

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Interviewees: **Doris Gurecky**

Interview Date: 11/22/2013

Interviewer: Roberta Terrell

Transcriber: Carlos Rubalcaba

Comments: Interviewed at the Gurecky's home in Rosenberg, Texas. Joe Gurecky also participated in the interview. 9 Pages



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Transcript

TERRELL: Good afternoon. Let's get started with some basic biographical information. When and where were you born?

GURECKY: I was born Guy Texas January 7th, 1938 at home.

TERRELL: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

GURECKY: I have one sister.

TERRELL: And she was born at home also?

GURECKY: She was born at home and I do know that there was a physician there at the time. Her name is Peggy Raesner. She lives in Guy, Tx.

TERRELL: What brought your family to Fort Bend County?

GURECKY: That's a long story. My paternal grandparents came [by ship] to Galveston in 1897 from Hostalkova, Czechoslovakia. They went from Galveston to Hempstead and lived in a boxcar to pay off their tenure to whoever paid their way here. From there they came to what is known as Old Guy which is somewhere around Long Point and from there they bought some property in Guy and that's where they settled.

TERRELL: They were married when they arrived?

GURECKY: Yes, they were married and had two children and were expecting one when they arrived here. This was my father's parents.

TERRELL: Did your dad come on the ship with them?

GURECKY: No, my dad was the next to the youngest and he was born here.

TERRELL: How many children did they have?

GURECKY: Figure it out Joe (chuckle to her husband). From my daddy's side there were nine siblings. I don't know that much about the German side of our family.

TERRELL: What type of work did you grandfather do and your father?

GURECKY: They were both farmers. They grew cotton, grain, and corn. Dad had some cattle, yes.

TERRELL: What type of work did your mother or your grandmother do?

GURECKY: They both were homemakers. They worked on the farm.

TERRELL: Did they can?

GURECKY: Yes. My grandmother made cottage cheese, which we hated at the time, but would love to have some now. (chuckling). Every time we saw it hanging on line we would run and hide. My mother also helped with the field work.

TERRELL: Did you have chickens?

GURECKY: They had chickens, guineas at some point in time. They never raised any turkeys or anything like that.

TERRELL: Did they buy food from the grocery store?

GURECKY: Yes, they did. The store at that time was in Guy. It was a little general store in Guy and they would buy their groceries there and feed for the animals.

TERRELL: Did it include meat and vegetables? Were they self sustaining?

GURECKY: I can remember they would buy meat at times. I don't know if my grandparents lived off of the land or not. Later they did purchase meat and canned goods.

TERRELL: Did you live in the same house growing up?

GURECKY: I lived in the same house growing up, yes.

TERRELL: Were there any families who lived near you?

GURECKY: There was a family that lived near us were the Batkes, the Susans, the Barinas, the Fotjeks, the Buchtas, the Marouls and the Kesslers.

TERRELL: Where did your mother grow up.

GURECKY: My mother grew up in Moulton Texas.

TERRELL: Do you know where your parents met?

GURECKY: They met in Moulton Texas. One of my dad's friends was dating her sister and he came along one time and that's how they met.

TERRELL: Stole her away.

GURECKY: Stole her away, yes (chuckle)

TERRELL: Did you play with children of any of those families living nearby?

GURECKY: The only ones that had children of my age were the Susans. They had a girl that was my age and two younger daughters. We played house, we played probably mainly house, coloring, made mud cakes. Played doctor with the chickens and killed some by feeding them too much corn!

TERRELL: Oh me, you should have been a nurse (chuckling).

GURECKY: We jumped rope and we would play jacks.

TERRELL: Can you tell me a little bit about Guy, what was there when you were growing up.

GURECKY: There was a grocery store, a post office which was all together. A beer joint and two cotton gins. When I was a teenager, my dad was part owner of one of the cotton gins. One cotton gin shut down very early, don't remember it as much other than it was standing there empty. That was kind of the center of Guy. Towards the highway there was a dance hall where we spent a lot of time. It is now on the George Ranch.

TERRELL: What did you do on the George Ranch?

GURECKY: The dance hall was not at the George Ranch at the time, it was in Guy and it was moved to the George Ranch. When it was in Guy it was high off the ground. My dad did Sokol, which is like gymnastics... it was a Czech thing. There are still metal plates in the floor for the chin up bars.

JOE GURECKY: They were secure in the floor but they could be removed for dances and functions. It was a Czech name for gymnastics.

TERRELL: As a family what did you do for entertainment?

GURECKY: We went to dances (chuckling) My dad was in plays in the Guy dance hall. We would go to movies, a lot. There was a theater in Needville, and two theaters in Rosenberg, and one in Richmond. My daddy was a real western movie buff and sometimes when there was not a lot of work we would make a movie in each city. My parents would go dancing and we would just play outside with the children that were at the dance. When we got tired we would go lay down in the car, there was no worry about somebody hurting us or anything, you know.

TERRELL: What were the roads like?

GURECKY: Muddy. Sometimes Dad would have to ride horseback to get to the grocery store or to the Post Office. I can't even remember what kind of car we had. One time we were coming home from somewhere and we slipped off into the ditch full of water. I opened the door and let my little sister slide out into the water! Thank goodness Mama grabbed her.

TERRELL: My word, that was a lucky.

GURECKY: Yes, that was lucky.

GURECKY: When it was real muddy we wouldn't get out. If we did we would go on horse back to some neighbors across the way that we would visit or they would to come to our house and visit.

TERRELL: So did you ride as a child?

GURECKY: My dad never taught me how to ride. He would put us on the horse with him, but he would never put us on a horse by ourselves.

TERRELL: Where did you go to church?

GURECKY: We went to church in Needville to the United Church of Christ. It was at that time The Evangelical and Reform Church.

TERRELL: What about school?

GURECKY: I went to Guy School, we had no buses. Most of the kids walked to school. I was one of the lucky ones, my mother and dad took us to school everyday. If there was anybody walking they would pick them up and take them. They would pick us up and bring us back home.

TERRELL: Was it a one room school?

GURECKY: It was, no it actually had three rooms and an auditorium and a library. There was first, second, third and fourth grade in one room. Then fifth and sixth in the other room. The other room I think had been used at one time probably went higher, but by the time I was there that room was just used as a storage room. They didn't have class in there.

TERRELL: Did you go to high school?

GURECKY: I went to Needville high. When they closed down the Guy school, I went to fifth grade at Needville elementary school and from there went to Needville high school and graduated. I went to business school. Southwest Business School in Houston.

TERRELL: Did you work in Houston after that?

GURECKY: I worked in Houston, for probably six months and then we got married. I did not work after we were married. ET: 00:14:5We got married in fifty-seven. Graduated in '56 and got married in '57.

We have two girls who live in the county.

TERRELL: Can you just describe a typical day in your childhood?

GURECKY: I was lucky, I never had to work in the fields or anything like that. My sister and I would go to the field just for fun, to maybe pick a little sack of cotton. The neighbor girl and I would get together during the summer most of the time. When we had cotton pickers that would come and they had children that were too young to work in the fields we would play with them. Just entertain ourselves however we could.

TERRELL: Were there any racial issues?

GURECKY: No, in fact we had a black boy that came to live with our family when he was thirteen years old and he stayed with the family until he passed away.

JOE GURECKY: Sixty-two years later. Stayed on the farm sixty-two years.

TERRELL: That's a long time. Did he marry?

GURECKY: No he never married.

TERRELL: Do you have a favorite memory about growing up on the farm?

GURECKY: We had dogs, but I never really had a dog that I would call my own. But we did have dogs on the farm. One of them would steal my jelly bread all the time.

TERRELL: What are the major changes you have seen in this area during your life time, the best and the worst?

GURECKY: Golly, Well there has been a lot of growth.

GURECKY: A lot of farm land is being sold and being developed, but where our farm is, we are out next to the Moore ranch, we are kind of protected from that, It's mostly small farms around where we are. There are no big plots of land that a developer would be interested in unless they could get a bunch of them to sell. Our little community school was closed down, the grocery store closed down. The two gins are gone, so that's a lot of change. Seem like all of the young people move to the bigger city or bigger town.

TERRELL: Do you have friends who still live there?

GURECKY: I know people who live there but no real close friends other than my sister. I have friends that live in the town of Needville but not out on a farm anymore.

TERRELL: You said that you had a document about the ship that your grandparents came here on?

GURECKY: I have the ship manifest, yes. I can't read them, but I do have them. And the passenger list showing my grandfather Josef Valcik and my great grandmother Johanna Zaidel. (see page 9)

I remember during the war my mother had ration coupons. My mother used a lot of sugar so she would trade gas coupons for more sugar coupons. I do have some poll tax receipts from my parents. I don't know if I have copies of those because they are all framed.

JOE GURECKY: Also you have... the property value of the farm.

GURECKY: It was the tax receipt. The property tax was just very low compared to now, very low. People visited more back then. We had company just about every Sunday or we went somewhere every Sunday. We always had chicken for Sunday dinner.

Also I remember having blackout curtains during the war. You didn't turn on lights or you covered the windows so no light could be seen from the outside. There was a watchtower in Guy. The men in the community volunteered to watch for enemy planes.

TERRELL: Do your children come over for Sunday dinner?

GURECKY: When my parents were still living we would get together just about every Sunday. Now the kids are involved in so much that we don't get together as much. They say we need to do it once a month and I tell them I'm here let me know when your coming.

TERRELL: Do you think that all of the activities are good or bad?

GURECKY: I think they should not have activities on Sundays at least.

TERRELL: What about all the school days?

GURECKY: The school days, yeah, all the outside sports. You know they play volleyball tournaments on Saturdays, they play volleyball tournaments on Sundays, baseball all of that stuff. No I don't think it's good. I think it's good to keep them occupied but I think they do need some family time.

TERRELL: I do too. Where did you and Joe meet?

GURECKY: We met at Needville Junior High in the seventh grade.

JOE GURECKY: The first time we met was a Halloween carnival at Long Point. We were in about the fifth grade. I liked her.

GURECKY: (laughing)

TERRELL: How long have you been married?

GURECKY: It was fifty-six years this past November.

TERRELL: Okay, can you think of any more humorous stories?

GURECKY: I probably will after you leave (chuckling).

Interview ends.

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Wilem Filip.	Anna Vavřinec.	Jakob Gorczyca.
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*Ships passenger list showing grandfather Josef Valcik
and great grandmother Johanna Zaidel*