes, that was about in the 20's I think when last days of Fr. Tobin. Yeah. [Inaudible, multiple people talking]. We built a stage, yes, the stage [inaudible, multiple people talking] was a big part of the altar, it must have set on the communion rail. Wasn't there a fire one time. That was when they had movies, they had movies too. There was a movie and the projector burned or something. Well anyway, all I was going to say was I wasn't in high school to get in any plays and then when Fr. Bendlage came he didn't approve of things like that in the church and we didn't do that anymore and that was 1928 when I started to high school, and well we didn't get to be in any play or anything, and so in '31 fall when we were seniors we wanted to, we were just determined that we were going to give a play so we bought this playbook that cost 35 cents and we talked about it and finally we went to Sr Rose Marie with it and she said, and she said well it was fine with her. The idea was that we would give it when they had the December 7th and 8th bazaars which were an annual thing at that time. And she said it was fine with her and she would direct us and all, but she would not ask Fr. Bendlage to do it. We had to do that, he was kind of hard to approach, and well we thought about it a while. We didn't know if we could do that or not, but finally we were going to do it and so this night after school, we had to do it after school, we couldn't go during the school day, they were fussy about those kinds of things. And so, everybody had to go home that night except me and Nellie Durham [who] boarded here and she could go with me, so her and I, and of course we followed the sidewalk and marched up to the front door and rang the bell. The housekeeper answered the door and told us to wait in the living room like we used to do and after a while Father called from the office that we should come in. And so, I got up and I thought Nellie was following me, but when I got to the office she wasn't there [I was the only one]. Well there wasn't much I could do so I asked him about it, and I showed him the playbook and all and he was really pretty nice about it. And well, he wondered where we were going to do it at and I told him we thought the 7th and 8th-grade room upstairs, [and he said] wouldn't the high school room be bigger, and maybe it was in a way, but we wouldn't have a cloakroom and we wouldn't have a place backstage you know, and I didn't want to have it in that room, so I had to argue with

him a little, but he finally said, OK, we could have it in the 7th and 8th-grade room. So, we went ahead with the play. Sister, of course, we just had the one book, so Sister had to make copies for everybody to have a copy of the play. And we practiced and we did and the 7th and 8th of December came and we gave our play to a real packed room both nights. We got told that it was good, and I don't know, we thought it was too, I guess. You had it in the school? Uh huh. Downstairs? No upstairs, 7th and 8th grade, the east side. Oh, they had a stage one time on the west side upstairs, when I was going to school. Well they built a stage for this too, but of course it didn't stay there. I suppose Joe Garvey probably built the stage. Well they built stages yet when I was going to school. We had them down in the high school room at that time. Oh, it was in the high school room was it? Yeah. Aunt Tilly goes to town. Yeah, I remember the play. That'd be on the west side? Yeah, that's the way I remember it. What was the name of yours? Shint's Cottage. Does anyone else have any things they'd like to share? I might add one footnote. I remember as a youngster we'd have picnics here and as I recall an airplane would land over to the southeast in the adjoining field and would land and give rides to people. I think they were perhaps a dollar. Do any of you recall that? That was quite a thrill as a youngster to see the plane come in and they would take people up for a relatively short ride and then land again. But they got too big a crowd down there and the run 'em off. I think Dean Schultz father run 'em out of there. That could be. Who was the pilot, Ted, was it someone around here? I don't know, but I remember the plane coming in here and it created a crowd and they had him leave and then Pete Schultz [inaudible]. I remember one other point to update the picnics. A number of years ago I remember working with Fr. Swift and I think someone from I believe Waterloo had a metal detector and he got permission and I think they searched the ground you know would buzz and they'd dig with a knife and find a coin or two and I remember youngsters after, the morning after the picnic would come over and hopefully find any small coins, a nickel or dime, which in those days anything more than a penny was quite a bit. So. Big money. Were you allowed to go to the store across [inaudible] when there was a store across the school? We really weren't supposed to unless I remember [inaudible]. Well as boarders I remember going there after school. Yeah, I do too. Anything else that anyone has to share? Who ran that store across the road? The Burks were in it and then Cooks and then Mrs. Bedard, Gladys had it. Just the other day I think Al Pierce said that they had more things that Jake and Bill did in Waterloo. Say I was told that when they had [inaudible] the family sale over here that they sold Ford automobiles across the road here at one time. For a year or so. Paul Kennedy owned a garage. Sold Model T's. What year would that have been? Oh, it must have been in the 20's I suppose, it was after World War 1, it was in the 20's. And then Kenny John Rosen run it and then Joe Garvey run it. Oh? They did repair work on cars then I suppose. Yeah. I might mention I think we should mention the fact that in our current bulletin as of today, Sunday, is a very fitting tribute to Catherine Steinwalt, and I think the piano right behind us was given to the church by Catherine and I remember too, I'm sure all of you do to, of course, that she played the organ as Father mentioned for over 50 years in the church here. In fact I thought of it this morning, that I think the organ and church faced west and as she would play it she would have to look in the mirror to look back to the altar in order to, at a certain time, and just mentioned I wonder what happened to the mirror? I don't know, maybe it was sold. I think maybe that was part of the organ. Yes, that could well be. Well I went over there more than one night and had to pump that organ before choir practice and [inaudible]. Well she took a real pride in her parish. I can remember one time before the picnic that she was quite upset that the outside doors on the old church they were looking so tacky. The paint was chipped off "I just have a good notion to get some paint and give them a coat of paint", and she did, she painted

them before the picnic she said "why they look just terrible, if any strangers go in the church..." and she did take great pride in the parish. Flowers, oh she liked flowers. Do any of you remember anything particular about the old stained-glass windows in the old church? You know, the families or where they might have come from at that time? I was reading the history of another town and they said that this must have been a prosperous community because this particular family left because of economic conditions in 1932 and came to Eagle Center. That's interesting. They had originated from here and they went to the town and they returned to Eagle Center. The Brennan family. Did they live here in the early, like 1912, 1914 and then leave and then came back in 1932? Part of the family, yes. Are they still related to the ones over in La Porte? I might add a footnote to that. Just the other day I had a conversation via telephone with Francis Brennan who lives in Waterloo now, and was citing from the cemetery booklet and he mentioned that how his family had come here like grandparents and I think his great-grandfather had given a window to the church. I know that there was interest and I asked him this. They spell their name BRENNAN and on the window it's BRENNEN so just a footnote of history there. Somewhere along the line, whatever happened, it was one letter difference. Anything else to add? I might add one footnote. Working on this history, any of you have any contributions you think it's probably a time for an update from 1976 to now, and that time even I think that we came to the point where it had to go to press so if there's anything now, like the World War 1 veterans or anything else you might think of we could start adding to a future time. To my knowledge, they still kept the plates at Morris Printing Company, we could either print a whole one again or a supplement to this. I think it's a privilege for myself just being here with you people this morning. Well I keep the history for the ACCW and the Rosary Society and I, every year make a summary of each year, which I have. How long did it take paying off the debt of this church? One year. And the fact that the mortgage was burned in a year should be in the history. Yeah. You know, just one year? Yeah. I know it wasn't very long, but I didn't know.... I think along with this, I have some articles at home from the Waterloo Courier I remember opening night, or the dedication evening, the newspaper reporter came out and worked with Fr. Swift and myself and there was an article in the paper and I think like a year later the mortgage burning ceremony there was an article, so there are some..... Does anyone remember what when in the cornerstone, what articles they put in? I think it's in the book. [Inaudible]. Does anybody know the date the church that's on the plate was built? Well it was dedicated in 1874, I suppose it was probably built that year, because it was Thanksgiving. Well, it was just a hundred years then? I might mention this Winter I updated the history of the Blessing parish on Highway 63 which is now a mission of our parish, Fr. Guter handles both parishes, and at that time even of the close connection between many of the Blessing people and Eagle Center, that they would attend church here or vice versa and I think naturally there are quite a number of inter-marriages between the people, as well as naturally between here and Gilbertville. So, in fact, the Tama County history will be coming out in the Fall of 1987 and there will be a section on the Blessing church history so even though technically it's in Black Hawk County, so many of the people came from Tama so, a footnote to this overall aspect. I might mention on the cover of the book Fr. Swift wanted a portrait of the old church like disappearing into the mist of history and the new church appearing, so I knew some people at Hawkeye Tech, and this was done by a student and she came out and painted about 4 or 5 paintings, at which one was selected. And you can see the old church, the steeple and the like are disappearing into the history and the new church appearing, so a bit of history connected with this. In fact, I might mention the plaque in honor of Fr. Swift who was pastor at that time and he is now buried in Marshalltown, the plaque is over

on the ball and made really in his honor of all the wonderful work he did for the parish that he should have a special place in our arts for the work he has done here. You don't remember his story about how him and Don Bosco got everything done do you? No. I can't remember it either, but I remember the priest that gave his eulogy told it. I'm trying to recall how it went, but it was something about, his name was Bob Swift, and I just don't remember the story. Well, I might add a footnote to all of this. I think in the Witness it's on the material in his, in honor of him, in his obituary, as I recall when the story came out it said "new church to be dedicated in Eagle Grove" so Fr. Swift called over and let them know it was Eagle Center and not Eagle Grove, although I can see where this became interesting bit of information. He didn't want to let anybody run over us in that way. Anything else? You say here, what would you like remembered about 1987, the 150th anniversary, and I think we have to hope they remember we kept the faith from those early pioneers so many years ago, the Irish and the German and all the others, that we're now leaving them a church which will be serviceable for the 200th anniversary of the Archdiocese. Well, I might add a footnote to the picnics I remember as a youngster, I run across people today at times and they say "oh yes, they were here for the Eagle Center picnics" at whatever year, and I think even to this day, I compliment the ladies for all the wonderful food they prepared here and I think it's worth mentioning now in all that church breakfasts that people still come. We do not officially have a picnic, but I think the church breakfast is a substitute for that and that people come from miles around for these events. [end of side 2]