

BC & CANADA  
THROUGH  
ARRIVING  
EYES



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Vancouver, BC

JACK PLOESSER

interviewed by

MARC STOECKLE

*October 22, 2015  
Robert's Creek, BC*

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# Interviewee

Jack Ploesser immigrated from Germany to Canada in 1956 with his parents when he was four years old. His name by birth is Jörg Wolfgang Plösser and he has lived in Canada now for about 57 years. Since his arrival in Canada with his parents he had lived in Vancouver mostly North Vancouver and presently he resides in Robert's Creek, BC on the Sunshine Coast. Jack worked during his life as a taxi driver, bush plane pilot, technician at Capilano university, potter, etc. During the interview he tells his experiences growing up as a child of German immigrants, his connection to Canada, the time his parents had a restaurant on Robson Street (then also called "Robsonstrasse"), his only visit to Germany after he immigrated and the struggles his parents went through trying to make a living in Canada.

# Interviewer

Marc Stoeckle is the research assistant of the project "BC Through Arriving Eyes". He is currently a master's student of Library and Information Science at the iSchool at the University of British Columbia.

# Notes

## Abstract

The interview was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2015 in Victoria, BC. In the interview one of the topics Jack Ploesser talks about are her experiences coming to Canada, growing up as a child of German immigrants, his connection to Canada, the time his parents had a restaurant on Robson Street (then also called "Robsonstrasse"), his only visit to Germany after he immigrated and the struggles his parents went through trying to make a living in Canada.

## Restrictions

The recording is muted two times as the interviewee was providing information that the research team considered to be too sensitive for publication and once when the recording equipment was functioning probably.

## Format

The sound recordings are available in wav-format.

## Transcript

The transcription is providing the words in verbatim sentences but does not include non-verbal communication or external sounds transcription.

# Interview Transcript

*British Columbia and Canada Through Arriving Eyes*

**UBC Library**

Humanities and Social Sciences Division  
Walter C. Koerner Library  
1958 Main Mall  
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z2

Transcript of interview conducted October 22, 2015, with:

JACK PLOESSER

by:

MARC STOECKLE

STOECKLE:  
#0:0:00.0# This interview is recorded for the purpose of the research project "BC Through Arriving Eyes" by the University of British Columbia. It is October the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 and the interview takes place in Robert's Creek. The interviewer is Marc Stoeckle, research assistant of the project and the interviewee is Jack Ploesser.

PLOESSER:  
#0:0:23.9# Ploesser.

STOECKLE:  
#0:0:23.9# Ja. OK. So... could you tell me your name, age and place of birth?

PLOESSER:  
#0:0:30.4# OK. My name is Jack Ploesser but my real name is Jörg because ever since I was four years old I went by Jack. But my real name is Jörg Wolfgang Ploesser and I came from Frankfurt am Main and I'm 63 years old and have lived in Canada for about 57 years... something like that. Came here in 1956 and always lived in and around Vancouver except for a few travels and things but most of my life has always been in either Vancouver or now Robert's Creek is 50 miles away... not even that far... 40 maybe. Frankfurt am Main that's where I was born. We came here in 56 and I was 4 years old. We landed in Montreal and came across the country although I remember nothing of it... not even the boat trip. I see pictures of myself on the boat but they don't ring any memory. Suddenly at four when we arrived here... I've suddenly got memories from 1956 and we lived in the immigration building which is now been torn down but there was an immigration building at the foot of Thurlow Street in Vancouver and we lived there for... I think it was only about three months and then moved to downtown Vancouver on Granville Street and we lived there for about two years... two or three years....

STOECKLE:  
#0:2:14.4# OK... so... so we got interrupted by you telling how you came here. You said you moved after living in the immigration...

PLOESSER:  
#0:2:24.9# Yeah we lived in the immigration building for about three months and I don't remember much of it except... there was a couple of things that I always do remember that I really liked. One was that there used to be some boats docked... it was right on the waterfront... and there was this fireboat... and I grew up always having a fondness for this fireboat... whenever there was like a big ship would come into Vancouver and the fireboat would go out there and do all this big spray and everything... it was really impressive to watch... I don't know what they do now... because they eventually sold it but that was something I really liked and I used to play on the dock right in front of the building. I'm sure my parents were watching me but I used to... I

think all my life I've had quite a bit of freedom in terms of whatever I wanted to do 'cause later on on Granville Street... which is like literally downtown Vancouver... I used to ride around on my tricycle and that was a couple of years later... and my parents didn't seem to bother me too much about it. I think things have changed nowadays but... we lived there on Granville and it was above a cleaner... there was like a dry cleaner in the basement... or the lower floor and we lived in an apartment building that was ... I think there was three apartments up above this dry cleaner and they occupied I think a whole floor they were sort of like stacked and so we could look down on Granville Street and see all the parade coming by once a year 'cause they used to do a big parade. So all we had to do is to go to the window which was kind of nice... and... what else did we... I grew up having a real strong feeling for being a Canadian. I don't have any memory of being German... not from Germany... I have German memories because my parents were German and we spoke German and I can still speak a smattering of German but I can't... I... I have no recollection from the time my memory starts is here in Canada and I don't know why that is but later on as I grew older I started to think more about being German or how there is that heritage that I had ignored as a child and... growing up here there was kind of a funny reason for it 'cause I guess I'll... in the 60's and that there was a bit of ... I don't know how you would call it... it's not even prejudice it's just that... people who were Canadian born and breed were very proud of there fact that they were Canadian and they didn't easily respond to foreigners... didn't really matter that you were German... you could be Hungarian or Swedish or whatever you know... it's just they didn't really take the foreigners. I think that's completely changed now. One example was in those days... people used to change their name often... like if you had a foreign sounding name it didn't fit in very well... nowadays it's really cool... people like it and they... they like everybody's foreign name from anywhere it doesn't really matter the more complicated the better almost but in then... and so I guess I grew up with that sort of in the back of my mind a little bit and just got along very well with other kids and that. Even though some of them were also the same thing as me. There were lots of people had immigrated around that time. I know that... I don't know an awful lot about my parents history but I know that my mom... her side of the family was more to do with farmers and I don't know too much about my dad's side except I was always thrilled to find out that my grandfather was a train conductor. I thought that was really interesting but he died fairly young. He was only in his 60's, I think when he died. Maybe even 50's but for sure by 60's and my grandmother, she lived to be 90

so over 90, 94 or 96 I think so she had a long life and all my relatives unfortunately... we kind of got separated when I left or when my parents left. And so all the relatives are in Germany and now some of them I'm sure have passed on many of them and I never grew up with the benefit of grandfathers, grandmothers, cousins, all that stuff which I think is a shame but I didn't realize it. I used to think it was good when I was young... you didn't have to deal with all that family stuff but I kind of understand now that it's a really good thing to have all that family stuff. It's really important. So I grew up very much free to do whatever I wanted. I could go wherever I wanted and never had to... sort of told a line ... or I don't know how you wanna call it cause I didn't have to worry about all this family obligations that lots of people do. So we lived in West Van for about four years which was really beautiful near the waterfront... I could go to the beach and you know just a few steps and then we moved to North Vancouver and I spend most of my... growing up time as a child in North Vancouver and living pretty well in the same area not just... near the entrance to Lynn Valley which is were... you know Laurie lives further up that way... actually yeah sort of that way. Anyway... North Van was such an idyllic place 'cause it was so wild still. It was still a beautiful country setting and even when I was growing up it was not uncommon to see horses going up and down Lynn Valley Road... lot of things have changed... has growing up a lot... I just have to think about what else to say. Could we stop just for a sec... OK... OK.... I just trying to think where I should go from here.... Cause I don't wanna spend to much time blabbing...

STOECKLE: What... what I would ask you right now .... maybe because you said your parents took of to Canada...  
#0:8:33.7#

PLOESSER: OK...  
#0:8:43.3#

STOECKLE: So... could you tell us maybe what they were doing and... like job wise or what kind of background they had and why did they leave Germany?  
#0:8:43.3#

PLOESSER: What's really interesting... 'cause I didn't know this when I was little... of course because parents are not going to tell a little child these things but my... we lived in Germany... before I was born my dad had a business and I think he was selling tools.... it was kind of hardware sort of kind of a business and I think he did very well for a while and then I think something went wrong but of course that is something I found out later form my mom that I think there might have been some debts... and that was part of

the reason he left but I don't think that could have been the only reason. I think there was also the thing to go to a new country my dad was quite bitter about the war and everything to do with warfare... and he said once I guess when we went to go to the immigration and I got my citizenship he said he didn't want his son to have to go fight in a war which is really something I always remember from my dad you know one of the main things that I admire him for. I would... couldn't even begin to think what I would like being going through something like that all our parents from that time went through all that... and it must have been horrible. So I know that they came to Canada on some kind of I don't know if it's called a grant but the Canadian government was offering rides to Canada... and I guess the first so many months... you know you get some money or something like that and then you have to pay that back.... I think there was some sort of a grant I think they were offering. I think that was part of it too.... and.... my mother I don't really know if she really ever was that excited about coming to Canada. My dad was.... but I think my mother was sort of reluctant and she never integrated very well... she could actually speak English but she almost refused to. She took many, many years until people were suddenly like surprised: Oh you can speak English... because they just thought she never learned it but she just never really spoke very much. She...

STOECKLE  
#0:10:54.1#

Why do you think she was... reluctant....

PLOESSER  
#0:10:58.1#

She... it was partly herself the way she was. She kept to herself very much, very introverted and not such a social person and then also just I think this kind of... maybe she felt a little bit ripped away from her life and you know... I guess in those days' women didn't question what the men said... what was going on and they went along. Maybe nowadays the women might say: Forget it. I'm not going... but... both of them went back and visited... so they had at least that to go back and... reacquaint themselves with the life and with friends and so on.

STOECKLE:  
#0:11:34.6#

Do you remember they.... you came here then... to the immigration building, Granville, then West Vancouver and then North Vancouver.... Do you remember what your dad was doing for work to make a living?

PLOESSER:  
#0:11:52.5#

Oh yeah my dad when we first came here he got a job as a cook on a yacht because he was in the sea fairs union, 'cause he used to work for the Arosa Line I guess it's called... there was a big steam ship company Hapag was a big steamship company

and... so he had his some sort of papers for that... so he got a job working on a yacht and then he ended working at BC ferries. He worked there for about three or four years and we got this house in... well we moved to West Van because it was more convenient and then he bought a house in North Van cause then it was a little bit cheaper in North Van and... in those days I mean the house... this was 1962 I guess... was it 62... 61 maybe? The house cost my dad 12,500 \$ and it was an oversized lot. It was a lot that was a hundred feed wide and he could have had even an option.... no, no sorry, sorry... it was a 15-foot lot he had the option to buy the next 15 feet but he diss... he didn't take that option which he probably should have but anyway... it was hard enough just to pay the 12,000 because people only made a dollar an hour something like that... and everything went fine for a while but the... there was some kind of tension at work and I don't really know enough about that. I know my dad had a few medical problems... he had narcolepsy... so he sometimes just fell asleep. Which can be... something not very good at work if you're working with the public and you suddenly fall asleep and he had no control over it... it didn't happen all the time and it wasn't as bad as I've seen on some documentaries... some people collapse.... he wasn't that bad but he would just fall asleep and I guess people got annoyed and eventually he ended up I think he got fired. I'm not sure if he got fired or if he was sort of asked to leave or whatever but... so life after the ferry was really tough for him 'cause he had a hard time finding a job and he had ended up trying getting a job several times as a cook like just some sort of a line cook and never really got paid very well. So his... he kind of got bitter... in his last working years and... on top of that eventually he had an accident and that was really bad... a really quite serious car accident... so....

STOECKLE:  
#0:14:21.8#

How old was he when that happened?

PLOESSER  
#0:14:21.8#

He was... I can figure it out... but I think he would have been in his early 60's or late 50's... in... around there and it was one of these things where he just barely lived through it... he was in the hospital for about a week or something and my mom, she got a job too because I guess there wasn't enough coming in from my dad so she used to go... like a lot of women in those days... were just clean houses... like I don't know domestic help I guess you call it and she got to know some really nice people through that and they would give her things. They were very... you know doing that kind of job you work for well to do people but these were nice well to do people they always gave her nice things... I

think they grow fond of her too and it was this funny thing about my mom... where she .... she wasn't really social but she had... she had this little bit of .... people would get affection for her but it's hard to describe but she was actually very, very sort of sheltered in her ... she didn't talk a lot... which was frustrating growing up with having a mother that wouldn't really respond very well you know to all the little things that teenagers have to go through and all that stuff 'cause you need to have somebody ask questions once in a while or at least if nothing else to tell you no, you can't do this or that or whatever you know... and my dad was away a lot 'cause there was a period they also... were... he was working on other ships, tugboats and others things like that... as a cook again and so he'd sometimes be away for two or three months or at least a few weeks. I guess that was when I was in my teens and...

STOECKLE:  
#0:16:11.1#

Do you remember that... did they speak to you in German?

PLOESSER  
#0:16:14.9#

Yes, yes my parents religiously... especially when I was really young they talked to me German... in German and... as I was getting older I spoke less and less German back which is... I've seen from other people which is very typical with immigrant children where they... they get so used to English they speak it constantly all day long and I guess they get bored with their own language and I think it's a shame because you can lose your language if you are not careful. I still remember quite a bit... I still... I can actually... I've been told I speak with a Frankfurter accent too when I speak German...

STOECKLE:  
#0:16:50.7#

Oh really...

PLOESSER:  
#0:16:50.7#

When I speak German. But my... the German I speak also is bad because it's never been taught to me in school so my grammar is completely wrong and messed up and as well as the grammar I always speak in the... the... what do you call it... the way you'd speak to children ... the familiar form I think it's called or whatever... the family form... and, and so you don't always use that in everyday life with anybody and... it's so many words are lacking that I kind of have a lot of stops and starts but you know the basic things I can get by quite easily... even...

STOECKLE:  
#0:17:34.5#

They spoke German and you responded in English...

PLOESSER:

Often... and my parents always called me Jörg and everybody

#0:17:36.9#

else I knew called me Jack so it was kind of weird too... I don't know things like that or you know... they are settle at that time but they are weird when you look back at it and when you think about it. And the whole thing about Jack... the way it came about and I remember this vividly walking to school when I was 6... 5 years old and I was gonna go to Kindergarten. This was in downtown Vancouver... the school was about four blocks away, five blocks away and... on the way to school my dad said well people won't know your name here they are not used to it they can't pronounce it... bla bla bla... and so he said we call you Jack so I didn't... I was like sure he could have said giraffe... it would've made no difference... Jack so it just stuck from that moment on that was my name... it's kind of funny the way that happened... and....

STOECKLE:  
#0:18:31.2#

Is it actually... did you officially change that? Or is that...?

PLOESSER:  
#0:18:33.3#

It has never been official but I have it on my passport as a name... I don't know... I just told the government this is my name I go by... it's a nickname I guess in.... I guess there also used to be a lot of people had nicknames... Jack was a nickname for a lot of Jones in the like 40's and 50's and like that but know there is people naming their children Jack as a real name... and so that was then and it stuck and I've always been... I always gone by that...

STOECKLE:  
#0:19:5.5#

Do you remember going... do you have some memories still going to the Kindergarten? Like for the first years...?

PLOESSER:  
#0:19:16.0#

Very few but I remember I didn't cry when we went 'cause I know some kids they go to Kindergarten and they can't stand being separated or whatever. I think I'm sure I was a little apprehensions but I didn't cry and what got so... I was walking back we stopped at grade one there so I know for sure from grade one I walked to and from school on my own so... I think parents let kids do more things like that in those days maybe now it's a little bit more sheltered and then went to halfway through grade one we went to West Van so... I had to start another school in West Van.... and that was fine... we had split up schools so... split up classes I mean... so there was grade one and two in a class and then there was two and three in one class 'cause there wasn't enough students for a whole class I guess. And I remember my first grade one teacher her name was Mrs. Brown.... and I don't remember lots of... I mean there is lots of little individual things here and there... I don't know...

STOECKLE: Do you remember for example... I would imagine but maybe  
#0:20:23.7# you were just too young but... you didn't speak any English when you came... came here... and you were probably really young but coming then for the first time going to the Kindergarten and everybody speaks another language....

PLOESSER: That's what I found fascinating... sometimes when I thought  
#0:20:37.6# about when I got older because I can't remember learning English and I guess children really suck things like a sponge like they learn really really fast and I just learned English. I must have learned it in about a year. I can remember those sometimes being stuck for the odd English word but not very much just, just a few words here and there. It didn't happen that often... maybe it happened more often when I was younger and I just forgot I don't know but as I got older there was very... the odd word occasionally but I sort of remember the German one and what how do I say that in English but... but it didn't happen very often and it just... it's like a metamorphoses or something which was kind of interesting how that happened and the German stuck but just didn't.... I probably should have at least one year of school or something... would've been better.

STOECKLE: And do you.... so you went to... you went to school.... did kids  
#0:21:34.7# there know that your parents are German? Did you have any like weird...?

PLOESSER: In the later years... if not... probably didn't come up in grade  
#0:21:47.8# one or two or somewhat like that... but maybe later on. In fact, I remember grade one to three very, very happy. Lots of friends... there weren't even seemed like girlfriends, boyfriends... didn't seem to make any difference but something seemed to change a little bit in grade four. I went to a different school... I don't know if that was part of it but there did seem to be a little bit of a different feeling in grade four. Kind of like being the newcomer and maybe not entirely welcomed... not by everybody but just by the odd person that was you know sometimes a little bit... there is always a few bullies in school so you know... and I never was terribly bullied but I meant there was the odd bully you'd bump into once in a while....

STOECKLE: Because you were of a German background or just because they  
#0:22:31.7# didn't like you...

PLOESSER: It came up occasionally...  
#0:22:35.4#

STOECKLE: Oh really?

#0:22:35.4#

PLOESSER: Not, not... mostly it was very settle but I remember having a fight  
#0:22:35.4# once in grade seven I guess...

STOECKLE: What happened there...?  
#0:22:43.6#

PLOESSER: It was actually...it was kind of funny because it was.... this is  
#0:22:43.6# almost ironic 'cause both of us were immigrants. He had a Dutch background and I had a German background and he sort of made some slurs which I can't even remember now exactly what he said but it was something to do with referring to the name or the war or something... I'm not even a 100 percent sure anymore but we actually rolled around in the yard... in the school yard on the ground. Never really amounted to that much... it was mostly rolling around and pushing and shoving you know and maybe... somebody got somebody in a hammerlock... headlock or whatever. That was about it... the whole fight maybe lasted a minute, two minutes and... it's funny that it would been with him 'cause he was also an immigrant but he had made some kind of funny remarks to me. With other people there was one thing once where I had a friend who.... this was what would've been grade four I guess.... their parents... it wasn't him at all you know.... his parents found out that I was German and they told him that he wasn't supposed to be my friend anymore and I found that out a little bit later but I thought it was.... even at four it's a little bit of a shock. Even though you probably forget about it in five minutes... but you do remember it later and then you think about it.... yeah that is kind of not very nice or whatever...

STOECKLE: Do you remember where there were coming from like where  
#0:24:3.3# there are from?

PLOESSER: I think they might have been English but I can't remember that  
#0:24:6.4# for sure that's a guess pretty sure from the name McFadden it sounds... sounds English to me....

STOECKLE: So you were friends with this... with their kid and...  
#0:24:15.5#

PLOESSER: I went to their house twice and I think the second time.... I don't  
#0:24:19.8# even think the parents told me... I think they told their son to tell me I think... if I remember correctly.... I don't remember a parent actually saying that to me.... but anyway it was... it was... that was much more definite... that was because I was German.

But I... there wasn't anything.... anything else through my childhood would've been way more settle than that... if there were anything it would have been gestures or sort of nothing over it you know like actual telling somebody no... don't come over here sort of thing... and it was a bit silly you know but I guess some people still had strong feelings or whatever.

STOECKLE:  
#0:25:5.4#

Do you remember your parents talking about something like that? Or did they....

PLOESSER:  
#0:25:9.0#

Yeah.... sort of. My dad probably wouldn't have brought it up to much but I think he... he had some of that too. But with my dad it was... I look at it differently now than I would have then because as my dad got older he started to have some sort of medical problems... mental problems in the end and who knows... that could have started in the war or something... I mean... again... going through something like that and... must really leave some.... terrible scars on people you know... but anyway.... he eventually was a little bit paranoid about people so that's why it has sometimes a funny connection if he ever had feelings about people when I was young I look at it from a different light after knowing that many years later you know... because it did go back quite a ways his... we found out later....

STOECKLE:  
#0:26:16.3#

OK... so you... so you went to Kindergarten, then here it is elementary school, high school...

PLOESSER:  
#0:26:26.9#

There is actually... elementary school goes till seven and then you go to some schools only go to ten but I went to a school that went eight, nine and ten and then I went to another school that was eleven and twelve and that... eleven and twelve school... Carson Graham in North Van was a fantastic school. It was a new kind of concept at that time where they let students do more of what they really liked... so I took electronics, I took my pottery... I took ceramics and I took chef training. I took a whole bunch of things which you know you can sort of debate whether it was smart or not. I don't think I was a very good academic student so who knows if I really lost anything but it's, it's another question 'cause sometimes the academic is brought out by a good teacher too so... who knows... 'cause I like science know its just at the time I did like it. I still don't like math I hated math then....

STOECKLE:  
#0:27:29.5#

Me too.

PLOESSER:

So it didn't take much persuasion to... I wanted to go to Carson.

#0:27:30.2# I knew Carson was like this and Carson was a little bit of a longer walk and it might have been had maybe fandangle a little bit just to... 'cause it was in one sort of district and I was going to another district but I managed to get in there.

STOECKLE:  
#0:27:48.9# And your parents were just like... yeah just do whatever you want or did they kind of pushed you in a direction?

PLOESSER:  
#0:27:53.2# They didn't really push me... my dad was an artist... sort of a closet painter... that he never got to pursue his art the way he would have liked to and... he was fairly in... when I was growing up he did lots of painting and later on he did less and less but I think... he might have admired my willingness to wanna pursue that and anything artistic. He didn't sort of come along and said no, no, no you shouldn't do that. Even at one point I wanted to be a photographer and he didn't deny... didn't say I shouldn't do that either but it's... it became what it was and I think I benefited from taking ceramics and art history and all that stuff in high school but I probably should have gone on to do the same thing after school and I didn't. I sort of going on my own way... little too independent I guess... maybe that's from growing up very independent. Maybe I became a little too independent. I don't know...

STOECKLE:  
#0:28:54.0# This is quite interesting to here because like usually there is this perception of Germans who are actually more like strict... and OK this is what you have to do... especially that generation... not that they were super liberal...

PLOESSER:  
#0:29:6.8# They were quite liberal. Although again my mother didn't really put any restrictions on me you know... maybe she should have and my dad once in a while he would... I was scared of him when I was little like you know... most kids are a little bit afraid of there father and as I got older he did sort of left me alone... I don't know... I don't know why he wasn't a little stricter. He bought an encyclopedia... Encyclopedia Britannica when I was about 16 I guess which was a big expense at the time I guess and it was like here study this... I don't know... I'm not sure what exactly he meant by that but it was... it was partly for school of course you know but I... maybe he would have liked me to go on do mathematics or something... but he never chased me about it.

STOECKLE:  
#0:29:59.8# Do you remember... during your... childhood or... anytime? How often... did your parents go back to Germany and how often did they bring you or...?

PLOESSER:  
#0:30:14.4#

I think it was very tough for many years so they didn't go back until quite a few years later. They would have been both a least in their 50's maybe even late 50's before they went back... 'cause... I don't know how old was my dad when he... they came here... I just have to calculate it for a second... could be. I guess my dad was in his late 30's coming to Canada or maybe about 40 and... yeah would have been 40's late 40's and my mother just a couple years younger and so it wasn't until their late 50's when they went back to Germany and... they send me when I was 16. It just sort of... here is a ticket you are going to Germany and I was supposed to go and meet all my relatives which was a fine idea but I think at 16 I don't know if I had enough appreciation for that. If I would have gone maybe one or two years later maybe I would have had more... maybe I would have stayed for a while or something, got a job or whatever who knows. I found out quite a few years later that I could become a German citizen because my mother never gave up her citizenship. My, my dad I think he did 'cause he became Canadian but my mother never became Canadian. She stayed as a landed immigrant or whatever the status is... so I went to the consulate and found out I could become a German. So I had a German passport for a while but I never had a lot of money to travel at that time. I did my travelling a little bit earlier so I've never went... I probably should have.

STOECKLE:  
#0:31:51.8#

So you... but they... you went to Germany when they send you?

PLOESSER:  
#0:31:54.5#

At 16.

STOECKLE:  
#0:31:56.2#

And how long was that? How long were you then in Germany?

PLOESSER:  
#0:31:58.4#

Oh that was only for about 3 weeks....

STOECKLE:  
#0:32:0.1#

3 weeks. And what did you do there...?

PLOESSER:  
#0:32:2.4#

Getting a little taste of it... I stayed with my relatives visiting other relatives in a few little places around Germany. Going to restaurants, meeting my grandmother... stayed with my uncle and aunt... and just got to know a few of the relatives... you know. Went to a few dinners and things and... went out a little bit on my own just walking around just getting a little bit of a feel for Frankfurt, the main Hauptbahnhof and things like that. It's

interesting, it was really interesting but I was little too young to appreciate it 'cause it was...

STOECKLE: What did you feel... like OK I wanted to go back as quick as possible or you just thought...?  
#0:32:40.5#

PLOESSER: I think right away... I probably didn't want to go at first. You know spoiling you know sort of like... OK. And after a while I actually... my voice changed slightly... I got a German accent. The ... about a week from the time I came back I had this accent for about a week and then of course I lost it 'cause I really don't have any kind of German accent but it's interesting how... once you use your language that there are innate things about that language you know... it's just... it's in there... you know... and so I had this little bit of an accent for a while. It was interesting... my... some of my relatives where very interesting. My... I think it was a cousin, he was a photographer and that was interesting to me at that time 'cause I was just learning about photography. He worked for a big "Metallgesellschaft". I'm not sure the...

STOECKLE: Ja... "Metallgesellschaft"... ja  
#0:33:38.0#

PLOESSER: And... there was a cousin that was kind of like me... same age... and he was also... no direction... kind of like me at the time.... so we were sort of similar and...

STOECKLE: So that was the first time since you came to Canada with your parents being back in Germany. But you already felt this is like...  
#0:33:55.4#

PLOESSER: No this is funny. I never really felt German... not entirely... 'cause I think it's 'cause of that memory thing. My first memory is here. If I would have had some memory from there maybe that would be different. I have this one... I don't know if it is a memory or a dream... I don't know if it's reality because it is sort of being in a crib in an attic looking up and my grandmother is looking at me. It could have been a fabricated dream in my mind but it might be a memory too. It's a very foggy one if it is.

STOECKLE: So you were glad going back basically back to Vancouver after those three weeks... and...  
#0:34:32.3#

PLOESSER: Yeah... I appreciated the experience but I was coming home.  
#0:34:37.5#

STOECKLE: Yeah coming home.... And what... how did your parents feel when they came.... when they went back to Germany for a while  
#0:34:40.6#

and then came back. Do you think like.... what was your experience. I don't know if you know....

PLOESSER:  
#0:34:54.2#

Well I don't know entirely. Like my dad's health was failing a little bit by the time he visited... he went at least two... two or three times and my mother went two or three times. They didn't go together, they went separately. I don't know why... but... my mother probably benefited more... well I shouldn't say that. I don't know entirely... they both had their friends and relatives to visit. Relatives would have been the main reason. That would have been probably entirely the reason to go.

STOECKLE:  
#0:35:27.2#

'Cause you were saying you missed not having relatives or grandmothers you could visit what usually do as a family like over the weekend or like on holidays and your parents just went back two or three times... that's... that's...

PLOESSER:  
#0:35:43.1#

Not much...

STOECKLE:  
#0:35:43.1#

No... it's not much over a lifetime and do you think they missed that too... the support of their family....?

PLOESSER:  
#0:35:51.2#

Probably. Money was part of the problem. It was... cost quite a bit to go and... it wasn't... money wasn't as free flowing as it might have been. My parents never were very well off and they would probably have liked to go more often especially my mom... I'm sure she would have... yes... yeah.

STOECKLE:  
#0:36:15.1#

Did they make friends here? Canadian friends? Or is it more like... they were like in their German culture here in Vancouver?

PLOESSER:  
#0:36:22.2#

They made some friends but not really long lasting once. Not... not close friendships. My dad actually made friends quite easily but they... something he didn't make long lasting ones... he didn't reach back to... he didn't get back to people he'd sort of... have a ... friendship with somebody and then they would kind of fait or something and I guess my mom... they were both a little bit insulatory or insulating... living in their own little world and... like Christmas we would have... the three of us... that would be Christmas... where a lot of Christmases are a big family thing right... or even if your family is not there then you adopt a family. Like I have done that over the years' sort of... wandering around on my own after I left home and there is always people that are very willing to invite you into their home at Christmas you know. Or if you live somewhere you have a land... I had this landlady she was... we were always good

friends and when she moved away to another house she invited me over at Christmas and things you know if I wanted to. So there was always things you could find if you wanted to but my parents didn't really look and that is sort of a shame... I think that might have contributed to my dad's eventual kind of mental breakdowns that he had. I'm sure it added to it.

STOECKLE:  
#0:37:49.1#

So... OK, you, you came back from Germany... was that after high school? When you finished high school... you were 16 and then...?

PLOESSER:  
#0:37:57.3#

I was either in my... I think I was going back to the next year. This thing when my dad wanted to go to the States... that happened when I was sixteen. I think it was the following year I went to Germany. So maybe I was going on 17. I think I... no... I must have been going on 18. It must have been... no it couldn't have been at the end of high school 'cause I went directly up north. That's my independent streak again... I even finished high school early and zoomed up north to look for work. I just was hell bend to work....

STOECKLE:  
#0:38:28.5#

What is the north? The Yukon?

PLOESSER:  
#0:38:28.5#

The Yukon... and I went up there with a friend and we hitchhiked around and stuff like that... we got a job in a mine. I stayed for ten months... or twelve... no ten months and one friend only stayed for a few months but I have two other friends that spent... one was about 2 years and the other one was about 15 years in the Yukon. 10... he spent 10 years there and... it was an experience... I enjoyed that... didn't really wanna spend more than my 10 months although people said you'll be back and I said bye. I didn't want to go back. It's OK... there is nothing wrong with the Yukon it's just not for me. It's rolling hills, little short trees and very bitterly cold winters which I guess it's changing nowadays and very rural. The cities are all tiny. The grown up is Whitehorse is a little bit bigger now but there are tiny little city or towns really. What else did my... I guess getting back to my parents I think they.... they didn't have a very happy old age I think... lot of struggles for many, many years and about the time when people would be retiring and relaxing... I think they still found life a really big struggle.

STOECKLE:  
#0:39:50.7#

You went up to the... I don't know... just to follow up on that... to the Yukon... and you went back and what did you do then? Because you left home then right? To your parents?

PLOESSER:  
#0:40:1.9#

I stayed... a little bit after I got back from the Yukon but it was just for a little while. A matter of at most 6 months but I think it was even less. And then I went up to... I started driving a taxi and I... I was... I had my own basement suite somewhere on Lower Lonsdale and then I had this notion... first I did a couple of short trips on the motorcycle just... one down to California and I think up here and... then the next year after that... I think I've been driving taxi for three years and I decided I was gonna go to South America. I had many friends had gone to Europe and I just wanted to go to South America. So I guess maybe that is again that thing if I was... if I had any feelings for Europe I should have probably gone but I just... it seemed like everybody headed to Europe. I just wanted to go somewhere else and I have an affinity for Latin America. I like it so... I don't know... I just went and I spend about a year in Latin America... that was fun...

STOECKLE:  
#0:41:6.6#

Which countries where you?

PLOESSER:  
#0:41:6.6#

Mexico and all of Central America. Columbia and Ecuador... and that's when I drove my van to Panama and... we left here... four of us. We were all gonna go together and I guess the original plan was actually driving through Latin America like... South America but we had no idea just how big the whole route was gonna be. I mean you can do it but it's complicated. You have to put your vehicle on a boat in Panama... it has to be hoisted on a boat and you have to pay for that and there is a lot of corruption and so on but... it was just as easy to sell it there. And I found somebody in the canal zone and that made it a little bit easier 'cause in all of Latin America at the time at least the car was worth a lot of money... any kind of car, any old beat up car was worth money and so I managed to sell it to somebody who was a little bit more on the North American level of income or whatever and so they... that... they leave that alone... they won't restrict you from doing that. And then I just took a plan to Columbia and I spend about 8 months in South America which was kind of fun. I got to the border of Peru and I wish I would have gone further south in Peru but I didn't. I was a little bit tired of movement at that point. I've been travelling around for a while and I just wanted to hang out somewhere in... and I liked Colombia and Ecuador. So I did those two countries for about four months each and I was... I mean at an age where it's just into hanging out and you know I was probably... you know some people might have been going to university. I might should have been... but I wasn't... so then...

STOECKLE:  
#0:42:59.4#

And then you went back to Vancouver after that trip?

PLOESSER:  
#0:43:1.0#

Yeah... yeah... I went back and I started driving taxi some more because it was simple to get in and out of that. It didn't require much and at the time at least when I started it was actually a decent job. It got sort of... the job deteriorated over the years... it's not a nice job now I think. They work way to hard for their money and then one of the other taxi drivers who was also a pilot and so he said this thing to me... that you should become a pilot. Why... I just didn't... I should just become a doctor... it was... that just made as much sense and so anyway... I ended up taking this little trip up north... to the Queen Charlottes. It was just a holiday and I got into Prince Rupert and from Prince Rupert I flew over to Queen Charlottes. And that was a really beautiful experience. In an old grumman goose that lends on it's belly on the water you know.

STOECKLE:  
#0:43:54.6#

Oh cool...

PLOESSER:  
#0:43:55.3#

It was really neat. Some of them are still flying and even though they are sixty years old now or something like that. But that did inspire me a little bit after this fella was saying that to me and I eventually did get my license and everything... persuad that for a few years. But it was... it was good but it wasn't... it didn't end up being the career I wanted. It kind of went for a while and then sort of... the recession happened in 1981 and it kind of blew the doors off of a lot of jobs like that. There was people looking for work that had more experience than me and so I sort of gave up... maybe I shouldn't but I did.

STOECKLE:  
#0:44:38.7#

Did you fly commercial... like those bush planes"

PLOESSER:  
#0:44:38.7#

For about 2 years I did that.

STOECKLE:  
#0:44:40.2#

Where was that then?

PLOESSER:  
#0:44:40.2#

Well out of Vancouver actually. I was really lucky. I went to Saskatchewan. I got a job there but there was not much going on. So I went back to Kelowna and I got a bit of work... work there... still not much going on and then ironically I went so far to get a job. I ended up getting it back in Vancouver. It was simple little things flying back and forth to Victoria. I used to

deliver newspapers... three o'clock in the morning I take off to take the newspapers to Victoria... and some charter work... a little bit of charter work and it was actually a nice... a fun little company to work for. I flew a plane I really liked. It was a smart plane for the kind of work I did 'cause sometimes it was landing in strips not the best landing areas and they had these big balloon tires and everything so it was a good plane and then somebody came and bought the company and I think one of the first things they did was get rid of that plane and so I ended up going to another company there was just a job offered to me and because before the recession it was actually pretty decent. And then... that didn't work... it worked out... but it only worked out for about three months because the boss was... was... long story... but he wasn't very nice and .... fired all of us actually... there was three pilots.... he fired all of us. So there it was like... you can have one person doing something wrong... but all three people were not doing it wrong you know.... anyway. He... I had a little bit of... missing feeling for not working with people in an environment where your... it's like a social environment... cause I was flying a plane... I was driving a bus... I was driving a taxi. It was always... I mean there were people there but they were always... you know... they weren't connected to me. So I got a job in a bar... which... it's OK... I don't think I ever really wanted to be a full time bar tender but I ended up doing that for about five years and then eventually I got tired of everything and went into... what I wanted to do when I was 16... which was pottery.... you know ceramics and... I... more or less got successful at it but successful at pottery is kind of... you know... it's not gonna be way up the ladder of some corporate job or something... but you still... you know I was independent again I guess... I have this independence problem you know so I was working for myself... nobody to answer to... and I did that for about 17 years... till now I have a job driving a bus again which is part time so it's...

STOECKLE:  
#0:47:17.9#

So when did you.... when you started the... the pottery. Did you get the house here in Robert's Creek?

PLOESSER:  
#0:47:25.8#

No that was actually... I started doing that in North Van and I had a job at Capilano College and that was a job in the same thing. It was kind of a lucky... the way I fell into that job was kind of lucky. I did have ceramic experience but I wasn't like... I got a job as a technician so maybe I wasn't quite qualified but I still knew a fair bit about what I was doing so I kind of learned a lot pretty fast in my job... and I did that for about 9 years... so that gave me... but it wasn't a well ... it was a well paying job but it wasn't many hours so I got well paid for a few hours. So I did lots

of other work in pottery besides my two days of the week I worked there. And so I was sort of employed already for ten years in North Van as a potter although part time and then came up here with an inheritance bought the house and became a full time potter and it... everything changed over night just about... within six months there was a huge change from going to being full time from part time. You could see the... the quality went up dramatically. It was quite something... 'cause I had to... that Linda said that I had to admit... yeah it's definitely better. I couldn't even look at things I made before. How did I ever think that was any good. It's kind of funny... so then... it had worked here fairly well... at times of the year it was quite good but at other times a little bit rough and if I had manage to figure out a few things for myself to trying make the most out of a job where you never know your income is coming from to try and smooth it out over the year... I don't know smooth it out isn't the right word... to try and find places where I could make almost a regular income so I used to go to hospitals and set up in the lobby and... and you make your bookings throughout the year and you pre-book the year. So I know I've got six bookings for a year in one hospital six in another maybe even ... at one point I did three hospitals like that six each and then.... that worked for a while but it... started to change a little bit too and I started for the last... I guess it's been about 17 years I've been going to two hospitals and that... one of them has decided they were going to stop the program... then the other one... probably... I'll just leave it where it's at... I probably stopped there myself. And just trying to make what I like. I'll do my bus driving and I... instead of having to make 10 of those, 10 of those, 10 of those... I gonna make one of a kind I really like. So... we'll see where this goes if I can manage to do that... 'cause it is... you know when you do it full time you got the discipline in there... if you doing it part time it's probably hard to get the discipline to work hard at it.

STOECKLE:  
#0:50:25.9#

Yeah, I have a similar experience with my music it's the same thing and the quality is just going down if you do it part time. If you do it full time all of the sudden you get like it is so much better....

PLOESSER:  
#0:50:35.6#

So maybe this won't work out but maybe it will.... I am just giving it a try... I don't have to keep driving the bus... will see what happens...

STOECKLE:  
#0:50:48.1#

I love that. I didn't know that you had all those different jobs. It's just that you were a bush plane pilot.... this is so cool....

PLOESSER:

Well, it could have been very cool. It was really cool for a little

#0:50:53.9#

while and then really in 1981 there were so many people just suddenly... and what was happening... for the kind of companies I was working for... they get these contracts on the coast... they would fly loggers and different people... maybe there might be some mining... some mining company people or whatever... and all those contracts just about over night... not all of them of course but quite a few of them were just... OK we can't afford this right now we have to... you know... cut our expenses and all this... 'cause charter aircraft is really expensive when you fly from here to some little place that you can only get there by air. They charge you for the return trip... so you have to pay for both trips so it's really expensive.

STOECKLE:  
#0:51:36.7#

Could you... I was just wondering... you told me kind of like a really little tiny gist of your life... what happened and what you did and all that... and I was just wondering what your parents were doing all... during that time and I don't know... could you tell me little bit about like what... how your parents actually... how long they lived... what they did maybe...and what happened to them?

PLOESSER:  
#0:52:6.6#

OK my dad lived to be 69 and my mom was 79. I believe those were the two years. My mom died in 1990... 91 I think it was. 91 yeah... maybe it was 92... sorry. 1992 and my dad died in 1980. And so there was a lot ten years between. I was flying when my dad died... I got this phone call... you know...just out of the blue... he had had some bad luck with his health... so it wasn't uncommon for him to be in the hospital. So the hospital phoned and said your dad's in the hospital and they hadn't quite finished the sentence so I was... when I first heard that I thought... oh he just had another spell right but then the rest of the sentence was... and he died last night. So... that was kind of little tough to take at the time because I was... you know... trying to do something else... my mom was alone now and there was just a real sort of turmoil. But... what they did in the meantime they... my dad tried so many different things... I mean he had this thing with BC ferries... it wasn't to bad. But when he lost that I guess he had to get a job and one of his ideas was to just open a restaurant and I guess he found one that was sort of willing... probably... I don't know anything about what it cost to get into it but he suddenly had a restaurant on Robson Street. There used to be this little two block area on Robson Street that that they called "Robsonstrasse" this was in... late 60's going maybe to about 1975 somewhere in there maybe a little bit longer than that. And there were quite a few European places... there was European news on one side of the street. "Vreiber" which was selling delicatessen and stuff when there was hardly any

delicatessen... that's everywhere now but in those days there wasn't so many. And there was another German restaurant down the street from my dad's... the funny thing he... instead of calling it something like German restaurant... or some kind of name that referred to German. Instead he called it the "Yellow Parrot". I don't where he... whatever name he didn't like but he changed it to the "Yellow Parrot" and he didn't emphasize anything German which might have been smart but he didn't cause the other place was called "The Heidelberg" which made sense... anyway it wasn't... he just did western food he wasn't trying to... there might have been some German thing on the menu I don't remember 'cause I was pretty small... I was around 12 or something... and that... was kind of fun for me because I went to school in North Van... we lived in North Van and then I would take the bus into town at night... after school. So I would arrive... you know... 4 o'clock in the afternoon or something... 4.30 maybe and hang out at the restaurant and then we'd all go home when the restaurant closed and they were... that was really tough work too. They worked hard for that and they got me to do a few little things but they probably could have made better use of me. They did the same thing... my parents didn't chase me to do a lot of stuff. One time... my dad asked me to serve some ladies who were sitting at a table and they had a coffee and they wanted a refill. But nobody had ever told me that you go pick up the coffee pot, take it to the table and refill their cups. Instead I made two new cups, I brought it to the table... and all that wouldn't have been that big of deal but they were laughing, chuckling and my dad was laughing and I felt like... why doesn't somebody at least say... just take the coffee pot... you know. So... he didn't really make an effort to kind of teach me anything about restaurants. I was kind of not very useful and he often gave me 35 cents and said go watch a movie... 'cause that's what movies cost in those days... for kids anyway... for kids they cost that much. So after the restaurant which was another kind of a fiasco... 'cause he owed some money after this all was over. He just got jobs in various restaurants. There was... and like I was saying... my mom would go and do some cleaning here and there and between the two of them there just wasn't a heck of lot... so there wasn't a lot left over to spend on you know frivolity I guess or... whatever... I guess to this day because of that I am a little bit tight with my money. I don't like it to spend it on needless things... I mean if you got extra... fine but I... you don't I am a little bit careful... having grown up like that you know I... I sometimes... I am amazed that people can just... without even thinking just... you know... I have to think about it whenever I spend money. Yeah they didn't... I don't know how else to describe it... I... I found some of these things out when as I

grew older you know... I remember when my mom... she went into a home when she got to be about 75 or so she was starting to also having some problems where she kind of was so much into her own little world that she carried on conversations with herself you know as if she is talking about somebody else... like she is doing such and such and... which freaked me out. But I eventually got her... she went to two or three and I eventually got her into a really nice home in North Van which was at the hospital... which was a well respected place... but that was the last five years of her life... was like that which probably wasn't that pleasant either... you know... just living in a home... and I remember going when I... when she was ... when that all happened... I had to speak to a psychiatrist... it was just part of the whole process... and that was the first time I really thought about it... for he sort of suggested to me that I shouldn't feel too guilty about it what's going on you know and I... it was the first time I really started to look objectively at the, the life that we all... my parents and I... 'cause it was just the three of us for all those years. Started to let go of feeling like there was something I could have done or whatever I wasn't responsible for something... it was more like that's the way it was... it was tough and it had nothing to do with me. Those things that could have made it better... but... everybody makes bad choices and I think my dad made a few and it just was tough... tough life. I mean... I mean I didn't have a tough life... I went to school... I never had a problem with various schools... as far as you know enrolment or anything like that. I went to the different schools and everything... I didn't go to boy scouts which I actually missed 'cause I knew other kids did that kind of stuff and they went on to more trips and things but it's alright. I got to go on a few trips and so they must have had to shell out a little bit of money for that and... you know and I just never knew. Right? I didn't know. But some things... more things were included in those days too... you know like nowadays I am finding out... partly from the fact that I've been driving a school bus now that kids are... their parents have to spend money on everything. Even there was one thing on the radio... that they had to bring their own paper to school to write on... like that's absurd you know what... what are the schools supposed to be funded for... you know... it's crazy.

STOECKLE:  
#0:59:54.8#

Eh

PLOESSER:  
#0:59:55.3#

Sorry.

STOECKLE:

No... yeah... no... sorry. You... so you... in the beginning you

- #0:59:55.3# mentioned that you think your dad was happy to be...
- PLOESSER:  
#1:0:6.8# He was happy at times... he was a bit grumpy. A lot of my growing up here is... he ... that's why I say sometimes I was scared of him... 'cause he would yell... he would never... well there were two occasions where he hit me. But I figure most kids at least get a swat through there... there whole childhood. It can't always be free from any prob... it's probably a good thing 'cause like I to this day I remember those swats you know... he once was right across the face. I remember that much more vividly than getting hit on the backside like the face slap was really strong, I think for several days I was like... kind of stunned but... so ... he had a bit of a temper and I think he did sort of feel like the world was against him a little bit. He made friends but he didn't keep the friendship up. He made quite a few friends and there was friends... I think maybe when they first came here they... at least my dad... I can't say for my mom very much but my dad was happy I think the first few years. I think things were probably pretty good in the first so... possibly 10 years... for sure the first 6, 7, 8 years I think things were alright.
- STOECKLE:  
#1:1:17.5# So you don't think they regretted coming to Canada.
- PLOESSER:  
#1:1:21.9# I think my mom did.
- STOECKLE:  
#1:1:21.9# Your mom did...
- PLOESSER:  
#1:1:21.9# I'm pretty sure my mom did yeah... yeah I think she did....
- STOECKLE:  
#1:1:28.8# You think that happened after it got a bit trickier a bit more difficult financially or was it not just the financial issue... or like I don't know... just... just overall leaving Germany... that she kind of regretted leaving home...
- PLOESSER:  
#1:1:41.0# It is probably a combination maybe... eventually she was missing lots of people but I think that struggle probably had a lot to do with it during those years you know but I think... again like they... they had some friends they could have made more effort with and they didn't. They... they... maybe that's some kind of blinders that they had. That they... just living their life and that's... that's it you know instead of... because they were really... you know I've got pictures of people were ... the first few years... some of those people I am not even sure who they all

are... but they were friends of my parents and then later years there is no more pictures. There is no friends that came around to visit and stuff... you know it's funny its, it's quite...

STOECKLE:  
#1:2:31.2# They never tried... or do you remember like trying to reach out maybe to the German community in Vancouver or they just didn't care or ...

PLOESSER:  
#1:2:39.3# I don't know what it was that they didn't really make an effort cause my mom [aquiast] whatever my dad said. But my dad didn't go to German communities and stuff. He should have made an effort for that you know. He had a bit of a chip on his shoulder 'cause I remember when he had the restaurant on, on Robson. The other person who had that restaurant I think they actually moved... first they were very close together and he had this antagonism against that person and instead he should have probably created a friendship with them you know. That's probably no reason there could have been those two places co-existing you know...

STOECKLE:  
#1:3:18.1# Competition maybe or something.... did you remember maybe that Germans came into your dad's... to your parents' restaurant? Or is it... was it just mixed?

PLOESSER:  
#1:3:26.0# It was mixed. It was just mixed. He had a friend... yeah I guess he was a friend that he had hired... first he was friend and then he hired him. And he was just a helper who came along when we were really busy and would do things with the tables maybe even helping and all that stuff. And this guy I think worked for next to nothing and I think he might have even been paid under the table. One day there was this... he was waiting for his pay... which my dad was getting out of the cash... cash register and he... my dad made this remark and I don't even remember exactly but it was a derogatory remark something to do with the pay and how much he was paying for and whether he was getting his money's worth. I think it was something like that and this guy took it wrong and I guess he was not gonna put up with it and so I don't... he must have gotten his... Yeah I think he got paid and then left and he never came back. So my dad had this capacity to make enemies if you know... and not for a good reason either. It's, it's not like some really big thing happened. This was... he should have said... oh I'm sorry you know... or something to this guy. Because that... this guy was a valuable employee. He helped a lot and he worked hard and I mean even as a little kid I could see he worked really hard. I could see both... all of them actually working quite hard and my dad a little bit less so 'cause he was out talking to people and he took

advantage of that I think... he made excuses to not go back to the kitchen when he had reasons to be out at the tables and stuff you know...

STOECKLE:  
#1:5:6.1#

I don't know... do you think it's because being scared like not taking seriously... because not coming... I don't know maybe as an immigrant... but then Canada is kind of like known... everybody was basically an immigrant. You don't think maybe that it was because of that? Being... I don't know... I was just thinking about that?

PLOESSER:  
#1:5:24.7#

I know what you are saying but I don't know for sure what always was in his mind. But he did I know... as I grew up it was not uncommon for him to have some bitterness towards somebody. It was not uncommon and... it probably didn't do him... it probably did him harm I think... even later in life. It would've probably added to other stresses you know that... he took few too many chances where he ended up owing money and things like that and that probably contributed to it as well but you know in the end that was his chance that he took. It wasn't somebody else's fault you know it's just that... I think when I left home I left home as early as I possibly could. I was quite thrilled... it's harder for kids nowadays but at... I think I was 18 when I went up to the Yukon and that little bit when I came home again afterwards was just basically get orientated and as fast as I could find a place to live. I had... you know... when jobs were available... so it wasn't hard to get a job and... I just really wanted to get away from the house. I mean... I don't know if you want to end up with that on the interview or not but I really did want to leave. I had great desire to... and most kids at 18 probably would... but I also felt like I just wanted to be on my own. To not have... there was a little bit of a stigma of living at home with what would my dad do next sort of thing. A little bit of... not... it wasn't like that every day... but every now and then I thought... oh boy don't start another fight sort of thing. They were not physical fights or anything. It was just always a little bit too much. He was little too serious right... somebody would say something... and that's actually... now I remember. That's how this whole thing with the cash register started. The employee made a little joke and then my dad took it wrong. And he paid him and basically that was it... OK see you good bye. And that was... he wouldn't take... he could not take a joke you know... he always took it to heart. Way too much to heart. Sometimes things not even meant badly... but... it's funny 'cause through the course of going through this I remember some of these things I probably basically forgotten.

STOECKLE:

Do you remember anything of the "Robsonstrasse" anything

#1:7:54.8#

like... you were like walking around and...

PLOESSER:

#1:7:59.6#

I loved it. I loved going to European news... like in those days... especially little kids they probably would leave you alone and you could look at all the magazines... and I spent half an hour or hour just looking at all those things and they knew also that my parents were across the street. So they left me alone... and, and I got this little bit of a knowledge for downtown, where lot of kids wouldn't have that 'cause they be just in the suburbs you know, even North Van was suburbs, even though it was just across the water... and... I liked it... I had fun... I really enjoyed it... again... autonomy or whatever you know... self-sufficient... I think I have this problem... that I like it... it's quite... I sometimes wonder when I always here how... when people get old they need to have other people to rely on and I'm sure that's true and I probably me need that as well but at this point I'm quite happy to be on my own. I don't mind... I mean you need to have some social life for sure but I don't mind doing stuff on my own. It was probably getting to me a little bit after 17 years in the garage you know... you sit there all day long making things and you not... the radio was my companion you know... it was...lots of times I really did enjoy when I finally got a break to... go out and... meet some people... but it's interesting. I don't know if I got that from my dad maybe. Who knows... maybe I did.

STOECKLE:

#1:9:28.6#

I mean the way you just told me like how you grew up and all that that makes complete sense. That you were like that. I don't know... I would... kind of solitude in a way but then the social life too but then... I don't know that's how I feel usually like. I like having the social aspect... but let's say 5% or 10% and then kind of like that's... but then I even more enjoy being by myself you know. So .... I don't know...

PLOESSER:

#1:9:56.2#

I think it's... it's underrated. There is a lot to it. A lot of people are afraid... quite afraid to be by themselves. They get really lonely or upset or whatever... not everybody... I know a neighbor that is perfectly happy by herself. Her husband died about 5, 6, 7 years ago. She is thrilled... not thrilled that he died... just thrilled to be... to be by herself. She doesn't miss having to have somebody around. She's got a part time job. It's... I think it's important to be a little bit self sufficient to take care of yourself... 'cause it'll have to happen someday when you do have to take care of yourself you know... I mean I took a view chances in my life that I'm lucky that nothing ever went wrong 'cause when I was in South America, I was in Columbia, and I had a certain amount of money and I knew I was gonna get some money send to me... that was all pre-arranged. When I got down to my last few

bucks but I guess I waited just a little bit too long and I was literally down to about my last I don't know... I think I had about 5 dollars left... something like that and I had a camera... and this was a camera that I had planned... I had so many camera plans that I never fulfilled... because I got a Bolex 16mm and I wanted to make movies and I found out not long after that this thing wasn't quite right. It... somebody had sold me this sort of a DUT. I didn't even realize it until I used it once or twice I think light was leaking in or something I kind remember now... anyway... I was like getting fairly desperate and I even put an ad into the paper in Bogota. And somebody I didn't think that anybody was going to phone. Oh well I probably have to give this camera away. Somebody phoned and they came over. They liked the camera and I have to admit I sold it to them. I got 200 \$ for it. I think I paid somewhere near the same. I can't remember for sure know but... I got paid in American cash. I remember the guy paying me the money and I thought... this is gold you know. And that was like right down to the wire like in the next morning I would have had breakfast and then I would have been sort of... now what do I do you know... but also the money came in a week but there would have been a week I would have been a bit scrambling you know but anyway... that's... once or twice I've taken a few chances... it's good for you I think... as long as you don't lose out too much...

#1:12:34.5#

Sensitive//// Material deleted!!!!

STOECKLE:  
#1:13:11.3#

Just going to ask you what I told you like ... like things wrapping up. Following your experience from your parents and your own experience... and then going back... actually was that the only time you went back to Germany?

PLOESSER:  
#1:13:24.4#

That's the only time. It feels foolish in a way I... I wish sometimes I would have but I guess being taken away from that and put over here I sort of feel like I'm here... I don't know... it's hard to describe....

STOECKLE:  
#1:13:42.7#

That would lead me to that question... I told you I would ask you. So you feel... do you feel German or Canadian?

PLOESSER:  
#1:13:52.2#

Basically I feel Canadian but I would never totally feel not German... like there is always gonna be some German there and I think it's actually a fantastic thing to have a little bit of two countries or even more if you could. But you know some people might... it's tough I think being a little bit older of an immigrant. If you are like 4 years old you just integrate you know. There is

nothing... but somebody who might've been 10 years old or 15 that could be really tough... 'cause they would have a whole bunch of... history in that country and suddenly be uprooted you know from that. So that could be way tougher but for me. I'm happy that I have the heritage and that I can at least speak some German and... have a open mind for people from all different places... I think I do... as opposed to just be... being in one country and never having you know any other experience. But I do feel more Canadian than I do Germany.... German... sorry... but not... I don't know if I .... essentially I'm Canadian but I'm very happy that I have a German heritage.

STOECKLE:  
#1:15:8.9#

And... so OK last one. Because you said you speak still a little bit of German. So could you... I don't know... tell me something or some words in German?

PLOESSER:  
#1:15:21.4#

Ich komme aus Frankfurt und... war 4 Jahr alt wenn ich nach Kanada... wenn...wenn wir nach Kanada...see I get old... I get... I get things chopped up.... wir waren in Montreal und danach in Vancouver. Ich hab mei ganzes Lebe in Vancouver seit ich vier Jahr alt war... 1956... ich bin jetzt 63... und... happy.

STOECKLE:  
#1:16:2.3#

Thanks.

PLOESSER:  
#1:16:6.1#

I don't know what else to...

STOECKLE:  
#1:16:6.1#

That's good. Thanks Jack.

PLOESSER:  
#1:16:7.9#

You're welcome.

END