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The Steinfeld Story, Page 1

Before my Grandfather, Ray Steinfeld, passed away on October 26th, 1998, he took the time to pass on his story to those interested by speaking it all from memory into a recorder. Later it was dictated and here it is in unedited form:

As I, Ray Steinfeld, Sr, remembered from my childhood through the years at the present I time:

It all started many, many years ago when my father was born in Russia, of German parents. History records that in the very late 1700's Catherine the Great married Peter the Great in Russia. After they were married, nine days later, Peter was killed or deposed of and she took over as the Czar of Russia. Being of German decent she went to Germany to recruit the people to come and work on the farms in the Ukraine section of Russia. In those days it was a vast wasteland and it was uninhabited. The first attempt failed and so, several years later she made a second attempt in which she encouraged the German people to come. If they would come, she would give them transportation down the Vogula River, she would help them with some food and materials to work with, so that they could inhabit that vast Ukraine territory. This time many of the people from Germany accepted. And when they went there they settled in religious communities, Catholics in one area, Baptists in another, etc. They did not intermingle as we would know it in America today. And they tell me that the first years of settlement were very, very harsh. They had to build sod houses, because there was no lumber to build a home. There were no conveniences, no anything, just pure raw nature and living. Many, many people died because of the severe cold and the extreme weather conditions that existed at that time.

Catherine the Great had guaranteed the people religious and political freedom. At the end of the 1800's they tried to conscript the German boys in to the Russian army. At that time, all of the German parents that possibly could afford it sold whatever they had and sent their young men especially to either America or to Canada. My father, at the time, was fourteen years old, Henry. Es younger brother, David, was ten. And so they came to America. And it is amazing to me how two young people, not speaking the language, could land on a foreign soil at Ellis Island and on their own with probably no money to buy anything with. Evidently, some friends or whomever, took care of them and they found their way to the Midwest in to Oklahoma ma, around Shattuck, as I understand it, where they worked on various farms for whatever food and lodging to take care of them. Later, the family migrated over, the father and stepsons. At this point, Grandfather's first wife died at childbirth, evidently with David. He remarried again, a sister of his first wife. Therefore, as I understand, they had seven or eight children by the second marriage and they were the step brothers and sisters of Henry and David.

They tell me that Grandfather would farm the boys out at so much a month, board and room, and would take the moneys which they earned and use it for the-rest of the family. Dad was born in 1894, and somehow migrated to Canada. It was in Canada that he met Barbara, his wife to be, who was of Austrian decent and had come to Canada in her early childhood possibly at the age of eight or nine years and had worked in a pickle factory when she was ten years old. She was one of four children. Her father had died and her mother had raised the three girls on her own. She also had a brother by the name of Jake, who lived in the Portland area here, for many years. Those were the only close relatives that Mother had to associate with for years. I remember visiting one of her sisters, when I was possibly four or five years old, who lived in Maupin, Oregon, on a sheep ranch. We took the train from Madras way out in to the country and they came down on horses and picked us up and we stayed there. I must not have been over four or five years old and they had to watch me very closely, because there were quite a few rattlesnakes up in that sheep country. Mother also had a sister whose husband was a border patrol on the Canadian border somewhere up around Detroit, Michigan. Another sister who she didn't have a lot of contact with lived in New York.

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Mother and Dad were married in Winnipeg, Canada, in 1909. They came to Portland on their honeymoon. They settled in the St. Johns area, where the first plant was located. In those days people settled in the city of Portland by their religious faiths, or ethnic groups from and in north Portland, the St. Johns area, there was many, many Germans from Russia, the same area from where Dad was from. There was another area over off of then Union Avenue around Fremont, and many, many Germans from Russia settled over there. Mother and Dad had four children. Elsie, being the oldest was bom in 1910, a year after their marriage. Bill was the second child, bom a couple of years later. Vic was the third child, bom six years after their marriage. And I was the fourth child, bom in 1921. 1 don't recall too much of my youth except that we were introduced to work at a very, very young age. And I remember that I would have to go out and learn how to tell the difference between picking a weed or the dill weed, or the cucumber or cabbage plant. Mother was a very, very hard worker and wherever she went usually she took us children, because we were the ones that would help her out. Dad worked as a blacksmith in his early years. My earliest recollection, I remember that they had a huge chicken house where we lived. It was, I'm guessing possibly, sixty feet wide, two stories high and approximately 250 feet long. And it was here that Mother raised chickens and geese. At one time, a tremendous disease hit her flocks and they all died. And that was more or less the end of the large chicken business for the family. From there they had some acreage in front of the house there and we grew cabbage and cucumbers. Of course, in those days, everybody had to have something that kept them through the winter and sauerkraut was a very good substitute for fresh vegetables. So she made sauerkraut and pickles. And, having a surplus, she would send my brother Bill and Elsie down in to St. Johns with a wagon with a five gallon bucket and a fork. They would go house to house and sell sauerkraut at \$. 10 a pint, or \$.15 a quart. In my youth, Dad would rent property. As Mother made the sauerkraut and they expanded a little bit he would then go out and rent a couple acres of ground, in which he could grow some cabbage or cucumbers so that the family could plant more than the space was available around where the house was. I remember as a young child that even though Mother's chickens and geese had died, she still continued to raise chickens for our own use to raise eggs. She would hatch the little chicks and bring them in the kitchen and have seventy or eighty of them in the warm kitchen until they were old enough to be able to go out in to the cold. They were my friends as a youth. I loved the little chicks and would play with them.

Because we were taught to work at a very young age, when the summer would come along, the kids in the neighborhood would go swimming up to Columbia Park. There was a swimming pool there in those days. I wanted to swim and so I suppose at the age of seven or eight I would rebel and take off with the neighborhood kids and go swimming at Columbia Park. Knowing that when I got home, the switch waited for me. We would hitch a ride in a car and then hitch a ride home, and be gone all afternoon on occasion and I knew good and well what was going to happen.

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As the family grew from the pickle and sauerkraut business, we hired many local people. All the kids that I went to school with and played a little football with a gunny sack on Sunday afternoon, whenever my parents would let us play, would work for Mom and Dad. I remember distinctly a fellow by the name of Harry Hide, who was a tremendous worker. The Younce boys worked for us, the Loving boy, kids from school. Many, many kids earned a few cents working for Mom and Dad picking cucumbers, hoeing cabbage, cultivating, etc. In those early days all the work was done by horses. We didn't have such a thing as a tractor in those days. But I recall brother Vic and Dad going over Germantown Road to Bethany to borrow a horse, so that we could cultivate and work the fields. In those days, Vic would either ride the horse or walk it back over Germantown, which was a whole day trip. And Dad with a model T, would bring me back. In those days we didn't have the St. John's bridge, we only had the ferry that took us across night near where the St. John's bridge now is. I remember as a very young child, possibly four years old, Dad picked up a woman to ride up the hill, so that she wouldn't have to walk and I sat on her lap. Dad went around the comer and I flew off of her lap, there were no doors on the side, so I fell and hit the curb with my head. I still have the scar over my n'-ht eye where he took me up to Dr. McChesney and he stitched me up. Dr. McChesney was the .family doctor at that time, and he was a real character. He took care of us and seemed to pull us all through with all of our health problems.

As the business with the sauerkraut and pickles grew a little bit, Dad would go out and get testimonies and sell them to a restaurant, like Henry Thiele's. He would get a testimony and say that he uses Steinfeld's kraut. The market started down at Yamhill Street. The market ran from First/Front Avenue to Fifth Avenue. This is the area where Fred Meyer started his first store. In the early days, they used to have to cast lots for stalls, never knowing from one day to next where they were going to be located. After awhile, they became much more sophisticated and they allocated permanent stalls, so when a person came down to buy pickles or kraut they knew where to go. Our stall was located between Fourth and Fifth on the North side of the street. Elsie quit school at a very young age, possibly thirteen or so. I went down on weekends and sold sauerkraut. Weekends were from Friday to Saturday, because it wasn't open on Sunday. We'd sell sauerkraut and pickles there. Of course, it was right in front of the Manning's Coffee Shop. A good looking guy by the name of Arthur Ames was in there selling coffee and he'd shoot rubber bands at Elsie, and they became acquainted, and eventually married.

Elsie was very much an entrepreneur. She organized our children to go over with the Model T Ford to the area of Bethany. There they had wild flowers, wild bachelor buttons. We organized all the kids, and I don't think they paid very much, but we would gather five, six tubs full of bachelor buttons for Memorial Day, and also lupines. We would bunch them in little bunches of maybe a dozen, and she would take them down on the market and sell them for \$. 1 0 a bunch, or two for a \$.15. I recall one weekend before Memorial Day, taking in \$II 0. 00, which in those days was a tremendous amount of money. Even after Elsie was married she continued to put potatoes on the stove at night, peel them, and make potato salads, which she earned money for herself She did very well at making potato salad and earning money that way. As the years went by, Dad expanded his horizons and would go out and rent land and farm it. Down the Columbia River here, right off of Union Avenue he built a bunk house, because he must have had an agreement to have it for two, three or four years. We had a cook, and we had beds in there where the men came and they were paid board and room at \$10.00 a month. It wasn't big money, but it was sufficient that at the end of the month they could go in to town and have a wing ding down on Skid row for two or three weeks, and then come back later and work again. It was not a reliable source of labor, but because there were so many laborers in those days, in t he twenties and thirties, that he always got sufficient people to help out.

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Then he bought a piece of acreage in Scappoose in 1934, then called Johnson's Landing Road. The reason It was called that was because the log trucks came down and would dump their logs in the river, raft them and send them to the mill. Of course, Dad built a bam for animals. We would go down and work on that farm. Dad built a bunkhouse there. We would plant our cucumbers and cabbage. We grew our own vegetables. By this time, it had grown to be quite a business for Dad. Let me just say, in the early 1930's he was putting an addition on to his cannery in Portland, A 30 x 60 cannery, because he wanted to can sauerkraut. In the building of that 30 x 60 addition, he had a fellow work for him who was a Christian. He didn't show up for two or three weeks, and Dad went to find out what was wrong, and he said he got hurt. Dad asked how he got hurt, and he said he foll from your building, which to this day we question whether that was true or not. But Dad not 'being up on things, we had industrial accident insurance, but it had to be paid for by the fifteenth of the following month. Dad didn't know that, nor did his bookkeeper, and it wasn't paid until towards the end of the month. Of course, when they went to court they found out that his insurance was not good, that it had expired. They received a judgment and practically took everything that the folks had at that time. They had a block down in St., John's, that he had several houses that he had accumulated by this time, and they literally wiped him of everything except the plant and the acreage at home. I recall as a youth, that was 1932 so I would have been eleven years old. The sheriff came and stayed there supposedly to lock up the plant and not let anything go out. But he would come in and sit down and have dinner with us a tnight. He told us to get out there and load up your pickups, get it out of the yards so I don't see it. He said he realized that you people have to live. I've never heard or seen anything like that before, so that's the way we did. We would lo

My mother never got over it. From then on she never trusted anyone. She had a bitterness in her heart and no matter who came along, don't trust them, don't trust them. She instilled that within us and love didn't seem to be a large part of her life at that time, I'm sorry to say. We continued to grow. Each year it was just a little bit more and a little bit more, and it seemed like Dad and his ability to sell, was selling many, many of the markets on Union Avenue. Most of the markets in those days were Germans from Russia. Many of them made sausage, and sold sauerkraut and dill pickles with what they had to sell. We attended, at that time, the Second German Baptist Church, over on Rodney and Morris. Most of the friends that my parents had went to that church. The first church we ever started was in St. John's, but then as we had transportation we then went with all of our friends over to the Second German Baptist Church. In those days all of the sermons were in German, and I understood very little of it. It was not a <u>help</u> to be taught German in those days, even though my parents spoke it. I learned quite a bit of German, now I only wish that I had known much, much more. It would have helped me for the years to come. After the war, it didn't happen.

I had learned to drive the truck at a very early age, possibly twelve or thirteen. We had farms down the Columbia River and Mother use to go with me. I would drive, and she would say, "Well my husband wasn't around", if the police stopped us and that we had to get the produce in. Fortunately, the police never did stop us, but I made a lot of trips as a very young boy driving the little one ton truck that we had back and forth between the farms.

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Dad started canning sauerkraut in the mid thirties, 1934-1935. Also, he experimented with peaches and pears. I remember right down where our plant Is in the Rivergate area, there was a large peach orchard a half a mile from here, and he took all of the peaches that year and canned them. They were very good. He added sugar syrup to them, and as they were tree vine ripened and absolutely delicious. The pears were also good. Why we never continued in the canning business with the pears and peaches, I don't know. They were canned in 2-1/2 cans, we had peaches and pears for many years after that.

We started canning sauerkraut in only 2-1/2 cans. There was a little cannery that I mentioned about having the lawsuit over, that was where we canned it. In those days we didn't have the machinery or equipment that we have today. We had an old, what we called a Western semi-automatic seamer. You put one can in and put your foot on the lever, while it sealed the can and put it in a basket. They were baskets about 30 inches across, 6 inches high and held about four cases. They had to can it as hot as the women could possibly stand it. I'm guessing they were heating 150-160 degrees. We had four vats for cooking. We put the steam on, we had a boiler, turned the steam on and we steamed four of these carriers. When we got the fifth one full, we would pull the first one out and cool it and put it in the cooling tanks. We had two tanks, one for heating and one for cooling. The cold water kept running in to the cooling tanks, but they never really got completely cold, so we would put them on trays. 12 cans to the tray, about 12-13 trays high. We had a hand truck and we would take them out and would cool them in the warehouse that day. We didn't can every day. The next night we would come in. All during my high school years Vic and I would go out and label from 5:00 in the evening or whenever we got home from school, to possibly 10:00 or 11:00 at night. Again, we had the neighbor kids help us labeling. We labeled by hand. We had a friend by the name of Willford Sink, who was reconditioning cans down on the docks that would get tom or whatever, and he taught us the art of labeling. He would come and label with us night after night. This went on all through my high school years. The last year that I attended high school, I only went for maybe two hours a day. I came home and went to work in the cannery. I distinctly remember one time when I use to tell my teachers that I had to go home and work, I don't think she believed me. One afternoon Mrs. Rhinehart, showed up when I was out in the cannery, filling cans. From then on

We had some real faithful and loyal women: Florence Frazer and Patty Palmer. They started working in late 1945, after the war. They were faithful for many, many years. After I finished high school, in 1939, I went to Bums School of Business. It was there that I met the sweet young gal by the name of June Cox.

Down on our farm, at this point, Dad was also raising pigs. We had a lot of surplus cabbage. He grew potatoes and he would buy cull potatoes for \$5.00 a ton. We would go down to the buttermilk corner, and I would bring out ten barrels of buttermilk. We would cook the potatoes with cabbage leaves, put in some grain and feed the pigs. On a date, I would take June, or whoever I was dating at that time, out and show them our farm in Scappoose where we grew cabbage and cucumbers. By the time the war came along, we had converted it and we got rid of the pigs and we only had cattle at that time.

Vic was scheduled to be drafted in the Army. He went down for his physical, but because he had played football in high school at Jefferson, he had an operation on his knee that pertained to his ligament or cartilage. When he took his physical they refused him in the Army. When Vic was through, he and I said why don't we start up again. AJI had been sold

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by Dad. In those days, we made pickles in 45-52 gallon barrels. We didn't have many tanks, very few tanks, and we made pickles the old fashioned way, in wood barrels. They were manufactured locally, right in Portland. Western Cooperage was down at the bottom of the hill and they sold barrels all over the Western United States. They did a very fine job of it. So, Vic and I decided somewhere around 1942, after the war started, that we would go back in business, inasmuch as we had the far-ins. I would try to get a deferral from the service.

I was married at this point, on February 14, 1942. For awhile June and I lived with my parents. We looked for a house, and they said oh no, don't buy a house because things are too hi-h right now. We found a nice little house that was \$'@,000 out on around 26th and Xnsworth. We came back and told our parents and Vic about that. Vic said I was crazy, they had only cost the guy \$2,500 to build, and he's making a fortune. Mom and Dad said things couldn't go up, they'd always come down, so needless to say we didn't buy the house. I couldn't go on our honeymoon when we got married, because we had a contract to deliver some sauerkraut up to Seattle. I don't recall how many truckloads. June rode with me, it was in the wintertime. It was February and very cold outside. She would wait on the street comer, because they wouldn't let her go in with me on the truck to unload the kraut. So after a week or ten days after we were married we borrowed Art's car, a brand new Packard, and took off for San Francisco. We honeymooned in San Francisco for approximately a week. On the way home we had a blow out. Needless to say it was a traumatic experience, because tires just weren't available, because the war had started. As I changed the tire, I said a few cuss words. My wife came out and said, "I didn't know you said words like that." I said, "If you don't want to listen, you get back in the car and leave me alone to finish changing the tire." Well, she did. We had the return trip and we had a wonderful time. When we got home we had to decide as to what we were going to do, and where we were going to go to live. By that time, it was getting very difficult to find men to work in the bunkhouse by the month. So June and I went down to Scappoose and took a look at the old bunkhouse. We decided if it was okay with Dad we would clean it up, scrub it thoroughly, and make it livable for us. Which we did. We went down there and scrubbed the bunkhouse and started our life in Scappoose on the farm. We had several fellows still working at the time. There were a couple of rooms, what we called out in the washroom, so a couple of the fellows stayed out there and June did the cooking for them for a long time. A fellow by the name of Joe Brown, who was an old faithful and had been with us for years, would stay for sometimes three to four months at a time before he would go on a wing ding. We wouldn't see him for about a month until his money was all crone and broke. Needless to say a year later, we had a daughter born to us, Barbara, on the nineteenth of February. Mother's birthday was the eighteenth, so we named her Barbara after Grandmother. Joe just loved that little gal and worshipped her. Interesting things happen when you have fellows that work with you from Skid row and eat with you. One of them I remember, Ward, he would always eat with his knife. Then he would eat on the butter dish and take the butter. It kind of turned our stomachs with him eating with his knife and then using it on the butter. I think after awhile I did tell him that it wasn't the way we liked to see it done.

We milked cows at that time, and during the summer Francis and Dave Cox would come out and work with me on the farm. Dad taught me how to kill cattle very cunningly. We had cattle on the farms as well as our cucumbers and cabbage. Dad would say just help me get the cattle in to the pen, that's all you need to do. So after I'd get them in to the pen, he

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had a little slaughter house with a shoot there. He says now this is how you kill an animal, with one shot with a 22, and this is how you bleed the cattle, and then this is how you skin them and quarter them, etc. and so forth. I became quite adept at butchering animals for Mom and Dad on their market. They had the market at this time selling pork and beef, and they made their living that way. Because, as I failed to mention, when Vic was scheduled to go in to the service, Dad sold everything he had lock, stock and barrel. All we had were the buildings and a few barrels. So, Vic and I had to get barrels to start in business again. Dad at that time that he would loan us up to \$5,000 on loan if we needed it in order to keep us going. Well, by growing our own produce and selling and shipping it ourselves, we didn't need any help from Dad and we took off ourselves. At Scappoose we had put in .about a dozen tanks for sauerkraut. We made our Sauerkraut in Scappoose and all of the pickles were done in Portland, We had grown quite a bit. During the war we could not get a tin plate for canning, so we sold truckload after truckload of sauerkraut to San Francisco to go on the ships going, overseas, in lieu of fresh vegetables. Anything, that we could pack or make we were able to sell. All during that time, each time we would make a buck we'd put it back in the company. We'd buy another tank or a few more barrels. Things were rationed and of course, hard to come by. But inasmuch as Elsie and Art had a grocery store by then, and were operating a grocery store, we were able to get whatever necessities were available with all of the stamps that we were given from the government.

Since we were doing our own farming during the war, we were allocated Mexicans. There was a camp about two miles down the road for other growers. I had built some bunk houses for them down there, about three bunkhouses, and that would take care of about 14 men on our premises there. When I was killing beef, anything that I threw in to the barrels for the rendering company, the Mexicans would go through it. By the time they would get through with it, all I had was the hide left. They were in their glory getting all of this meat that I was going to send to rendering free. They would cook it and make their stews and whatever. I got along very well with the Mexicans. They were hard workers, very good workers. We sold all of the sauerkraut that we could sell at that time.

When we were short of pickles, which was quite often, (we would run out of pickles as far as Vic and I were concerned, of what we could grow and manufacture ourselves), we bought a lot from Hunt Foods who had a plant in Scappoose. It is now our plant where we make kraut. We would buy pickles by the truckload from CHB, as it was known in those days. Cecil Johnson was the manager. The very wealthy people, Jewish people down in Hayward, California, owned it, and we just bought truckload after truckload of pickles from them in order to supplement our own tonnage. They made pickles the same way that we did, so they were reasonably close, when it came to flavor. Every time we got ahead a little a bit, we'd put in a piece of machinery. In those days the only piece of machinery that we had was a shredder that you had to push by hand, We also had one knife coring machine. This was set on a jack shaft where one motor ran everything by pulleys. We would change it from Portland to Scappoose, because we had a few tanks in Portland. We would make some sauerkraut in Portland and then turn around and move the machinery back out to Scappoose. It was relatively simple, it was a 220-3 phase motor and if it ran in the wrong direction al I you had to do was change a couple of wires. One day, poor Otto Norderf, who was our field man at the time, was moving, the machinery from Portland to Scappoose, and in tipping it to move it we hit 220 wires. I'll tell you the two of us got a jolt that we'll never forget as long as we live. It just went through our bodies, because the floor was wet and

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we were wet, we were very fortunate that we didn't get killed by hitting those hot 220 wires with wet feet. In 1945 we hired Otto Norderf as our field man. He stayed with us for the next 30 years and ran the fields for us. Sy Walters was our plant superintendent, that came back from the war, in Portland. I was running the farms at those times, as well as making all of the kraut down in Scappoose. As the war was over and, as I had said, if we made a couple of bucks we put it right back in to the business. Vic and I only took a salary in order to support our families. Vic and I traveled together. If we went to San Francisco or Los Angeles on business, we usually drove in those days and we would take our families with us. It was quite a scene when we each had four children and would check in to a hotel, and maybe Vic would go call on the trades selling, and I would take them somewhere like to Disneyland, or wherever we went together with one man, two wives and eight kids. Everybody took a second look.

Vic and I got along very well. We were pals and friends, as well as brothers, and very little did we have differences of opinion. As we discussed the children coming into the business, we decided it would be best for them to work for another company for a minimum of three years. The company policy became such, and it worked out very well. So we agreed. One thing that Vic and I did agree, that if we couldn't agree on something we didn't do it. Of course, we were different in many of our areas and so it worked out very well. All of the boys, before coming to work at the company did have to go out and work for someone else prior to coming to the company. After the war, the old plant at Scappoose had sat empty from 1946/7 until 195 1. We decided to make an offer at that plant. There was 15 acres and 44,000 square feet of wood building that never had had a piece of machinery in it other than a hand truck in its life. We made a bid to the people in California and they accepted our offer, so we bought it. After the war, our oldest brother, Bill, went to work for Vic and I. He was mechanically inclined. We set to changing over the Scappoose plant to a sauerkraut plant. All during the days when Vic and I would travel together we would go back to the Midwest to Wisconsin and New York and see other sauerkraut canneries, because sauerkraut was probably as big as anything for us in those days. We would come back with a new idea and we'd put it to work. We had gone up to Puyallup, Washington where Libby's had a plant, and they had two large conveyors that they could bring conveyors in and you would always have a source of supply, you wouldn't have to run out. Down on the farm we did things so archaic in antiquity that there was no comparison. For instance, we had four bins on a truck. I would go out to the field and load these bins up. We had a dolly that would come in and there was about a two foot drop off the dolly with about 1500 pounds of cabbage and we would take it in to the machine and empty it and put it back out and put them on the truck. Well, this chanced our life completely by having these conveyors built at our Scappoose plant. Bill was the one who headed up this project. We had spent so much more money than we had ever anticipated on this, that we both lost sleep nights wondering as to whether we were ever going, to be able to pay the bank off or not, because it did take a lot of money. We went to our creditors and asked them if they would be patient, and the can company and the carton company said yes. Within a years' time we were able to bring our credit back in to shape. That was probably one of the most difficult times in our lives financially, because the banks wanted about \$7.00 worth of assets for every dollar they would loan. We had to put up whatever insurance policies we had for collateral, or any assets that we had whatsoever, and put them in the hands of the bank. I never did see my large life insurance policy until 10 years after we had

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quit doing business with them. That's just the way it was in those days, we had some tough nosed bankers that didn't want to loan money unless you really had some liquid assets. But we managed. We got through the 1951 crisis at the plant there. By this time we were selling pretty much in the West coast. We could sell everything that we were able to pack, which was very fortunate. We only had three or four brokers at that time, Spokane, Seattle, San Francisco and Portland. They did a very fine job and we were very fortunate to be able to sell everything.

Scappoose blossomed. The first thing that we did was tear out some 2x12 planks and we put a little cannery in at Scappoose. We were still using what was called a hand packed filler. That's a filler with a disk that goes around and around and you put four or five .women and the cans, there's a whole that you poke the sauerkraut in, and you pasteurize it. It was so hot when we had the fill that it still burned the women's hands. Every three weeks they would get a new set of skin. Of course today that would not be allowed. Finally we made a trip back East, and I'm guessing this would be the early 1960's and a fellow by the name of Bemle Eisenberg had invited all of the kraut industry back to see this new invention that he had made called the Solbem filler. It was in Seneca Castle, New York at the Block and Googenheimer plant, that a fellow by the name of Eddie Googenheimer was so gracious to invite us back to see it. Anyone who was packing any amount of sauerkraut in the United States stood around and watched this machine spew sauerkraut all over the floor in every direction. Everyone stood around and shook their head that it wouldn't work, it can't work. A fellow by the name of Gib Mealeous was the plant superintendent and he was mechanically inclined. He put his head to it, and he got that thing to working. We got back to Portland and I told Vic you know we are having so much trouble with our women burning their hands, because it's so hot to pack, that we've got to have a machine like that. I'll never forget, it was \$13,000 and you would have thought \$1 million today for the cost of that machine. We decided that we would buy it. I had written a purchase order back to the Solbem company and about two days later Bernie Eisenberg was on the phone. He was telling me that he had one machine left over and he'd like for us to buy it. I said I thought you were calling because I'd ' Just sent you a purchase order two nights before. Oh, he said thank you very much and was ready to hang up. I said Bernie wait a minute, let me tell you. Do you ever come out West? No, I've never been West. I said, well, if you ever do you come and see us and let us show you how great and beautiful a country we have here in the Northwest. Low and behold a couple of months later he calls up and says he's here with his wife Florence. He said we're in Portland, but we're getting kicked out of the Sheraton Hotel because of the President's coming in. I said, Bernie, what time can you be ready. I picked them up at 10:00 on Sunday morning and took them around Mt, Hood, took them out to our home and they stayed with us for several days. At that time, he was working on a mechanical cucumber harvester. He was telling me all about it. I said we had brought out an FMC harvester here and it could pick the crown fruit, but nothing else. He said, oh my heavens, take me and show it to me. Mine will pick everything but the crown fruit. He said I think with their help that maybe I can get it to work. So I took him over to Hillsboro and 'd why didn't I think of it myself. I thought at that time that showed him the machine. He said he was going to build and manufacture a mechanical harvester that would pick cucumbers, but it never did come to fruition.

Back to Scappoose and the making of sauerkraut. Up to this point we really didn't know too much about how much salt sauerkraut it took. We always had a can, we put it with a wash tub, that we did down on the farm with the Mexicans. Everything seemed to come or anything out all right. We had no knowledge of titration's or how to measure salts, acid

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We would go by taste. We built a scale at the plant when we remodeled it and weighed every load of slaw and every pound of salt. The guys that were in the tank didn't distribute it evenly. So, we would have spots that would be a little bit on the pink side, which is an indication of too much salt and spots that would be soft. For several years Tony Crawford and I, every time we'd come to can, we'd have to stand on the line to feel if the kraut was too soft or too tender to throw away, or if we could can it. That was a real headache for us in those days, as we expanded. I think if you look at our Scappoose plant you'll find that we built one warehouse in 1964 and then four years later we built another one and four years later we built another tank farm extension on there, because we had grown so much. -Incidentally, when we bought the Scappoose plant, as we looked at it, it had 164 - 5,000 gallon tanks inside of it. It was so old with just the 2 x 12's, like I had indicated you could only put a hand truck on it, that we started and backfilled and put the first cannery in there. After the cannery came a little warehouse. After the warehouse we backfilled more and put a little labeling room in it. Then from the label room we expanded that warehouse. When we did that we took out about 40 tanks and hauled them in to Portland. We thought at that time if we could ever fill that plant, that would have been our goal in life. Well, we finally filled that plant and we added to it another warehouse that had 14 - 10,000 gallon tanks, they were huge. We didn't have enough air in there, so within about seven years they rotted out and so we had to take them out. By this time, we were in to fresh pack pickles. Which we were processing all at Scappoose. We would receive them in to Portland and haul them to Scappoose. We started our fresh pack out in Scappoose because we had what was called an exhaust box that after we canned the sauerkraut, we still would exhaust it. In order to get sufficient heat, before we cooled it to make s

We had a large account like CPC Corn Products, who makes Best Foods mayonnaise. They were manufacturing the Fanning's bread and butter pickles at that time, and there was a new pickle on the market called the sweet cucumber chip. S&W was the first one to have it. They had a fantastic market. They had the whole Western United States saturated with it. Vic and I got in to the business with our experiments, trial and error system, and we made sweet chips. We packed about five more items for CPC that year. Probably 50,000 cases of a 12 ounce hexagon jar. We did that for two years. We got some real bad glass and they broke in our packer as we were packing them, and that was a nightmare at the time. Each venture that we would go in to, always presented the problems of working out the bugs of whatever we were doing and nothing came easy, it seemed like, for us.

We finally arrived with four warehouses at Scappoose, with an additional 44,000 square feet. We had filled all of the tanks inside of the plant at Scappoose and we had put a bank of tanks outside, We probably had upwards of 100 tanks outside. Then we had filled up Portland to capacity, every square foot that we could put a tank, we put in there. Each year it was an expansion here or an expansion there, until we had come to the place in 1978. Vic had been feeling bad for a long time and he was back in the Mayo Clinic. One morning at about 3:30 the phone rang and someone said your plant's on fire in Portland. June and I jumped out of bed and we raced in and we had just installed some new computers for the first time in 1978. The fire gutted the production area and the office. It just burned down, because of the lack of water in order to put It out. I thought, my, oh my, our life had come

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to an end with the loss of the plant here. Well, Vic came home finally and we sat down and we had several family working for us by that time. Vick had been working for us, Ray Jr. was with the company, Dick Ferris was with the company and Jim and Jane had finally come with the company. Continental Can was gracious enough to loan us, in one of their warehouses, an office on Columbia Blvd. They said, here take over. We had all of our friends in the industry call us up and say is there anything we can do to help you out to keep you going until you get back in the business? Nalley's and other competitors both. We said thank you very much, but our tank farm was still in order. And we had the facilities of Scappoose for canning and processing them, so we could still go by hauling our merchandise to Scappoose. We sat down as a family to decide where do we go from here - and what do we do. The boys said, look your parents gave you the ball to run with it, why . not us. Why don't we build a new plant. We can't expand here anymore. We had so many, what we call revocable permits at our Portland plant, that the City council said we don't ever want to see you down here again. But the last ten times they told us the same thing. So we decided, yes. Rick and Sy went around the United States looking at new facilities. They came back and went to CH2M Hill we put it on the drawing boards and they sketched out the plant that we have here in Portland. Really it was more than we could afford at that time, so we eliminated a lot of the things in there, such as half of the warehouse and some of the production area, because it was beyond our ability to perhaps pay them in the foreseeable future. But we had gone to the City and they had worked with us and we got what we call revenue bonds and we got the land at a lesser price. We started building here on the fast track, the warehouse first, the production area. We contracted each area as we went along, rather than a contract as a whole. By 1979 we were back in business again. It was a 15 year loan and both Vic and I at the time said, if we could either one of us ever live to see the loan paid off. I am happy to say that next month, this is July the 7th, that on August the 1st we have the reserve in the bank to pay off the 15th payment for the loan which will then render us free and clear from the indebtedness as far as the revenue bonds are concerned.

As I had indicated before that, Vic and I had got along as two brothers, I've always considered the business was a marriage and my home life was a marriage. We both agreed in our early days that we would never, as long as possible, let the two conflict with each other. Now I'm not here to tell you that it was always that way, I'm sure that Vic had some flack at home as I got flack at home as to why we were doing this or that, or why we couldn't have more money to spend and all of the other things that go with two families working together. But we did keep them separate, and as I had indicated, he was not only my brother but he was a good friend. Other than my wife, probably my best friend, because we worked together for so many years. We hunted together, we fished together, and we played golf once in awhile together, and while we lived on the farm, during the winter or whenever, if we weren't working on a Saturday usually he came out and we would go over the farms, we would talk, or he would bring the children out to ride the horses or whatever it was while we were on the farm. So we had a wonderful, wonderful relationship. Of course, one of the saddest days of my life, other than the loss of my parents and my brother Bill, was the loss of Vic in 1984 when he passed away. It's a loss that I still remember and I'm sorry that he didn't live to see the payment of the billing gone- We were most fortunate. Dad had died at a very young age, he was 61 years of acre. He died in 1945. Mother lived to be 83 years old, and she had a long fruitful life, living at the Baptist Manor. Of all of the people that I have known in my life, I have never known a harder worker than my Mother.

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From dawn until dark every day she would get up and fix breakfast for the people that we had living near and around our house. Martin Suerco was with the family for many years, she'd cook for him as she did the family, seven days a week. She would get up put something in the pot for lunch, come in there throw something else in to it. We'd have lunch, she'd go back out and work. I remember many and many a nights where she and I would go out and make sauerkraut alone. We didn't have-machinery in those days. She had to trim the cabbage, then cut it half, cut the core out in a V, and then I would shred it in to wash tubs and put it in barrels. I would get my rubber boots on and have two or three barrels going. Put salt in there and make the kraut. She and I would do that right after night during the season when Vic was not there, or the other kids were out doing whatever. ' As far as work, Mother worked as hard as anyone that I have ever known. She use to love it when we bought the plant in 1951, she would come down and trim cabbage, 'just to be doing something. Even though she had the market down there at that time, she would come down Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday's when it wasn't so busy, and would trim cabbage. When they finally sold the market down there and she got out of it, she still came as long as her little legs would carry her. She came down and trimmed cabbage and she trimmed it the same way picking up every head. Whereas down there we have the facilities you could cut it on a table, but no, she had to do it her way. I wouldn't dare to change her, because she enjoyed it so much. Mother was a real inspiration when it comes to work. Of course, as I've said we have been most fortunate as a family to have lived in a country called the United States of America where you are free to reinvest what few dollars you make, so that your future generations would have something to build on. We have been most fortunate, because we've had a business that has been reasonably successful. It's not a big business, but it's one that has supported all of our families for the last 70 years. For that I am very grateful. I was given the opportunity to work, and Vic and I picked it up and we went. We've had a wonderful time in putting the thing together and our hope and prayer is now that the third generation will be able to continue it in the same manner so that they will have the fruits for whatever length of time they want to keep the business. That it will produce for them a livelihood as it has done for Vic and for my family. May God continue to add his blessing on the Steinfeld businesses.

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