

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

SUZIE HOSPODAR

INTERVIEWED BY ARLENE SMITH

November 18, 1992. To keep the persona of Suzie, I have attempted to characterize the translation of an audio tape interview by writing in her charming accent, which increased as memories returned to her.

Question: Suzie, would you give us your name, birth and tell us something of your family?

Answer: I was born November 26, 1918 in Czechoslovakia, the daughter of Martin & Anna (Smock) Krizan.

Q How many brothers & sisters were there in your family?

A 4 boys, and 2 girls.

Q What was your grandparents like? Were you around your grandparents?

A Well, my grandma died when I was four. My dad lost his mother when he was nine years old,so that would be my grandma. So when my grandfather remarried.....so I didn't know my grandma at all.

My mother's mother I knew, because she was in the neighborhood, and I helped care for her when she was alive.

Q Tell us about your years when you were growing up.

A Well, we had a lot of responsibility, that responsibility in this country, on the children over there, don't have. I was responsible for raising my brothers & sister. I had to wash the clothes, change the kids, feed the kids, make their dinner, make the dinner for the family, when they came from the fields. I had the responsibility like a mother. I was only seven years old, but I had to do all that. She (her mother) depend on me. She teach me how to do it and I didn't complain, because she said I can tell you to go out in the fields, but it's too hard work there. You just can't do it. But you can take over in the room. So I was like a mother to my brothers and sister till I was 13 years old.

And then I went out to work to make my own living. There just wasn't enough income from the farm to keep us all going. And everything I made, came to the family. Always, something was wrong. Now my brother, he lost his arm, almost up to the wrist in a when they was thrashing, but the doctor told my dad, if you had 1,000 crowns, I could save his hand, otherwise I'm going to

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

cut it here (she motioned above the wrist.) But he said... well I don't have 1,000 crown, but maybe my daughter can help out. But I was a long way from home. I sent 1,000 crown and he has a hand left and 2 fingers left. See..... every time they needed money, I was right there to help.

Now one Christmas, my mother.... well, she couldn't see. You know she cleaned the chimney and got a lot of soot in her eyes and she went blind. So the doctor said, well, I'll send her to the eye specialist, but it will cost money, and people had to pay for all their bills, and that would be for Christmas, she lost her sight. I was going to come home for Christmas, I was going to save my money and come home for Christmas for my family. I was way down by the German boarder working, but I said, what's the use to go to mother, who was blind and can't see, if I could help her with some money that I got saved up. So I sent some money and she got her sight back. So really, I what I made over there, everything went for the family.

Q So your family pretty much worked.....

A We all did work, we all worked and there wasn't too much income from the farm, because we didn't have the tools, everything had to be done by hand. My dad had to shove his wheat like this, by hand. Until he had the opportunity sell his wheat..... and then he had to take a drag and drag it in so the worms won't eat it up. So we all had some kind of (work), my brother, John, took care of the sheep, my brother Martin took care of the stock, he took to market feed, and then my other sister took care of the chickens, and then I did most of the housework and the cooking. We all worked. Even thetook it easy. (?)

Q What did you do for fun?

A What did we do? We never had fun, but after school, once a week we had recreation. You know what we had to do? Every little kid that went to school, had to bring a hoe, over his shoulder, and every Thursday, when we went to school, teacher took us out in the field and we had to hoe potatoes.

Q And that was your recreation?

A And that was our recreation. You know what we got paid? Our dinner. The farmer fixed our dinner and that's all we got. There was no money comin in from no where. We was poor. We didn't think the situation.....but everyone was in the same fix. We didn't have anything. That's why our people (family) got kind of scattered around. After they got grow'ed up, and see they couldn't make any headway home. They went someplace else to make a headway. Just like me. I came to America, when I couldn't make headway. I worked very hard here.

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

My uncle (John Smock) had me doing the farm work, and drive tractor, and put up the hay, and milk the cows, and I did work all day long, you know. And he said, "I can't pay you. That's why I got you over here. I in debt, my wife was sick," (she still was sick and she died 3 years later. I took care of her.) He says "I still cannot pay you, but if you work, if there's anything left of this farm, it's gonna be your's, that's gonna be all your gonna get."

Q How was it that you happened to come

A Well, I had to come, because I was the only one who could come out of the country. You see I was 17, my brother was 21. He could have come too, but because our country already in the draft age, he was ordered to come to the draft at 21, see? and I was 18, the younger ones were under 16, and that was the only ones we had. There wasn't anyone (of her brothers & sisters) over 16. You had to be over 16.

So I came home for Christmas that year, and a, once a year I come home for Christmas. That time I come home for Christmas, my mother give me the letter from Uncle John, (John Smock) and I never knew Uncle John and never heard from him, and he wanted to know if she (her mother) had any children, because he needs somebody to help with the farming. And because he is a brother he could get somebody over here (to the U.S.) So he had to guarantee to come to this country, to give me a job for 5 years, I won't be a burden to the United States, pay my way, pay all the bills for 5 years while I'm working and a..... after 5 years, then I have a right to get married, and have a right to try for my citizenship. After I get my citizenship paper, then I could be on my own. (That is) Usually the condition that everyone can get to come over here. And because he didn't have any children of his own to do the farming, and he had to make a living off the farm near the colony,) so it wasn't too hard, all he had to do was to go borrow a couple of children to do it. (help on the farm)

Q Back in Czechoslovakia, when you were working, what kind of employment.....

A Well, I worked on a farm, most of the time. Ya, I worked on a farm, and then, towards the end the last time I went to the city, and I got a job at the restaurant. I was used at a restaurant as a cook.

A Back in Czechoslovakia?

Q Back in Czechoslovakia. That was the only vacation I had, when I came to this country. Now when I went to apply for a job over to Mr. Walker, he asked, could I cook. I said "I cook to home, but you'll have to teach me what

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

you want me to know."

A Now let's back up to where, when you came over. Tell us a little bit about what it was like to leave your homeland and come to the United States. Did you come alone?

Q I come alone, and it was very sad. I cried for 3 years at night, because the war broke out the following year and I couldn't get any mail. Now, I didn't..... wouldn't..... if there would be anyone left of my family or not to come to. I was indeed heartbroken. I was heartbroken, so..... I didn't want to go back there, because I couldn't. The war was raging, and after the war..... I know what was happening. Things weren't good either, so I.....soon as I learned English, I was happy. Now I went to work in city of St. Johns for Bud Clark and Helen, and she needed help, and she needed somebody, so \$1 a day, I took care of 4 children, did all the cooking and cleaning for \$1 a day, \$7 a week, and I work Sundays. And I said to myself, maybe I'm not making a lot of money, but I learn how to speak English, it be worth it. I believed that, so much, because I needed it to make a living. Because I needed advise and they tell me. Don't you think so? That was my whole idea. I said, "I live here. I didn't come here on a vacation, I need to make a living," and so I was working and making a lot of friends, I joined a church, I joined a choir, and everyone thought I was something special. You know?

Q Did life seem easier here, than it was in the old country?

A It did, It did. It was easier. Even though I didn't get paid. The only time I get paid was when I milked the cows. I took the milk and sell the milk to the neighbors in that big can right there. Like this (size of pail.) Everyday, and I take it every day, and on Saturday they pay me, and I end up, sometime, with \$3 or \$4 on Saturday, so I have some money to go somewhere and..... and some money to spend for what I needed. But a..... I wasn't big money, cause I, well.....just have to have shoe.

But it was the same thing for Mr. Walker. He paid me only \$1 an hour to do all the cooking. Mind you, I worked there 5 years and he told me \$1 an hour. But, I (was) treated well, maybe not much in pay, but what I learned, from that man, to me, I can use it someday. I never dreamed I (would) end up with the restaurant. But after I did, it come handy. In that kitchen, many time, I was thinking about it..... working like this, for almost nothing. I said, I figured on the chicken, I used to bring in chicken from the farm. I sell the chickens for \$1. We made 4 dinners out of that 1 chicken, I said "Gee whiz, he's make'n \$20 on a chicken!" That was a start! I figure, well, I'm not making a lot of money, but I'm gotten lot of ideas. This is what happened, so

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

when I took over that restaurant, I was in debt, well, gosh, by the time I have the building, and everything improved, and remodeling, I was in debt \$10,000.

Q How did you happen to take over?

A Mr. Walker died. She (Mrs. Walker) never did take much interest in the business. So when he died, she said "Sue, you....", she said, "I know you can save money, with the farm, you can raise your own vegetables, and chickens, why don't you buy this restaurant?" I said, "Mrs. Walker," I said "I would buy it, if I had the knowledge of the business." I didn't have much knowledge of the business. Well, she offered to help for one year. So she helped me one year. So she helped me one year and I..... I learned! I said, "My gosh, I....." after I got the language under control, you know, "I understand it." Then I was alright. Towards the end, what stopped me was the business cards. People come and pay me with the cards, and I don't know how to file or how to get paid, and they didn't call you or tell you how to get your money. And that, I couldn't do that. As long as I was in business, I had to have money coming in. And that was the only thing that pushed me about the business. My kids were scattered around and they couldn't help me with the business and Judy helped me with the tables and the book work, when she was around here, but she went to college.

Q Let's back up. When did you get married and how did you meet your husband?

A Well, I got married during the war. I tell you, I came here year before the war. I got married during the war. I got..... ah..... let me see, I went over there after the war and my husband didn't go to the war because I wouldn't let him. (Ha Ha) No..... he..... I needed him on the farm, you know. So, my husband could speak Slovak, just as good as I could. Because his parents came here from the old country. But, they never did learn English.

Q What was your husband's name?

A John

Q His parents were?

A Steve & Catherine Hospodar. I'll bring John's picture here. He was a nice looking guy and everything, but you know, when he started raising the kids, he wanted to raise the kids like he was raised. When his parents came to this country, they got 9 children and they all worked. Never got paid. Never had a

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

car. Never had nothen. Work came till they came in the army. And when they come back, they say, Pa, Uncle Sam paid us. If you don't pay us, we're leaven. And they were. That was the end of the farming. But John did. This is my husband. (picture) He was a nice looking man. Ya..... That was John and that was me. John was 34, and I was 26 when I got married. And this is our, this is our wedding. We had a big wedding. This is Pete Kurntz. That's Siptowsky, Theresa "Siptowsky" Martis. This is Hank, use to have the bar downtown, and..... Hank Powaski. This is a boy from Detroit, he went with Helen. This is Phyllis Armbrustmacher, she's the one who married Bruno.....Bruno Mazzolini,....Phyllis.

Q Not Bruno, Bruno's son, Don.

A Ya, Don, she married Don Mazzolini. Bruno came from the old country.

Q How nice (the picture)

A That's what I got. But John was a nice looking man. That was the first new suit he had, when we got married. I told his mother, I don't want him to go down the isle like a farmer. I want him to be dressed real nice. Because I want to get my wedding gown and everything. So..... but because he was a farmer, Uncle John told me, "If you marry a farmer, I give you the land, if you don't marry a farmer you don't get nothen. So here I was!

Q Look'n for a farmer?

A I was look'n for a farmer. I found a farmer, during the war, in the woods! I went to pick mushrooms, that's where I found John. He didn't have no place to go to find somebody, because he didn't ever had a car. So, but he was a hard working man. But, he was so used to the idea where his mother and dad lived when they growed up their family, he wanted to do the same with my children. I said, "John," I said "Our children need an education." I said, "This is why I went to work in town." I said "I'm gonna find me a job. And if you can make it on the farm here, and I know you can't without me.....you git yourself a job."

And he did. He went to Eureka and got a job in the elevator, working for Mr. Gower. He was there 6 years.

And I went downtown and I went down town, up and down the street saying, where can I get a job? I happened to go around that Walkers Cafe, on the way to the Post Office to mail a letter, and he was frying onions. It smelled so good, I went by the window, you know, and said, gee, something smells good here.

I went to the back door and got a job the next week I went to work. He hired

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

me because he knew I wasn't gonna be fussy what I do. But I gonna do everything he ask me to, and more. And he can depend on me. He can go home in afternoon, that's what he wanted to do, and I can make the supper and serve the supper and everything. He trusted me.

Q How many children do you have, Suzie?

A I have 3. I got 2 girls and a boy. And they all had education, I tell you.

Q What are their names?

A John, the oldest one is Judy. Judy Nobis. She's married. She got married when she was 20. And a, John Robert Hospodar, he's married too. He was married when he was 28.

Q Who did he marry?

A He married a girl in Lansing. She's from Saganaw. Mary....oh, what's her name, she's Italian. Foreconi

Q What is Judy's husband's name?

A Nobis

Q What's his first name?

A Glenn

Q And your younger daughter?

A My younger daughter's name is Helen, and she married Jerry Bhanette.

Q And you said you put your kids through school?

A John went to Ferris College to be a carpenter. He wanted to learn all about that measuring stuff and building to the plans and everything. And Judy, she went to Concordia College. She didn't finish, she married, because her husband already graduated from college. She wanted to get married. He had a problem with his stomach, he had an ulcer. The doctor told him "I'm not gonna send you to war, because you won't last long, but you get married and you can last awhile. If you have a good cook. So, they got married. So, that's how

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

it went. And Helen, too, she went to Concordia College. for 3 years, but because there it was Lutheran college, Helen's husband was a catholic. I said, Helen, I put you 2 years through college. You got 2 more years to go. If you're not gonna be a Lutheran teacher, you're not gonna get a job. I'm just wasting my money. So she quit the college and went to LCC and finished it up. She went to, she was working as a secretary. She worked for an insurance. Ah, finally she went and her husband went into business, and she's helping him.

Q Well, what now, can you think of anything else you would like to....

A Well, I'll tell you, In a way, I'm proud I could got the kids into college and a get'um to learn a little more than I did. Because they didn't have to start with ABC like I did. I went to night school with Bess Osgood, you know her, don't you? When she quit school, teaching, she was given these foreign people lessons. Now most of these foreign people was Mexican. All the girls that work at the hospital. I went to school with them and there was this couple that came from Czechoslovakia. So we..we went once a week, we had a lesson, first we had a lesson in her house. And then the group, population...then she got the municipal building, in the basement. We had a nice big room for lessons there. First she wanted, you know, from every one of them "What kind of future are you planning for yourself? What do you want to know?" Well I told her I wanna know about to write, to write checks. And far as everything is concerned, I can read my cookbook, but when it comes to writing specials on it which-a-ma-call-it (blackboard at restaurant) the girls do it for me. I had all the high school girls work, and they did, I didn't have to know that. Help me, I have to have numbers from 1 to 1,000. "How come so many?" Well, I said "Someday I might want to write a \$1,000 check. I want you to teach me to write down these checks." She wrote them all down and I still have some of those things left. And she said, "Well, that's a pretty good start." I said...a..."Mrs. Osgood, I don't want you to teach me how make money, I want you..... you gotta teach me how to spend money." (Ha Ha) She knows me up to now. She said "I know you're smartest one." That helped a lot!

I didn't make the payroll. My daughter made it. First I had a bookkeeper making it, but then my daughter got almost, and she made the payroll for me. The business had brought me money, but I worked a lotta hours. I worked 16 hours a day. And up and down the stairs, going all day, the stairs, I don't know, I had the Chamber of Commerce, I had parties, Xmas parties, there wasn't hardly any night during month I didn't have a party down there. And that kept me, and I was going from the farm. I didn't live upstairs then. I had to go back & forth, which was hard, especially in the wintertime. Many times the party broke up at 11:30 and I went outside and the snow was flying and I thought, how am I gonna get home? Five miles down those country roads. How am

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

I gonna get there. So I use to call John, He didn't work with me at the time, when he was home working. I'd call him and ask "How's the road, is it open?" Well, he said, you want to come home in it? I'd say, ya, I do wanna come home. He'd say, why don't you come from the east. And if I see you aren't coming, I'll start out with the tractor, and I'll pull you home. And he did it too. Many times he did. That was fear I always had, because I didn't want to walk because I was tired and then walk 3 miles on top of it. It was impossible. But then I bought the building, you know.

That was five years, we put apartment upstairs. For myself and all the other, there was a school board up there. You know before they build the new high school? The school had a meeting. The school (board) had all their offices up there. There was 13 offices upstairs. Above the store. Because a...Dick Wells, he was in charge. And tell you about the school board. After they built the new high school, and had their offices there, well, we started fixing the upstairs and make it into apartments. So we made a nice big apartment for myself and we had 3 besides. So we had income coming in from that apartments, and besides we didn't have to drive back and forth, so far, you know, to home and then when we were all settled there I rented the house. Someone had to pay that heat for all winter. But you know, I'll tell you, it was everything up to me, to make the decisions. I couldn't talk that over to my husband, because he didn't know nothing form nothing. It was all up to me, when I decided to, sometimes he didn't like it, but I said, John, maybe you think because I came from the old country, I'm dumb.....but I'm making a good living. Shut up and put up! (Ha Ha) And he was willing to help and you know everything, he raised a garden and I'd send him out to get some vegetables and sometimes when he come from work, he get bombed. And he bring vegetables from the garden, clean them all up and then chop them up and peel the potatoes and everything, and in the morning I would just make pies and work and I did everything else. But for 5 years he worked for Gowers, you know he liked the job there. Because that was something he was used to. He worked outdoors and people came in to make ground feed and he go acquainted with a lot of people. He was happy there. John.....but when he was around he did what he could, but he never liked me to associate with people, he thought I liked everybody. I said John! If you want to do business with people nowadays, you show that you care, that you like them. And that doesn't mean that I have to love everybody. But I really....I really did. Every morning when we opened up, I had a plate of Koloche's on the table and everybody came and helped themselves. No pay, I tell them it's on the house.

Q You were pretty well know for your koloche's?

A They didn't have to pay for it. I said that's on the house. Most of

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

them come to dinner and I make them, what the heck, I make them in the morning and they were nice and fresh, and everything and they liked them and so I didn't mind. Every time people had a party, they were always for dessert there. I make koloche's, I didn't have to make pies.

Q They're easier than pies?

A Ya. We're gonna have some Saturday. At the..... At the..... we're gonna have a bake sale at the Church. And lunch and bake sale and odd sales.

Q Now what church do you belong to?

A Lutheran, so Friday, all day I'm gonna make koloche's. Well, I'll tell you, I wasn't lazy, I was always looking for work to make a dollar, spend a dollar where it will do the most. I belong to the Chamber of Commerce and helped when they were decorating the, what-a-ma-call-it, city and when they was going over all the buildings here, I just bought the building there, and they said, we're gonna remodel all these buildings. We would like you to remodel, because you're right there on the corner, when people stop there by the stop light....

I said well, a ... I know, but I just bought this place, and I don't have the money. If you don't have the money, we'll let you have some money to do it, and later on you can pay us. But I didn't. I had Norm Radmacher to remodel the outside, because my son didn't have the scaffolding. My son did the inside, nights. He came 7 o'clock in the evening, when I closed and worked until 7 in the morning. The electric bill is \$300. We got the Mable Durkey shop all ready, you know for the coffee. For the coffee shop, you know, it took all that. Because he had to take all that 2 x 4 because our wiring was burning in between. Our wiring was old. Just like hotel. Why do you think hotel burned down? Steel Hotel burned down. All that wiring caught fire then they couldn't put it out. And every time Bob Ott came in he says "You know you're gonna go down like the hotel." I said Bob, I would like to do something about it, but first I have to buy the building. You know darn well I can't fix someone else's building.

Q Who owned the building before you bought it?

A Gay Estates. Gay properties.

Q Are you familiar with the old businesses that was in that spot? It is right at the head of main street.

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

A It was always.....No, I'm not familiar so much..... it was always a restaurant there. Ya.

Q Ever since I can remember it has been.

A Ya, it always was a restaurant there. Gay properties had it, and it was in quite a few hands. Mr. Walker was here 25 years. He was there the longest one.

But a....you know, everything had to be just right. If someone came in dirty clothes, he would show them where the door was. And you know, that don't work out good. If you don't treat everyone right, it didn't work out. Especially when some guys working in the streets, came in, he'd come out in the kitchen and say, load them up heavy, because they've been working hard. I said Mr. Walker, I don't mind doing that, but when the girls take all these big plates of food in next to somebody who isn't gonna get big plate, they're gonna complain. He said I didn't think of that. I said that's what's gonna happen, wait and see. I don't mind, it's your food, I'll load them up, but don't forget, you have other customers there, so he said "You got pretty good idea there." But I tell you, it just was hard going in business, but for me, because I could speak English good, and I was friendly with everybody. Mrs. Hendershott helped me quite a bit by the cash register, after Mrs. Walker left.

Q Suzie, tell us about your happiest day. When you think back over your life, what would term the happiest?

A Well.....I think.....well....I did come to this country. Because I didn't see any future over there. That's why I went there 5 times. 5 times..... it was no different. Last time I was there, I was so disappointed, that time, that I'm just glad I'm out of there.

Q What years did you travel back to Czechoslovakia?

A Well, lets see....first trip I made after 10 years. 1957....1957 I got over first time. 1960 was the 50th anniversary of my parents. I went over there the second time. And there was 65, and 1970.

Q Now all during this time Communistic rule?

A Well....after 1960 it was. Communistic rule it was. I took Helen with me. Helen was 8 years old. I couldn't take the younger ones.

Q Now had things improved over there under communism?

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

A Things had improved to the point that the buildings and the stores,...government buildings, everything was builded up nice, every thing nice. But part of the things of the people didn't improve much. Now they weren't getting paid much. Now they were getting paid, not much, but a....that helped that people had this health program...every time they had a baby in the family, they paid for it. Any time anybody was sick, they paid for it. Now they're kind'a up on themselves, so nobody goes to the doctor sometimes, Everybody goes late, it's just the it is.

Q Now the Communists reign was.....

A Now don't forget the Communists confiscated in 1960, all the property from the people. Farms, businesses and everything. So people really didn't have anything to go on. And other thing they did was give the education to the young people there.

Q And how has that affected the people there?

A Well...the education was kind'a one sided. They said you work hard, you earn your money, and you believe that everything comes from the government, and nothing coming from God. That's what broke the churches apart. The kids they don't wanna go to church. They say, what we want to go to church for, we got everything we don't need a God. This is what makes me and why do they say that now? Because this kids, that's all they know. The government gives us the school education, they get us the busses to come to school, we don't have to walk, and they give us teachers and everything, they have everything. But the parents, what do the parents have? Parents just have a lotta hard work. They can't give us poor.

Q This last trip you took over was when?

A This year.

Q This year? 1992? In August, July?

A Ya...That was first time I was there after the Communist Regime left the country. And they left with all the money there was, they had. They left them nothing, like I said. I mean they tried to elect a new government. Well, these candidates find out, there's no money in the treasury. No money to pay us. So they don't have any government now. And everything is in just such a mess that nobody knows where to turn. Because they go to church, nobody stops them. They can give their last penny to church if they want to, nobody to stop them. But

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

as far as the education is concerned, there is a public education, you know. And....I got a niece up there who is in education. Well, you organize the singers, in the school, like the choir singers, and on Sunday, we'll load the bus and we'll visit some churches and we can sing, and they went to Germany and all over, these kids. So they can see the world.

Q And I understand, didn't you buy them a P.A. system while you were there.

A Ya...Ya...Ya...so they can speak through it. Well, I tell you, I was glad to hear that (?niece) do that. But course the Communists was all gone now. And the Communists did that are all gone from the country, but before the people didn't have much either. They didn't have any...any....any a....tools to farm with. All the..sometime the stuff on the farm rotted away, and of course there was a shortage of food. The food was out in the fields, the potatoes were out in the field, they had to do everything by hand.

Q They did reclaim their land, didn't they?

A They got it back now, but you know, they don't want it. Because these old folks that they took the land from, are mostly gone, and another thing, they don't have anything to farm it with. So they're organizing the state. The State's gonna work the land. And they're gonna give the families so much rent. Like my brother had a farm. They had to divide it onto 5 parcels. And once a year, they're gonna get something out of it.

Q They do own the land.

A Yes, they do own the land.

Q You visited the school, your one niece is a school teacher works at?

A Ya...Ya....I visited the school each time I went. I visited the school each time I went. This time I was only once, because, you see, the last week of school. I said to Anne, (Suzie's niece in Czechoslovakia) if you organize it this week, I can come and speak, because otherwise you probably won't be able to get the kids in after school is gone. And I tell you, there was kids happy to see me, because I had talked to them before. And a...they ask a lotta..lotta questions. They said "Our fathers, we work hard in our country, how come we can't make a success? I said, you know why? Don't forget, you have a war every 20 years. That you make it burn. And they said, "that's foolish, we're not going to have those wars any more.? And I tell you, now..... we show now it's time (Czechoslovakia) is shaky too, but we tell

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

youngsters now if they think we're going to go and fight for something we don't even want, we're not going to do it. We let those guys fight out there. They want the Communists back, cause they had the easier life, and now they gotta be

I talked to the kids and they said we would like to come to America. I said you do? Well, I said it's not so easy in America either. You gotta study and work hard and everything. At least you can get something for it over here. I spoke to the kids that were about 8 years old. She had all those kids in the class, and their teachers were there. I ask how many wanted to come to America. They all wanted to come to America.

Q I understand you went back to celebrate your father's 100th birthday.

A Ya, ya, he was, he only lived 3 weeks after I got there. and he had 2 more weeks to go until his birthday, and he died.

Q. How did that feel?

A That, that was something, you know, after all those years. He said...brother said, "He would have died a long time ago if you didn't promise him." Last time I was there, 5 years ago, I said "Dad, if you live to be 100, I'll come once more." I was there with my daughter, Judy, you know. I didn't stay that long, you know, I just stayed 1 month. He said "I'm gonna keep the family here, so that you see me when you come here." But I didn't think he'd do it.

Because he left me something....because he give me something....he did. He was a hard working man and everything, but the idea's, that I go learn when I was a girl, that was something to take with me where ever I go. I was willing to work, willing to obey my superiors, or whatever they call it.... and he said "Well, if you can do that and earn some money, you'll be a good worker, and you can be a good boss too, someday." You know, but he had a lot of good ideas. So is...is.... is the thing. It's just something...in this country, I tell you, some of these 12 year old's that don't feel like worken', bum around, bum the streets, get into trouble, then they blame it on the parents.blame the parents because they don't spend too much time with their kids. They really don't. And so, I don't know.

I spent all the time I had with my children, and when I could be working, they was with me there, out in the fields. I had, 2, 2 little ones. One was John, and Judy, 13 months apart. One was in the back seat, sleepin', the other one was on my lap, goin' up and down the tractor, and when that fell asleep on my lap, I went and changed. I put the one that was sleeping and took the one that was awake. And they was always with me. And they know how hard I had to work. Since they was born, even now, they understand that. But I can be as

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

some mothers are, I am a hard workin' mother, and I teach my children to work. So....and I'm glad I did.

Q Well, I think you're a remarkable person.

A I think I did. I have a...in the 50 years I been in this country, I accomplished quite a bit.

I owe a lot to the Government of the United States. I owe a lot to myself, that I had the courage to do it, and I do think of my country sometimes, but I never forget that I have to come back to the United States, because this is where I made it.

Q That's nice, that's nice.

A I could never come here from Europe on my own money.

Q I think it's nice, and I think I've covered about everything, unless there's something else that you've got to say.

A No.....I just....I just....ah.....I'm thankful I can take it easy now, and I can visit with people, and I can help the adults, all the members, I can cook or something. I don't charge anybody anything Verna Joarae died last night. I took care of her fifteen years and I went 2 -3 time a week, took her food and see, when I moved to St. Johns, I didn't have no place to live so I stayed with daughter in Ionia, but on weekends, I come here, and Verna said, why don't you stay here with me for the weekend, and then we're gonna go out on it, and I was willing to do it and her daughters friends. I tell you, people can live here for years, and you just don't make the friends I made.

Q That's right, you've got a lot of friends, down at the Senior Center.

A Most of those people were in my restaurant, because when I see, when I dished out the food, and the waitress said, well, this is an old lady, and she don't want too much, I dished out half a portion. She paid for half a portion. When I sold the restaurant, the other girl, was doin' the same thing. She dished out a little bit, but she charged for the whole portion. Now you know, people don't have much money, and they don't like that. There cheating. Ha Ha.Oh well, I don't know....

Q Well, I think we're....we're....

A I think we got everything. In this country, that we want. Really, we

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

should have little more understanding of one another, I guess. Children for their parents, Parents for their children,children, and think we try government, our government is wasting, too much money, which could be used for something else. You know. When you think, all the money we're gonna waist in Washington, we could....we don't need to have people sleepin in the streets, and hungry, my gosh, can you see that. You knowI tell you, there's a television program, people in our country, they are well informed on what is going on in this country, they show the people how they sleep in the alleys. They don't do that in my country. They find a place for them to sleep. They won't leave them out there to freeze. And it doesn't have to be here either. There can be something done about it. And I was just shamed when I see that, on the pictures....You know what they think...the big shots don't say anything and let all those people freeze out there. Just to show you that television is good....but it can bring a lot of bad memories to people. A lot of bad memories. Ya, the news is not always good on the television. Just like after the war, you know. These ah...these ah...bodies....Germans, the jews and everything else. They had them in....they had them in concentration camps, and after the war was over...they loaded them on open cars, hauled right in the old towns and let people see them. All these hands and everything sticken' out....then they dumped them on a pile and burned them....so.....and then you sometimes wonder....I...our generation over there wonder... how come we had so many smart people in our country and didn't put a stop to it. Well, where did we slip out? We didn't have any..... around. But look at what he did. We knew something happened to our people like that. We got punished. That's one thing I can't understand.

Q I think that's the reason they step into so many countries now....because of that.

A They want a United Europe. And that means united! They want to help one another! If one country has a little shortage of food, they want to help out one another. But this is what they should have, really. I ah....just like they was ask'n, "How come you can have all that?" I said "You know how many states we have in our Union, 50." I think.....I show American flag to each school. I said "I want you to keep this flag, because this flag represents the United States. 50 stars, 50 states. That means we have a cooperation with everyone of these states. You don't declare war on each other. You help each other." I said "If you can do that here, you can help each other too." I tell that to the kids. They tell I am right. They say they're gonna do like Americans. Ha, Ha.

Q Thank you Suzie, and

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

A But everyone asked me to talk... and I say what's on my mind. Especially with the mail that's comin in.....

Q Now, the mail that's coming in from.....

A From Czechoslovakia.....I got a birthday this month too....I got a birthday on Thanksgiving, so I got a letter from my sister, I got a letter from my brother, I got a letter from my niece, a letter from my other nephew. Everybody writes me now, because it's my birthday. Well, I was born on Thanksgiving....26th is gonna be my birthday.

Q And now I also understand you translate

A I do

Q Mail for.....

A I do. I got a whole bunch of mail over there....(on table). There was lady, never thinks she, this lady over here, across the road, is ah...her sister, and she operates that bridal shop for the.....for her. And she's got relatives over there, and she don't know the father's name, mother's name or nothing. She wrote me the letter, in English. She say's write the letter, and send it over there. I got it already written, but I haven't sent it, because I want to read it to her, what I wrote. Because she said, "I don't know how to get a hold of those people." Ya, I do that a lot. Here's the letter I wrote.

Q you've got a beautiful hand.....(handwriting)...this is nice.

A Ya, this is....this is the letter she gave me. This is, see....I had to translate it on this sheet over here in Slovak. What she wanted to know. So...and then they can read this here (Suzie's letter), but they cannot read that (neighbor's letter).

Q That's nice...

A I help people out, much as I can, and when I worked in the restaurant, it was same thing. Soon as people find out I can read in Slovak and write in Slovak they bring the mail... but there is several times I had to do it evenings, but I do it.

Q Well....Thank you Suzie.

HOSPODAR INTERVIEW - 1992

A Well...I do what I could. I never thought I would own the restaurant. Because I figure he has 2 daughters, and they got a boy, Tom. I said they got children, they can own, they can take over, but they didn't want. You know.

*Transcribed by
Neyma Van Epps
18 Nov 1982
92*