



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Transcript of interview with Emil Gehrke

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# Transcript

## Preface

### Tape-recorded Interview with Emil Gehrke

#### At the Artist's Home in Grand Coulee, Washington

August 19, 1976

Willem Volkersz, Interviewer

#### Editor's Note:

This transcript is from a series of recordings made by Willem Volkersz over a number of years. They are not formal interviews, but rather records of conversations, often taped during photo-taking tours of the artist's studios or home collections.

The naive/visionary artists in these interviews have unique verbal mannerisms, many of which are difficult or impossible to transcribe accurately into written form. Thus, for grasping certain nuances of speech, researchers will find it advantageous to listen to the original tapes.

Our intent in transcribing these interviews was nonetheless to translate as accurately as possible the spoken word into a comprehensible written form, making changes to clarify but not to interpret. Thus the speaker's grammar is unedited. For example, "them" for "those," "themselves," and "gotta" were all transcribed as heard. On the other hand, certain changes were made for clarity: "'cause," was transcribed as "because," "'fore" as "before," "'yo" as "your," etc.

Other editorial notations are as follows: Bracketed words are of two types. Those with "[—Ed.]" or "[—WV]" are inserted by the transcriber, editor, or Volkersz. Other bracketed words indicate uncertainty: Two or more words or phrases indicate possible alternatives; "[unintelligible]" and "\_\_\_\_" indicate words that are garbled or incomprehensible on the tape, the former being a much longer phrase than the latter; "[noise]" is self-explanatory.

The original format for this document is Microsoft Word 365 version 1908. Some formatting has been lost in web presentation.

## Interview

**EG: Emil Gehrke**

**WV: Willem Volkersz**

### [Tape 1, side A; Volkersz' No. G4-1] [45-minute tape sides]

[Note: Accompanying Volkersz during this interview were David Davis (DD) and Diane Volkersz (DV).

*Preceding the interview, Volkersz read from posted articles:*

"He, by his own admission, is one of a kind. So are his creations. Gehrke is, he believes, the only iron mill maker in the country. And every one of his mills—he has made 300 in the last ten years—is unique. Made of the castaways of society, gleaned from 62,000 miles worth of car travel between junkyards, Gehrke has undertaken a mammoth recycling project which he claims he has done, "for the benefit of children." His aim is to show youths of a disposable society that junk is merely a creation of the mind, that practically any object can be reused. Give him the front wheel of a bicycle, an old iron, threshing machine shakers, plastic bowls, an old hiking boot, a broken fan, a washboard, or a fry pan, and Gehrke will create a one-of-a-kind windmill. He refuses to follow an assembly pattern. Every mill is an original, he proudly stresses. "You know if each car was different, and not off the assembly line, you'd pay more for it." Gehrke never expected his works to become art objects, but several were recently included in the Eastern Washington State College Art Exhibit, complete with electric fans to simulate their movements in the wind. The north Grand Coulee man began his unique occupation at age

81. With his wife, Viva, he conducted at 62,000-mile auto trek of Washington junkyards. "To hunt it and haul it in, we were gone over 1,200 days and worked an average of seven hours a day," he said. "First thing you know, you've got a great pile of irons. American people are pretty wasteful." Most-treasured finds are old farm machinery, and his most valuable hunting ground has been the Old Prairie dump, eight miles from his home. He assembles the mills in a home basement, explaining that, "Balancing is the secret. You have to do it in a place where there is no wind." After assembly, his wife adds colorful paint. "Painting preserves your iron and its beauty," Gehrke noted, "so you must do it right. A primer coat must be first applied so the paint won't peel. Pretty colors appeal to everybody," he adds, as he pulls a color photo out, of the 200 mills that surround his home. Sometimes the sight of his unique home grounds will attract someone who would like to learn Gehrke's craft, and he'll always take the time to offer free instruction. Gehrke and his mills appear in a two-page color photo in this month's *National Geographic*. Written Monday, December 22, 1975, *Spokane Daily Chronicle*.

*Volkersz read another excerpt from a posted newspaper article:*

"There are too many things mass-produced in the same mold and pattern in these modern days," says Gehrke, retired millwright and machine mechanic with sawmill and box manufacturing firms in Idaho and Washington. "People have almost forgotten individual artistry and craftsmanship. Each of our windmills is an individually crafted article." [The poles are eight to ten feet tall—WV]

*Volkersz read another excerpt, possibly from a sign or a business card:*

"Gehrke retired in 1953, and the couple moved to Grand Coulee in 1958. They moved to their present home in 1960, and soon afterward began putting up their colorful products that have attracted thousands of visitors. The whirling colors provide a soothing effect, Mrs. Gehrke believes." Gehrke's Windmills, Grand Coulee, Washington 99133.

*[Interview begins]*

EG: . . .until I felt something on my hand, and I went over to the door, and, boy, my hand was just as rusty as it could be. That was that poison coming out of the hand, and when I wiped it I couldn't [get] it.

WV: Wow.

EG: Now they know that. . . There's a steel specialist from Wenatchee, came down here. He looked at it, and he said, "We're handling iron just like that, only it's painted. But it's wrote right on: 'If the paint is scratched off, you must handle this iron with rubber gloves.'"

WV: Ohh.

EG: Well, that's what I have to do now if I want to use this paint remover on the iron, leave it on there for a couple days, then wipe it off very careful, not get any on your hands, till you got it good and dry, and then paint it. Cover up that poison stuff that is in the iron.

WV: Sure.

EG: But they say, then if you happen to scratch it and the paint is knocked off, look out, you've got a rattlesnake that'll bite you just sure as going to be. And I see there's truth in that. That should be wrote on the bottle, you see, because they call it paint, rust remover.

WV: Sure.

EG: So there's a lot of people having that trouble. And there's nothing. . .

DD: Doesn't it say on the bottle to be real careful?

EG: Yeah, it says to use soap and water if you get it on your hands, and bathe it with baking soda or magnesia. Well, I did both of them things. But I pulled a sliver out here two days before I used that poison, see. I didn't even. . .

WV: Oh, and it got in that way.

EG: The sliver was as wide as an ordinary match, but not as thick. Real thin. I tried to pull it out of my hand and I couldn't so I had to take a pliers. It was in there five eighths of an inch and went clear to the bone.

WV: Was it wood or metal, the sliver?

EG: That was wood, and it was nice and clean. The two by four was a piece of plain one, and it bled, oh, it

pret near squirted out, see, and I raised my elbow up like that, and finally it stopped, got so it didn't drip any more, then I come down again, oh, oh, here come the blood. So I had to lean against something and left it there pret near half hour, then I brought it down careful and taped it. By God, I went right to work with it again. Well, in two days, the tape was wore a little bit, and that's when I got, I picked that piece of iron up that had that poison on it. And it filled that full, and the x-ray picture showed a regular brown spot in here.

WV: Ooh, terrible.

EG: Well, those things should really be wrote on the bottle.

WV: Oh, of course they should be.

EG: There's nothing they could do in the Brewster Hospital. I was in about 12, 13 days. My wife was in there too, nothing they could do with it. She said, "You could do it at home, and watch your eyesight by that." Because that's the first thing that gives out, because lymph is also an oil, you see. When it goes in the joint they call it joint oil, and lymph goes in the tissue, and when it goes back in the blood again, they call it white blood cells, see. And you have it in your saliva, and that's what. . . Because lymph is the antiseptic of the body. That's an old medical term. That's what a dog uses when he licks, is that lymph, because it is an antiseptic. It does.

WV: Huh.

EG: And now I know for sure it's a painkiller. If you've got a pain somewheres, you know, like I have here. . . Right here is a gland where these white blood cells come out, see, in the tissue, and go through the joints and back in another gland, only it's called node. . .

WV: Yeah.

EG: . . .and if there's too much poison, that node swells up and stops it, and that's what the doctor said. If I use my hand too much, this node will swell up, and if it once gets up here, he said it's too late then to do anything for you. But long as you can keep that poison down here and take a little of it out at a time, see, and that's what I've been doing.

DD: Do you soak it?

EG: [Nah, Yah]. Once in a while I have to push some of these lymph down here and rub it clear down over the top of my fingers, see. And get it in the joints here, because there's lymph in there; it's in the tissue, see. Then I can bend it here and get new oil in and push the old oil out, which of course is white blood cells when it gets back in the blood again.

WV: Huh.

EG: Well, that's the mess I got in because I didn't know any better. It can happen to any of us, see.

DV: Now you have to take it easy for a while?

DD: You're not left-handed, are you?

EG: No. I don't work with this hand. [apparently the left hand is the damaged one—Ed.]

DD: Well, that's lucky.

EG: Yeah, it was, a bit.

WV: Have you always worked with metal? Did it say that you were a millwright?

EG: Oh, I've been a millwright since 1902.

WV: Huh.

EG: 74 years. Just repairing machinery, was the first thing that I done. They'd get a new part and I'd put it on. Well, I found out when they were putting in a new part that would give out again, so I'd make a part for it, or make that new part stronger so it wouldn't give out.

WV: Better, right.

EG: And bearings that give out, I always used ball bearings. And now, it has been my job, anything that was giving trouble, is to fix it so it don't give trouble anymore.

WV: For what kinds of companies did you work?

EG: Well, up in Canada, I worked for a company that put a mill up there, west of Ponoka [Alberta—WV]. That was in '89. I did fire the boiler for them and I done oiling and lay some belts. It was millwright work, but not very much, see. Till we come to Loon Lake—that's north of Spokane. There I worked for [Hollen Hore] Lumber Company of Spokane. They had a factory just below Monroe Bridge. And I worked for them till 1907, and then Dad sold his homestead in Canada, and he bought a mill for us. See, there was five of us boys.

WV: Were you born in Canada?

EG: No, I was born in Nebraska.

WV: In Nebraska!

EG: Yeah.

WV: You're from my part of the country.

EG: By Ravenna. No, we lived in quite a few places with a family of nine of us: five boys and four girls. We lived in Nebraska, then we took a train to Portland, Oregon. Dad worked on the Willamette River right in town in the sawmill. And the sawmill crew told him that there was a 80-acre homestead half a mile out from Vancouver, Washington.

WV: Right.

EG: So he went out and homesteaded that—and he pre-empted, which means, if you build a log cabin on it and you want to pay a dollar and a quarter an acre, you can get a deed for it right away. So Dad did that. There was timber on it. Oh, some enormous trees, my God, man. Douglas fir, you know.

WV: Right.

EG: Sold that to the mill company and then—I think it was 1890—we went back to Nebraska again. Farmed there and got dried out and then took a team of horses, fixed up a mover wagon—you know, with the canvas, made it wider on top.

WV: I'll be darned.

EG: There was eight of us kids in it then. Went to Missouri. And they put in a crop, and, say, was that a wet year! This is one of them just about like it, you know. Drownded out the corn and the wind blew it all over right in the mud. So Dad hooked up the horses and went to Kansas, not very far from Kansas City, and worked in a lead mine. There was lead in—you could see it along the road, you know, a piece of lead here and there right in the dirt.

WV: That's probably not very healthy to work in a lead mine, is it?

EG: Oh, yeah, that's why he got out of there. And he read that there was another 80 acres of homestead he could get in Charles Mix County, South Dakota. So we traveled there and he filed on that 80 acres, and we lived there, and that's where I got my first schooling—in a sod house. A farmer moved to town and we took his cattle and took care of it, and he allowed people to use his home for a schoolhouse.

WV: That's great.

EG: Then Dad read about that there was homestead in Canada, west of Ponoka. That's on this side of Edmonton, about 60 miles. And that was in '98. He went in the fall, and filed on the homestead. And from there on to the Rocky Mountains, it was all wild, nothing but homesteads and railroad land, see. Railroad company. Come back and we had an oxen sale, and loaded most of the stuff, and a milk cow, and a couple horses in a freight car. And two of them, my son-in-law [perhaps meant brother-in-law—Ed.] and my oldest brother, lived right in that car, South Dakota, for two weeks, milking a cow and using it for (chuckling) food.

WV: (laughter) That's great.

DD: Very self-sufficient.

EG: We stayed there then till 1901, and we had one pony, a mule, and a yoke of oxen. Most farmers had yoke of oxen there. We hooked the four of them on a wagon, put canvas over it, and we traveled from Ponoka, then to Calgary, and there we camped for a couple of weeks. Oh, we trapped some young coyotes. Right close to town. There was a river there—I forget the name of it—and a bank, and the coyotes was raising their young ones in

there. We trapped them and sold them. We got three dollars apiece for them, see.

WV: Oh, yeah.

EG: Because the young one, you could tame them little bit, you know.

WV: Yeah.

EG: Well, then we traveled from there to McLeod. That's close to Bestbridge. There we got a job working for the government bridge. That bridge is there today yet. And I carried the water—I had two pails—to wetten the cement. And it was a high bridge, too. We worked there till in the spring of 1902, and then we heard of this sawmill at Loon Lake, that we could get a job there. So the four of us—Dad and my two brothers and myself—we went over there.

WV: Did you learn mostly on the job?

EG: On the job, yeah, and figured it out myself, you know. Because the machine, when it's broke, you can see how to fix it again like it was, but I'd never fix it like it was, because that's one thing we should all do. If something always keeps bothering you, for God's sake try to change it and make it better!

WV: Right.

EG: Because that's one policy Dad always used at us. Don't make any difference how good we do it, he says, "Mind, you can always do your work better." Now see, there's a lot of truth in that.

WV: That's a good thing to live by, yeah.

EG: Yeah. Improve things on this earth and seem to be no end to it, you know. Of course we can always change it and make a difference, see.

WV: Did you move here when you retired, then, to Grand Coulee?

EG: No, I retired when we were living at Rock Island, below Wenatchee there, you know. Then we moved to California, lock, stock, and barrel. I thought we would like to live there. But there where we was at is too doggone wet. God, I couldn't take it. Rheumatism.

WV: Really!

DD: Where was that? What part?

EG: Oh, by Little River.

WV: Is that up in the north?

EG: It's south of Fort Bragg about 20 miles. Well, then we came back. That was in 1931. And we came back to Manson, there at Chelan.

WV: Yeah.

EG: I got a job there building a mill, doing the millwright work there. And I worked there until 1944, and then I had another job there, just below Wenatchee at [Mallagar's] mill, and I completely rebuilt it all together. And I stayed there then until I retired. Oh, I was over at Kamiah, Idaho, there. There's a big mill there, and I millwrighted one winter there, changed \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. Of course, that was my policy: always changing, making something better, you know.

WV: What year did you retire?

EG: In 1953.

WV: But then you didn't start building these windmills until '64, did you say?

EG: Yeah, '64. Well, we lived out here half way between the two dams, at [Leahy]. Well, we was, since 1950 I give treatments on the feet. You probably heard that word, reflexology?

WV: Uh huh.

EG: Boy, that's the greatest thing. Don't let this here devote all your time to it. You should devote more time to learning what you are born with. You've got everything on your body to drive every ailment out known to the

human race—except in a germ like syphilis, gonorrhea; you can't drive that out, because that's a germ in the blood. But all your other ailments, if you want to know just where to press, see, well, the surgeons have put it in a chart, on a chart now. You can send right down to New York and get them, and I've been giving treatments, but now, since this hand, I've got to give it up, see. I'm getting a little too old to take it.

DD: How does it work?

EG: I still have a few charts here left yet.

DD: How does it work? Like, I have a sore toe. What should I press to make it stop hurting?

EG: Well, if it's the little toe on this foot, then you work this finger, see. And there'll be a tender place on it. It'll be on the same place. If it's on the first joint, then it'll be in there see. If it's on top of the foot, you go on top of the hand. If it's underneath, you go here [palm—WV].

WV: Right.

EG: You work on that tenderness, and that takes off the tension of the nerve, then go in and push fresh blood in there. That's all you have to do, see. And another thing I want to tell you, right out in plain English, it's nothing at all for a person that's got a cancer to move it out—if you only know where to press! But boy, you can't get that across to the doctors. Oh man, they think I'm crazy. But I'll give a deed to my home if I can't show you what you should do in order to get the different things that you've got in your body to fight that cancer out. Because cancer is not a germ. It's in the flesh, see. Anything that is in your blood, like a germ, no, you stay with your doctors; they've got drugs that'll kill that, because I can't get it out. But I can clean your flesh. Oh, yes, you're darn right!

WV: That's very interesting.

EG: The only thing I don't like to clean is if you got a great big sore, an injury, and you got dirt in it. You go to a doctor. They're very good in cleaning it, see.

WV: Yeah, right.

EG: But if it don't heal, well, yes, come here and I'll show you what to do, because lack of blood is the cause of a sore not healing. Well, all you do is to massage all around that sore until you get that flesh nice and pink. It won't hurt, see. Then you push some of that pink blood over to where the sore is at, and first thing you know you'll see a whole ring of red blood coming out. Well, in your red blood is where the new flesh is at, because any doctor will tell you—they know now for sure—that the liver makes the flesh and puts it in the blood, see. So you have to get that fresh blood there. Assimilating the glands in the body—that's everything. And you've got a, just a keyboard on your feet like a piano has. That's the way to see it, and that's true.

DD: How did you learn about that?

EG: Well, we was living near to Rock Island, in 1958—we had come there in 1947. . . And I said '58; no, 1953. I retired in '54; we went to California. Anyway, my wife always had migraine headaches, because we spent right close to \$15,000—we got it on the books here yet—going to the doctors and paying the doctor bills, and they tried their best to help her with that migraine headaches. Migraine headaches, see, always cause a swelling here in the back of the neck. And there was a woman in Wenatchee—she's there today yet. One block west of the Deaconess Hospital, you can find here there. All you do is ask anybody there by the Deaconess Hospital, because she's well known. She was in the work then several years before we heard about it. And she heard about my wife's trouble, so I told her, "Go down and take a treatment." And boy, she slept that night, that first treatment, you know, slept all through. And the fourth treatment I could see right there that she was getting some good out it.

WV: Gee, that's great.

EG: And my wife told her, "Is there anything you can do for a man that gets influenza? Every winter my husband gets that four and five times. Millwrighting, no fire, you see, on old, cold machinery. If a finger was wet, and stick on iron—boy, you've got to watch for that, you know. And you can't work with gloves where you've always got to have your pencil and your ruler and your different wrenches. Bare handed.

WV: Oh, sure.

EG: And this woman said, "Yes, I'm pretty sure I can do something for him. So when she come home from the treatment she told me about it. And the next treatment, I went along. I was setting there, you know, and just watching her working on my wife, working on her feet. She said, "Mr. Gehrke, would you take off your shoe?" I told her, "Yeah, sure, I'll take my shoe off." Well, I had to unlace it. Took it off. She looked down there. She said,

"Oh, yeah." She reached down there. I had a big knob right there, under the root of the fourth toe on the right foot.

WV: I'll be darned.

EG: She got to put her finger on, raised my foot up, but, oooh, boy, man, that hurt me. I did get peeved. I said, "For God's sake, you've got sharp fingernails!" (laughter) She said, "No, I didn't." Well, I said, "I could feel it! It hurt!" "Well," she said, "you just watch." Oooh, I was all eyes. She put her finger under like that and raised up again. "Oooh," I said, "for God's sake, what is that?" She said, "That's your reflex to your liver and gall bladder. You've got a bad gall bladder." And she said, "Now, you take treatments on that and you'll find out you won't get influenza no more. You won't even get a cold." Well, I laughed up my sleeve, but yet she was helping my wife when she told her the same thing with a headache. So I told her, "All right. We'll both come next time then." So I took four treatments and, boy, did I feel different already. And when she got through with me, I said, "Listen, lady, is there such a thing that I could learn to do what you're doing, helping people like that?"

WV: Oh.

EG: I said, "You helped me wonderful." She said, "You sure can, and I'll help you!" And she said, "I'll give you the name and address where you send and get you a booklet and it'll cost \$3.50"—then; now, it's \$3.95 for the book and a dollar for the charts. And she said, "I'll go you one better. I'll give you my outfit until yours come."

WV: That's great.

EG: So we went to work right away. I set down and my wife worked my foot, and I would take hers, see. But yet, we went back and took a number of treatments so that she could see, and I explained to her, and she'd help us what to do, you see.

WV: Right.

EG: And first thing we know, some of the neighbors come over; they want treatment. They see that my wife was getting such results. And then this woman did massage on the back of the neck. Well, I see that's very important for all of us to do. Right along the hairline, you see, where the skull, where the bone starts.

WV: Right.

EG: Get in there and just press that down. Press hard enough so it'll hurt you a little bit. That pain is cholesterol stuck there.

WV: Huh.

EG: And, because we all have nerves coming from the brain.

WV: Right.

EG: And veins on this side, carrying the waste from the brain. Well, if they swell up, it sets them veins off. First thing you know, you've got headaches, see. Well, we get in there and massage and break that loose, but it hurts so, that's the reason we work on the liver first and on the back of the neck right here—on the big toe, see; that be right along through here; that's where the neck is at—and massage that, and that would take the tension out. And then we'd go in there and massage here. And she had no more headache. That's all gone.

WV: Oh, that's great.

EG: I don't have influenza. I don't get a cold anymore. So that's the greatest thing to look into. I want to be sincere with you people, because you can see the pretty things that you can make now. Well, I know you can drive your ailments out. Tumors. I got it on the book here. We got over 700 tumors I moved out, every one of them.

WV: That's great.

EG: It may be a little bit left that is kind of calcium, fiber, you see. I got one right here. I did have a great big tumor right there. This blue bit here, that swells up for me once in a while, because it's like a willow bush in the creek. It'll grab some waste, won't it?

WV: Right.

EG: Well, here this here stuff that's in the flesh will grab some old cholesterol going back to the liver again, so the liver can take it out of the blood, see. Well, all I do is to go right on top here. See that knuckle right there. Go



right in there and massage it, and, boy, that'd be a tender place. First thing I know, that'll be soft again.

WV: That's beautiful.

EG: Done that, oh, fifty, sixty times since 1950, because it builds up on me.

DD: So if you find a tender place on your foot that means that something else in your body. . .

EG: There's something wrong. Yes, you bet you. You don't have to wait until you're sick. Hunt around there, but don't use your fingernails, because that injures the flesh.

WV: Yeah, sure.

EG: So, cut your fingernails short, on your thumbnails, and work on it like that, and if you find a tender place, there's something going to go wrong that hasn't showed up yet. Correct it.

DD: That's neat. And you just massage that area.

EG: Yeah, yeah. Massage good and deep. Right along here on the flesh, you know. Oh, there's so many things that I could bring out. I've got all records of what. . . Young people dying, you know, with cancer—when it's nothing at all. They've got everything they need. Not that I cure cancer, no. I happen to know because the surgeons have made a record. . . I'm going to show it to you. [moving away from microphone] I didn't make these charts. They was made by a surgeon.

WV: Uh huh.

EG: I'll show it to you. [noise] Each one of you can look at one at the same time while I explain it to you. You can look on it.

DD: Hey, Willem, is the dog in the car?

WV: Yeah.

DD: Okay.

EG: That's the feet that you look at there, you see, and you can see little dots on them, and the words there. They're a little bit too fine for me to read. Oh, I could read them if I had it good and light.

WV: Yeah.

EG: Different places where you work for anything that is wrong with you, and I am sincere like a baby talking to his mommy. You can stop your ailments or your trouble that you have. Arthritis is the hardest, because it's in the joint, and I can't get blood to go in a joint. No, but we massage the lymph glands then; that isn't in the charts, see. Just like this one here, clear on the left here, isn't it? Where it shows the breast? Well, these are one of. . . Yeah, right there, see. I discovered that you can move tumors out of the breast—and also a cancer, because I've had them! Tumors, oh, yeah, ever so many of them. So there is information. . .

WV: Yeah, that's very interesting. I'd heard of it, but I'd never had anybody explain it to me.

EG: And much more. I've always had a guarantee, and I'm still going to have it. If you should find that you can't use that chart, send it back and, boy, I'll give you even your postage for it and your money that you paid out.

WV: (laughs)

EG: Because that's the greatest thing on this earth.

DD: You mean, you don't need this? Don't you want this poster back?

EG: Well, yeah, that's what I say. A dollar is what they cost now, you see.

DD: Yeah.

EG: But the booklet. . . I don't know if I got any more left or not. It's the Mrs. who attends to this. [moving away from microphone]

*[Interruption in taping]*

EG: . . .don't know that everybody's got something because it's written in Bible. Not that I want to bring religion in, because I'm not a religious person. But I believe the Bible is a good book if you use it right.

WV: I'm sure that \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.

EG: It's written the day'll come when there'll be a new earth, way of living here. That isn't the government; that's individuals see.

WV: Right.

EG: Because they have proved beyond all facts that old Abraham Lincoln was one of the faithful men of old that you read about in the Bible. The way he worshiped God is dealing justly, and he was a merciful man, and he was a humble creature.

WV: Yeah.

EG: Well, there's no more that a man has to do than to just follow those three principles, because it tells you that in the Bible. And because if we use what is already here on this earth, instead of looking to God what he's going to do tomorrow, and preaching it that he'll raise hell with the human race, you know, if you don't worship. No, that's all sin talk, see.

WV: Yeah.

EG: So we see we should have pure thoughts. Worship that which He has already made. In olden time they call it the Garden of Eden. He should appreciate that, see. But no, man wanted to know what God's going to do in the future; that's a forbidden fruit. So you can see there is really guesswork if I was to start out and tell you what God's going to do ten years from now.

WV: Of course, yeah.

EG: No, my thoughts are not pure, because you've got a little machine on the base of your brain and the name of it is right on your chart. It's on the bottom of your big toe. They call it pituitary gland. It makes good hormones out of pure thoughts—and bad hormones out of fake thoughts. You think you know what God's going to do. Oh yeah, you believe it. You got fake thoughts just the same, because you're not pure. But if you talk and think about things that are already here, then you know you got pure thoughts. So you can read in that little booklet, too, that the pituitary gland is the greatest—and science brings it out now. You can take it up with the science?

WV: Yeah.

EG: They say the greatest thing on this planet is that little pituitary gland. Because it makes, every time you think about something—no, then you think about this, then you think about that—every time you change is a different hormone. And they said you can't fool that gland. It'll make a hormone, you go back there ten years again, where you was before, and you look at the same thing: same hormone, see. But if you see a little change took place, right away a little different hormones. They have tested that out, with twins that look so alike, you know, that they couldn't tell the difference in them.

WV: Yeah.

EG: You look at this and you think of that twin, then you're going to look at that and both alike, both same hormone made and put in your bloodstream, you see. But if you see there's one of them got a little bit of a wart over here, right away there's a difference in the thoughts: those hormones. That's the reason science brings it out, that that gland is the greatest creation on the earth. To give you health. If you got pure thoughts or thoughts like fear, anxiety, stubborn, jealousy, hatred, down in the dumps, those thoughts are bad. It makes a bad hormone because that gland makes a hormone for your liver, for your pineal, for your thyroids, potheroids [means parathyroids?—Ed.], spleen, adrenalin gland, and gall bladder and liver. It makes the hormone for them, you see. But you should have nice thoughts—appreciative thoughts, see. Full of joy, full of life.

WV: Makes sense.

EG: Not down in the dumps and always fault-finding. Everything is going to hell, you know. Well, they have found now that those are sick people because they're made, that gland makes a hormone for them that numbs their glands. There's a lot of truth coming out on that, and you've got one of the greatest thing in your hands right now, because it's a surgeon that brought it out, but they say there's no money in it.

WV: Uh huh.

EG: But the nurse of the. . . Eunice Ingham, that's her name.

WV: Yeah, I saw it, yeah.

EG: She's the one that was his nurse when he went on the old country, and he was in America. He had to come here and—he was an operator, see, surgeon. When he cut. . .

*[Interruption in taping]*

WV: . . .mills like.

EG: Yeah.

WV: You say you do them for, like for young people, to teach them something.

EG: Well, the young people, because you have [to do] it. The greatest problem that is on this planet here is our young people, because everything is in the hands of the older ones, and you show me a merchant that is short-handed, he needs a young person. No. They ain't no jobs for them no more. Now, it's all big machinery, isn't it? There are some little jobs like carrying groceries out, you know. But I mean, just going in the factories and working with that big machinery; there's nothing there for the young people. They're coming out of the college. They got dandy education. But they wasn't trained when they were young, because the Bible says train a child in the way it should go and when it's growing up it won't depart from that. And I know that's true. But the clergyman says that means train them, send them to Sunday School. Yeah, I says, that's for your pocketbook.

WV: (chuckles)

EG: But I'm speaking something for the young people to educate their brain clear to the end of the fingers.

WV: But how do you. . .

EG: And you can't do that in a college.

WV: How do you get the young people out here to look at your work and to talk to them?

EG: Oh, yeah, boy, it is open day and night here for 'em if we're home or not. This is the first time I've. . .

DV: Do a lot of them come by?

EG: Hmm?

DV: Do a lot of them come by?

WV: Do a lot of young people come by?

EG: Oh, yeah. Boy, yes, you bet you. Lot's of them. But so many of them are always looking in the air they walk right past the guest book. (chuckles) So I didn't get their name. But, oh, gosh, yes, they're always here, especially all through the summer. And winter, you know, they bring them here on Saturday and Sunday when there's no school.

DD: Could I ask you how you happened to make your first windmill?

EG: Well, I built a lot of wooden ones out there at Loon Lake.

DD: Oh, you did.

EG: Yeah, in the wintertime, the sawmill didn't run, you see. And I done the repair work, then on Sunday I'd make wooden windmills. Just take a piece of board about that wide, see, two inches wide.

WV: Right.

EG: And about that long [10 inches—Ed.] And one inch thick. Well, I'd take a axe and cut off one end of it, like that, and the other end I'd cut off on the other side.

WV: Right.

EG: And then I'd take and cut, lay it down here and make a mark down there and saw it on in, chisel it out, and put them together like that. And then bore a hole in it, and stick a spike in it, and drive it in that piece of wood. With one end I have a board on it for a tail. Then you drive another spike down in through it for a post,

see. You bore a hole in that, it'll turn in that hole for you.

DD: These were big windmills that you were making?

EG: Yeah, wooden windmills.

DD: Not toy ones, though, but big ones.

EG: No, it was just the small ones, you know. I didn't build no big wooden mills.

DD: For ornamentation?

EG: Yeah, we used that [still speaking of construction—Ed.] because we didn't have no drills, not, we had to bore a hole with a brace and bit awls, you know.

DD: Yeah.

EG: Until we got electric drills out, and that was in 1930, when the first electric drills come out so the average could buy them, you see.

WV: So you would use the windmills as a power source, too.

EG: Yeah, yeah. [I believe he misunderstood the question; see below—Ed.]

WV: Ahh.

DD: Oh, did that work pretty well?

EG: Well, yeah, sure it does. Boy, you bet you. You can make big ones, you know, just eight-foot paddles on them, you know. Take anything for a cross-arm like that. Well, then you build your paddles on them as big as you want them or as wide as you want them, you know.

WV: How did you transfer the power then?

EG: Well, we didn't do nothing, just had it there running, you see.

WV: Oh, I see.

DD: Oh, you didn't use it for drilling?

EG: Oh, we did have some of them, right on the wheel we had a kind of a pulley put on, and put a V-belt on, see, then we'd run a little grindstone with it down below.

WV: Oh, I see.

EG: But now, see, that was all woodwork. Now we can handle iron better than we could handle woodwork years ago. You can make anything out of iron if you got a emory wheel so that you can cut a hole in it, or cut it down smaller. . .

DD: Yeah, right.

EG: . . .and electric drills, see.

DD: Well, why don't you make any windmills out of wood now? I notice you always use metal and \_\_\_\_\_.

EG: Well, because they don't last too long. Even steel windmills, coming from the factory. Got one right down the road here, two blocks on the right side. He bought it three or four years ago and it's all wore out.

WV: Oh, really.

EG: You have to oil them, because they don't have ball bearings on them. Well, I wouldn't turn that thing. . . But I found out here, they said the factories are turning them out now with ball bearings. Because these have been running for ten years and they're just like new yet.

WV: Do you put bearings in yours?

EG: Yep. All ball bearings. Bicycle bearings. And I have other kind of bearings that you can get, real small ones off from thrashing machines or anything like that.

WV: So you get them off junk things. You don't just go out and buy new ones for them.

EG: Yeah, you can. I'll tell you, when you see a young person—light, not heavy, you see—they got a bicycle. It won't last them long; they'll take it to a junkyard. Well, there's a good bicycle hub in the front wheel.

WV: Right.

EG: Well, the hind one is usually good enough too on a light person. But you have to take them apart and take out the different stuff in them, you see.

WV: Yeah, right.

EG: No, I've got a number of them here with a front-wheel bicycle—the whole wheel is on it, see.

WV: I see.

DD: Well, how many windmills did you make before people started to come by and take pictures of them and buy them?

EG: Well, the first summer. There was people here coming for treatments, see. And they come here and we'd both be outside there. They'd knock at the door and they'd come around, first thing you know we'd come up and we'd tell them what we was doing there. And they want to see it. So they looked at that first windmill there, and I had another made. My wife claims it, and I claimed that big one for myself. [laughter] But I will have to say I've come pret near to killing my wife with that big windmill.

WV: Oh, really.

EG: Oh. It's right on this corner of the house, when you look at it.

WV: Yeah, I saw that one, uh huh.

EG: I had it laying down, but I didn't have the wheel on it yet. I put that on when I got it up, see. So we're going to raise it up, and my wife would take a sawhorse to put under it, you see. Then if I'd raise it a little further, she'd shove that sawhorse that way.

WV: Sure, I understand.

EG: Until it was balanced, see. Well, then we had to have a taller sawhorse. Well, we had it slanting about like that see. And I had a long pole there, and on the top of this windmill was a shaft sticking out that had a collar on it that I couldn't get off. So I put a board right under that collar right there, you see.

WV: Right.

EG: I cut a slot in it.

WV: I understand.

EG: Put that in there, and I start to raising it up, and she was taking that sawhorse out of the way and helping me. All at once this collar slipped off.

WV: Ohhh.

EG: And down it come and just went right past her shoulder here. Tore her skin off a little bit. But if that had hit her there, it'll have killed her sure as could be, because that thing is heavy.

WV: Oh, boy.

DD: Yeah. Better to work with. . .

EG: From then on, boy, man, I tell you, we was careful. I tied, I had a big rope that I picked up at the dump yard, inch rope, and it's about sixty feet long. So I tied that on the windmill, and she went over there and wrapped it around something, and when I pry it up a little at a time, you see, she would tighten it with the rope, and we got it up all right.

WV: How do you get some of the ideas for your windmills, like using hardhats or using shoes? How do you get those ideas? How do you start out with your windmills?

EG: Well, when you once find out anything that is bigger on one end and smaller on the other end, you can

use that for a merry-go-round. Because when the small end comes against the wind, it isn't as strong as it is on the other of the wheel.

WV: I understand, yeah.

EG: And the paddles are the same way. You see, if you got a windmill, you have to have a tail on it. Well, if you set your paddle right in line with the tail, it wouldn't run, would it? The wheel. So you have to set them out to one side, oh, say, 15, 20, 25, or up to 45 percent, see, like this here. Then the wind hits that and it'll turn, the wind will scoot off and turn the wheel to the right, see. If you want to turn it to the left, then turn the paddle this way from your tail. And that's the whole secret there, but to make it run and make it last, you have to balance that wheel just as perfect as can be. You have to loosen your ball bearings, see. And then turn the wheel. If it stops wherever you turned it, you've got a balanced wheel. But that won't happen once in a million times. (chuckles) When you build a wheel it'll be always want to turn down the same way. Put a lead pencil mark on it, see, so that you know where the heavy side is at.

WV: Right.

EG: Well, then you either have to add a nut on this side or cut off a little iron on this side here, see.

WV: Right.

EG: Until you get it so that it'll stop. Or first thing you know, it'll probably turn off sideways like this, see. Well, then you have to cut off a little bit of iron right here until that'll stop wherever you want it.

WV: I understand. Stops it.

EG: And it usually takes hour, hour and a half, up to sometimes three hours to balance a wheel.

WV: Huh, that's \_\_\_\_.

EG: But when you once got it balanced, then you're all right until somebody comes along and hits it.

WV: Oh yeah.

EG: And bends the paddle for you, then you're stuck again.

WV: How many hours would you spend, like on building one of the windmills. I mean, I'm sure that it's a \_\_\_\_.

EG: Well, hunting them was the longest because—we've got it on our books here—and I had a sign on the door here: "Closed Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday." We'd strike out early in the morning, because when I give treatments here, they'd always come early to get ahead, you see.

WV: Sure.

EG: So we went early and sometimes before six, even, get out of here. So we could get iron, see. But we was open then in between that time, see.

WV: I understand.

EG: The way theaters close. And we was closed here for twelve years like that. And we made twelve hundred and five trips out—no, trips, twelve hundred and five days.

WV: Days.

EG: Sometimes we made two trips, like a dump yard right here in town, see. We'd go in there and get a few tubs and something, come and eat, and then we'd go out again. But the most of them, most of the stuff in the mill stuff was hunted—from twenty-five different towns.

WV: How did you pick your objects, like on what basis would you. . . ?

EG: Oh, any piece of iron. Pick it up and put it away. And you get a great big junkpile—that's what we used to call it, see. But it's like new iron, it's only the paint is off of it.

WV: Sure.

EG: Paint it and you look at and you think, "Well, they got the same thing in the hardware there."

WV: Looks brand new, yeah.

EG: Only a lot of it on the old machinery, they don't make them parts anymore, you see. And that's what I was after is antique—old hayrake seats, you know.

WV: Right.

EG: Boy, some of them are pretty. . . Oh, like, I just couldn't hold them [the seats—WV] here. I still have one of them left right down there, right there by the guest book. That's off from a thrashing machine.

WV: Yeah, but would you look for objects that would catch the wind real well, like these hardhats, and things like that?

EG: Well, yes.

WV: Or did you just pick them up without thinking about it?

EG: But you can't find much of them. I did get some of them in the dump yards, yeah, some of them down here by a second-hand man, but this contractor down here—Bonnell? Eckmann. Eckhardt. No. Yeah, Eckhardt. He wanted a windmill worst way, and I wouldn't sell one, see. "God," he said, "I got to have a windmill!" "Well," I said, "I'm saving it for the young people to see." He says, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll bring you some hardhats." I told him just before that, I've been watching—and I had a couple of 'em hardhats there, all battered up. He says, "I'll bring you some brand new ones." So he did. He brought me twelve of them.

WV: Oh, that's where they came from. [laughter]

EG: And he bought me some pipes, too, to put them up. Well, I couldn't turn a man down like that. [laughter] And I let him have one, a mill, and it's there today yet. You know, down on the dam, the other side the river?

WV: Uh huh.

EG: Well, you go past the church there, and on the right side, beyond the church, there's a house there and the windmill. It's a merry-go-round, running this way. Hardhats. It's there today; it's still running \_\_\_\_.

WV: That's great.

EG: Yeah, that was six years. . .

DD: Do a lot of people bring you things, or do you. . .

EG: Oh, once in a while they do. Yeah. The other day there was somebody brought in quite a bit of things. Some of them I can use, but others I can't, of course. I didn't know they was there. They set on the back of the, by the back gate, there.

WV: That's nice.

DD: Yeah, I'll remember, if I come across any bicycle wheels that you really need them.

EG: Well, they are something that is going to be harder and harder to get, because all over the world, the young people—and the older ones—will take them bicycle hubs, you know, if they can't get them, they'll buy one.

DD: Yeah.

EG: I had an order in since last February, in Wenatchee, for 15 bicycle hubs, just got them yesterday. And the woman sent a letter of apology. She said she could not get that order filled. She had. . .

WV: You mean, you bought them new?

EG: No. Yeah. And I didn't find out yet, because I didn't get the bill. I have to pay for that now, too.

WV: You can't find enough old ones, huh?

EG: No, you can't now. Because pret near all these people won't throw them away. They'll save them, you know. God, because I'll pay for an old bicycle hub if it was a light person on it, because they're just as good as new. I'll pay them for it, you bet I will.

DD: Let me ask you, as long as you see a lot of things, do you ever see any tank pumps? I need to buy a tank

pump, you know, a water pump, to pump water.

EG: Yeah, well, that's what I got right here.

DD: No, the kind that sits on the ground and it's a big cylinder, and you pump it. You know, it pumps a lot of water.

EG: Oh, yeah.

WV: Do you ever see any of those?

EG: No, sir, I haven't seen them. I know what you mean, because I've seen them, but I haven't found one. But I did have a ram here. You know what they are? Water ram?

WV: Yeah.

EG: I put it on top of a water tank, hot water tank. And by God, everybody wanted that God-darn ram, you know.

WV: [laughter] That's great.

EG: So they bought it, and I put. . .

WV: Did it have a windmill on it?

EG: I've got a three-wheel windmill on it now.

DD: It had a windmill on it.

EG: Yeah.

WV: What kind of tools do you use mostly, when you make these windmills?

EG: Tools?

WV: Yeah.

EG: Well, I have worn out three quarter-inch drills. They call them quarter-inch, but I took a 5/16th drill bit. That's the size I have to have to bore a hole to put the bicycle bolt in, see.

WV: Oh, I see, yeah.

EG: So that's the most used bit there is, is a 5/16th, and I've ground it down so I can put it in a quarter-inch drill.

WV: Right.

EG: Because if you put them in the half-inch drill. . .

[Tape 1, side B; Volkorsz' No. G4-2]

EG: . . .so I usually bore a seven-eighth hole in the piece of iron and bolt a bicycle hub on that.

WV: So you primarily bolt everything together?

EG: I bolt pret near everything together. The only thing I weld now is two pieces of pipe. To make them longer, see.

WV: I see.

EG: Because the welder the kids bought for me for my birthday.

WV: Oh, that's nice.

EG: It [the welder—WV] is too big, to weld, nice, small iron, see.

WV: Oh, small iron.

DD: Does your wife actually build some of the windmills, too, or does she just paint?



EG: No, she didn't. Oh, once in a while she helped me a little by holding a piece of iron or something like that. But she done all the painting, and, say, that's quite a job too. Bet your life.

*[Interruption to answer phone]*

EG: That's a lady, Coulee City, \_\_\_\_\_.

DD: Does you wife help you to decide what objects to use in the windmills? Or do you make all the decisions yourself?

EG: No, I do that all myself, yeah. Because she does the housework here, you know.

WV: Yeah.

EG: And watching the phone. There's so many people. And then I've been giving the treatments on the feet. Oh, the phone ring anytime. She'd write me down for an hour, then I'd come up and give the treatment, and go back to \_\_\_\_\_.

DD: So you're helping a lot of people.

EG: Oh, yeah, there's, as near as we can figure it, there's over 8,000 treatments I've given since 1950.

WV: Whew. Wow.

EG: But I didn't get paid for all of them, oh no. [all chuckle] Because, you know, you got so many friends, and they don't know what this is, so you give them free treatments and, first thing you know, they see that it's actually helping them. And ever so many of them are helping themselves then and giving treatments.

WV: Does your wife enjoy painting the windmills?

EG: Oh yeah, she likes it, you know, but it's been too cold for her to go out.

DD: Yeah.

DD: Does she choose the colors? She chooses the color.

EG: Well, quite a bit, yeah, and I try to do that because I've been watching that all my lifetime. I always did like colors, and she did too. Uniting the colors—or in other words, dividing your color—is a very tricky thing, you see. You can put colors together that won't be pretty at all, but take them up and divide them different, see. . .

WV: Uh huh. Like what kind of combinations?

EG: And, boy, how much nicer it looks.

WV: What kind of color combinations do you like?

EG: Well, white is something that don't look too good. I've got a white tail right out there. See it here, from here, you see. If that would have been divided with maybe a yellow or a red in with it, it would make it look like a garden with different color flowers in it—or a bouquet with different color flowers in it. And that's what they're bringing out in the hospitals now. They said they're finding out now that a bouquet that's got different colors in it can do more for the sick people than medicine does. Well, I know that is true. Because older people, you know, medicine don't cure them, see. They are breaking down. Well, if you can get their thoughts joyful again, boy, they got that nice hormone in their body, you see, from that pituitary gland.

WV: Sure, right. Well, all your windmills are very joyful too, because of the color and because they're spinning around.

EG: Well, it is right. I tell you, I always say, some days you're overworked, and you may have had some problems with your brain here, which pret near all of us will get. Go out somewheres where there's some pretty color and the wind to blow and your flowers, and you don't believe how it'll relax you. If you can get your thought off from your trouble. Here the same way. People you know that are down, the first thing you know, they start talking about the way everything is going to hell on this earth. I always tell them, "Well, come here and forget your old thoughts!" There's a lot of truth in that.

DD: Very good.

WV: Sure there is.

EG: Yeah.

DD: That's a good philosophy.

EG: Yeah, you bet. That's one thing. . . But we see so much trouble on this earth, and the biggest trouble that they're facing now, according to the books. . . Say, do you ever get a chance to read the oldest book on earth? It's called [Johesoph, Joe-hee-suff]? It's records of all the governments that they could find, see. Boy, that's something. Why governments would fall, see. The younger people got in, smashed all that stuff to pieces, because it was starving themselves to death. And what's more, the older ones would set fire to it, bomb it, in order to get the insurance. And that's going to come now, and you see it already. You know, all these fires, you can't blame the young people for that, all together. But they are going to. That's the reason I say the young people are facing something terrible now, and the only way that'll ever be changed, is like in Bible times: destroy all that big stuff. Because you can't live off from it. How are you going to use a great big building when all the young people haven't got any money to get in it? Right now, the state gives them. But that's going to come to an end, because the state has been borrowing money and taxing the farmers for it. And I've got one son-in-law myself. He started out here, it must have been about fifteen, going on sixteen years ago. Here, his dad died and he fell heir to it, and they owed \$42,000 on the property that he got, see. And now they got 73 [\$73,000—WV]. And this crop is going to be still worse yet.

WV: Oh, no.

EG: The banks, see, they live off of the money out of a bank for a year, then they bring their crop in, like all farmers do, you see. And they got cattle. . . Everything that's sold goes back to the bank. Well, pret near all of them, the taxes is so enormous, that it takes the biggest part of the crop to pay the taxes. And that's coming more and more now. Taxing. Governor Evans said he went behind this year \$4 million, short on taxes, see. And just what to do to raise that, I don't know. It is a problem. Business people. . . And the Chronicle people, I think you can write to them and get that information. Or even the Spokesman Review. I couldn't swear to it which was the one, but one of those two papers brought it out, that 93 percent of every dollar the government collects comes from the working people—farmers too.

WV: Right.

EG: And seven percent comes from the business people.

WV: That's amazing.

EG: They tax the business people, but whatever they do, they get a discount. You take all your television pictures, everything you see, the Republicans. . . You watch that last night?

WV: Yeah, not. . .

EG: Don't you know there's millions of dollars spent there?

WV: Oh, yeah.

EG: Every one of them takes it off from their income. That's tax money that our government should have, in order to pay off that debt. Six hundred billion dollars, now, is the debt. And they say that's far more than the United States is worth.

WV: (laughs)

EG: Now, that's their report, whether I should believe that or not, but I do know that six hundred billion dollar debt and paying interest on it. . .

WV: That's an awful lot of money.

EG: Don't you know that's going to take a lot of our crops?

WV: Yeah.

EG: And that's going to end someday. It's got to end.

WV: It's got to, yeah.

EG: And the only way you end is tear it down. They are tearing down a lot of buildings now already, you see. So that's the big problem now, is for the young people, and that's the reason I see right here in town, there's a lot of young people won't work, and I give them what work I can, what they can do, you see.

WV: Oh, you mean they help you out.

EG: Yeah. But we have no training schools. We got education, but that's only educating half of the brain.

WV: You mean, like vocational skills and things like that.

EG: Yeah, well, you see, if we live up to what the Bible says, training a child in the way it should go—it doesn't say educate; it says "train" them—that means using your fingers, and you can't use your fingers without your brain, isn't that right?

WV: That's right.

EG: And when you do your work right, first thing you know you can go ahead and play a piano and talk about something else. You're using both brains, see. But if you go to college and set there with your hands in your pocket, and you're educating your brain, only half of it is improved. The other one, he has to be done like that, see. [gesturing—Ed.] That's the reason some colleges have farmland where you can take up farming if you want to.

WV: Right.

EG: That's training and education. Boy, you can go out and run a railroad if you want to, or go back farming again. But there isn't many colleges like that. The government report come out, here, that's been three years ago, that there's over four million too many school teachers—isn't a school for them—because all they do is make more. Well, they should train them, you know, how to do something, and then also educate them for a teacher. Then if they can't get teacher job, they can use their fingers again.

WV: So, what kinds of jobs can young people do for you? What do you have them do?

EG: Painting. They can paint, put the first coat on.

WV: The primer.

EG: All the same color, see, the primer, yeah. And sometimes, if there's one that's teachable, you tell them, "Now, make a mark right here just as straight as you can, see. Go ahead and do it." And if it's crooked, well then the next paint that goes on it will cover that crooked, see. Somebody that'll do it.

WV: (laughs) Right, that's nice, yeah. How old. . .

EG: A lot of them start painting the fence, the pickets, see. That you can do with the brush, you know. And then I had them carry. . . See, the soil that's in these pots, we got that from Northrup Creek, by Steamboat Rock, hauled it here with the car. Well, I'd have it in the sacks. I'd have about seven sacks full. And there was a little girl living right here, and she wants, oh, she wanted to help me, worst way. So I give her two pails—they'd weigh around twenty pounds apiece, because there was a lot of leaf mold in them—but two pails full; she could just carry that. And she carried all that dirt for in the pots. And I paid her for it.

WV: That's great.

EG: Oh, my God. Today, she's a good working girl, and the boy is a good painter, you know, and good hard worker, because he had his brain educated clear to the end of the finger, with that, what the doctors called the subconscious mind. Being there's two brains in all of them, if you're born normal; you've got two sets of brains. You have to develop one when they're a little bit of a child. That's the reason it says "train a child." Because if they don't do it the way you ask them here you pick them up and paddle them to beat everything. You put fear in them. Then you tell them, "Do it right, now." And they'll do it right, see. That's training the fingers to do their work right. And first thing you know, you can get them to talking about something and they'll do their work just like we would play a piano and sing songs and read \_\_\_\_\_. So we see that training is something that should start—and it must start in with the young people. And I hope the colleges will come out to that, and especially our government. Have the parents train their children. If they can't do it, then let them have training schools where children can do something with their fingers, see. That's developing that other brain. And then send them to school, too, you see. And then when they go to college, boy, are they dandy. They can take up business, you know, of any kind, and take up cleaning up or doing dirty work. But not so if they've never done any work at all with their fingers but they've got a fine college education. Well, that's all they can do is use their brain. They haven't been trained with this other brain, that the doctors call the subconscious mind. You can learn to drive a car by reading out of a book, going to school for that, but you're not a safe driver.

WV: Right.

EG: That's been proved. But if you got your training while you were driving and somebody setting aside of

you, and when you're looking like that, boy, he'll hit you with a pop on the back of the neck that you won't forget. You took your eyes off from the road. You're training them then to keep that eye on the road, and then you can talk to them. And if it ever happens, it'll be like that right back again, see. They're driving with their subconscious mind, and that's training. And you can't do that by just educating out of a book. And they're finding out that pret near all of our car wrecks come from those that haven't been trained; they were educated how to drive, you see.

WV: Right.

EG: Well, it isn't that I run other people down, no, no. It's the system that we got that isn't quite right yet. We should train! This other brain that the surgeons call the subconscious mind, but you can't develop that in colleges or high schools. Can't go anywhere. It's always reading, you see.

WV: I wanted to ask you how you enjoyed being in the *National Geographic*?

EG: I didn't even know.

WV: You didn't know?

EG: That picture was taken in 1974. Right on that hillside, where that bird feeder is at. I was working there and. . . I think it was a man, all right, near as I can remember, taking pictures like so many of them do. Some of them have movie cameras, you know. And every now and then, one'll say, "Look up at the mill and smile." Well, I did, you know, look at the mill, and they went right on.

WV: (laughs)

EG: Well, in 1975, in the fall, we got a letter from Washington, D.C. I thought to myself, "Who's that Washington, D.C.?" The name was on it. I can show it to you right here. [continues while searching:] They sent me a letter and wanted me to okay their writing in there; if it was wrong, to correct anything that was wrong in that, and. . .

WV: You subscribe to the *National Geographic*, don't you?

EG: Oh, I think that's over somewheres else. [speaking of letter]

WV: You subscribe to it?

DD: Well, that's all right. Anyway.

EG: See her name is right on it. She was the one that sent it to me to okay and see if the number of the mills were right and how many whirligigs there were, you see. A whirligig is like a merry-go-round, see, and a windmill has got a tail on it.

WV: Right.

EG: Well, I corrected on there, she had 260 windmills and I had 302 or 303, I believe. So I corrected that. And a few other things that she had, corrected.

WV: Did they ask you for permission to publish the picture then, too?

EG: Yeah, well, they told me that they wanted to put in Geographic magazine, if I would change everything that was wrong.

WV: Right.

EG: Well, that was the only thing that I done, and I showed them what I done there, and wrote it down there, and by gosh it come out in December issue. (chuckles) I was surprised. And she sent us an extra magazine and that's the picture she has. [pointing] Only my daughter put it in the frame.

WV: That's real nice, yeah.

DD: Let me ask you one more question, and I guess we better go pretty soon. Do you remember anything from your childhood, a dream, or an object that suggested any of these windmills, because they're so joyful and happy, and they make me think of childhood.

EG: Well, I seen that long before I went millwrighting. You know, Dad was a farmer, and he would work for the neighbors too, with an old mower, cutting, you know, and even a scythe. Cut wheat with a scythe, cradle, they

used to call them.

WV: Uh huh.

EG: Well, some of them would have trouble with their [crates] breaking off, you know, bumping it. And I always thought to myself, "Why don't they put a little bigger piece on that, instead of that thin stuff?" It was my, that was my hobby, to see why people were having with a mower. Every now and then they'd have to stop and fix something, you see. Bolts come loose. Well, I told them, "Can't you put two nuts on there, and tighten them?" We call them jam nut now, you see. Well, that was just a little hobby that I got, trying to stop something that gives trouble. And the sawmill people found out that was my hobby and, boy, did I have work! (laughter) I could get a job anywhere.

WV: That's great.

EG: Any mill would take me in there because I loved work like that, and naturally when you follow something like that, if you like it, you're going to use a lot of thought on it. And anything that we don't like, like a nasty dirty job, just as quick as you get away from it, we do it, see. But not so if there's something you like. It's to fix trouble so it don't bother people anymore.

WV: So that's sort of how it started, you mean?

EG: And that's the reason I took up the sickness. I seen people dying by the hundreds in my lifetime. Now, there's no need of it. If they will listen to me. But they won't, because the first thing they'll do is go to a doctor and ask, "What do you think of reflexology?" "Oh, don't listen to that crazy stuff." Because that'll break up every doctor in the hospital in the United States, if the people would work on their feet. Only for injuries, we need them for that, you see. But for ailments, I'm speaking of.

WV: Yeah, I understand.

EG: No, that's the greatest thing that's going to go down in history. The biggest fools that ever walked the earth are people who think they're doing something that is good by running this work down. I say before you run anything down, be sure and examine it first.

WV: Yeah, sure.

EG: Because you might be turned into a fool by history, fighting something that you needed, see.

WV: That's for sure.

EG: Yeah. Well, there ain't no big money in it, because anybody can learn to do it. You'll be surprised how you can help people by just studying on the chart. Somebody got a headache; well, you work on the big toe, see. Keep 'em massaging that deep enough so it hurts your \_\_\_\_\_.

DD: You just massage with your thumb?

EG: Yeah, well, with your thumb and fingers, you know. [unintelligible passage]

EG: . . . the windmill, you said. (laughter) Be sure and look at this [the reflexology chair—WV] first. Then you can think about the windmills.

WV: Oh. Very nice meeting you. Nice talking to you. How do you keep track of all your windmills? You always know how many you have. How do you keep track of them?

EG: Tell by the book.

WV: Oh, you have them all written down?

EG: Let's see. [continuing while searching for book] Yeah, but they're, they've been \_\_\_\_\_.

WV: Yeah, take it out in the light; it's a little dark here.

EG: Go out here in the light.

WV: I was curious about that.

EG: That's the row across the street here.

WV: I see, and you give them all titles.

EG: Then that's a duplicate there, see. Here's the next row, on the outside of the wall there.

WV: I see, all right. [reading] "Pressure cooker, fry pan. . ."

EG: He told you that, yeah.

WV: ". . .five plastic bowls." I see. You give them descriptive titles. . .

EG: East fence.

WV: East fence.

EG: Yeah, and the number's on the post, and the price, see.

WV: "Twelve oil cans, two headlights, two reflectors, ring black tail, dustpan tail, four panels. . ."

EG: Yeah, it kind of gives you an idea that mill is like, so you can come and see what kind of a tail they've got, \_\_\_\_\_.

WV: ". . .wide wheel, green tail, four-blade motor, blue tail, black iron, sheet-metal pots, eight spoons. . ."

DD: When you use this peg, you just rub the peg around.

EG: Yeah. You should take up. . . [moving away from microphone; DD and EG continued to talk about reflexology while Volkorsz continued reading from notebook] As long as you lay there and relax, I'll give you a little more.

WV: ". . .electric drill, Gehrke's reflex massage." He has a license from the city of Grand Coulee. "Allegra Askman, of the Cheney Cowles Museum, did an interview, oral history taped interview, for the Eastern Washington State Historical Society."

DD: Well, listen, that's good advice. I can do that.

WV: Mr. Gehrke, what year were you born?

EG: 1884.

WV: 1884.

EG: A leap year freak. February 29.

WV: Oh, leap year. That's great. Do people ever send you photographs of what they've taken?

EG: Oh, yeah. Every now and then. Well, those on the end of the house down there outside.

WV: Yeah, I saw that.

EG: That's what other newspapers, people send us.

WV: I'll send you a few prints, if you like.

EG: Yeah, by gosh, man, you betcha. I sure appreciate it.

DD: I'll sure look for any bicycle hubs. My Dad was born in Coulee City, so sometimes I come over here, and I'll pick up any old bicycle hubs I can, because I'll know that you can use them.

EG: I used to get lots of them at the Coulee City dump, on the other side.

DD: Yeah.

EG: It was there and my daughter's living right close there, but it's closed off now.

WV: Ohh.

EG: You know they closed pret near all the dump yards.

DD: Well, where I live is on the other side of the mountains, over in Bellingham. I can find bicycle hubs over there.

EG: Yeah, as long as there was a light person on it. But some of the bicycle hubs are loose, you know, well, and where the spokes end, you know.

DD: Right, they have to be good.

EG: When that part of the hub is loose, well, I can solder them again, if the ball bearings are good.

DD: But it's better if they're in good shape.

EG: Yeah.

DD: Child's bicycles are probably good too, I suppose.

EG: Yeah, they're going to be the shortage coming now, boy, because all over the world, they're going to make these little windmills and whirligigs, because they're so easy to make after you once start on it, see. [But you won't.]

WV: Well, thanks very much. It was very nice talking to you.

DD: Yeah, it sure was.

### **[Tape 2, side B (cont.); Volkertsz' No. G5-1]**

*[Sometime in the early 1980s, Volkertsz returned to Coulee City, where he read from newspaper clippings posted at relocated sculpture in Grand Coulee, Washington]*

"Art Comes to a Seattle Substation." "Murals, Whirligigs, Tunnel, at a Viewlands Hoffman Substation."

Several years ago, Seattle City Light and the Seattle Arts Commission's Art in Public Places program decided to try something new with City Light One Percent for Art funds. The Viewlands Hoffman power substation was in the design stages, and artists became part of the design team, contributing their ideas about the substation design along with those of the project architects, and devising ideas about the kinds of artworks which could be created for the substation in order to soften and humanize its effect on the surrounding neighborhood where it was to be built.

Located at Fremont Avenue North and North 105th Streets, the substation and the artworks—some created, some selected and installed by the three-person team of Sherry Markovitz, Andy Keating, and Buster Simpson—were dedicated June 18. The artists' involvement in the project started in 1976 and was completed in 1978. The artworks will be visible and viable for some time. Deputy Mayor Bob Royer dedicated the artwork, and City Light Superintendent Robert Murray dedicated the substation. Murray also unveiled a plaque honoring the late Eugene Hoffman, former City Light Superintendent, after whom the substation is named.

The award-winning substation has been nominated for a national design award from the American Public Power Association (APPA). The substation was the first major City Light construction project to include such a diverse group in its design: artists, engineers, architects, landscape architects, and neighborhood residents.

The primary artwork components to be seen at the substation include a large mural on the interior wall; the color coding of the electrical equipment to an artwork "key," which elucidates the electrical pathways at work in the substation; and this year's [displays] of multicolored whirligigs, which spin and twirl in the wind.

All of the artwork components and the electrical equipment can be viewed close-up by walking through another artwork element, an arch-shaped chain link tunnel path, which passes through the substation, and which allows access to the inner workings of the substation while assuring safety to the viewer. Created by Emil Gehrke of Coulee City, Washington, the whirligigs, or windmills, represent American folk art in an "airy" mood.

Gehrke makes the mills and his wife Viva paints them. Each one is a distinct work created by the putting together of all sorts of "everyday" found objects. One is a simple construction of kitchen spoons painted red and formed into a pinwheel. A more elaborate construction features a propeller painted in bands of red, yellow, pink, and green on one side of the mill and, on the other side, a green plastic baseball hat set upside down in which sits a nesting mallard. A red plastic Donald Duck is dancing upon the back of the mallard. On a gusty day, one can see spin and twirl in all directions. Boots, coffee pots, frying pans, lids of cans, and engine parts, all move at once in a carnival of color. The subdued yellow, green, and pink colors, which the artist used for the electrical equipment and the pathway key are based in part on the colors used in the windmills.

The mural, which covers the interior wall of the substation, was designed to "act as a backdrop, interacting

visually and thematically with the equipment and the whirligigs," stated Andy Keating. The mural features a pattern of brightly colored painted shapes resembling wedge-shaped flags unstrung in the wind. The system for designing the mural was based on using the lines left in the concrete from the forms used for construction. Lines and arcs were drawn which intersected the existing lines. The shapes created by the intersection of the lines were then painted using pairs of colors in different quantities.

Additional artwork elements in the substation include specifically designed electrical danger signs and signs commemorating the work of Hoffman, the Gehrkes, and Thomas Edison. The signs were executed in porcelain enamel on steel. Other signs which relate the station to the overall electrical system and the functions in history of electricity were created in anodized aluminum. Rocks painted in colors of the other artworks were gathered by the artists at the foot of the dams which provide power to the substation and were placed within the compound.

"The integration of artists into the architectural process is certainly an important aspect of the work accomplished through the One Percent for Art program of the Seattle Arts Commission," Keating said. "It has proved to be an effective and practical means of accomplishing an integrated public art. The experimental nature of this project necessitated that time be spent breaking down barriers and establishing relationships, abandoning preconceptions about the function of art. For the artist, such projects involve a fundamental change in working method; that is, works are developed with input from a wide variety of sources and requirements, rather than emerging finished from the studio."

The selection of the artists for this project was made by a six-member jury in an open competition which included jurors [Myra] FitzGerald, artist; Richard Hobbs, the project architect; Lee Kelly, artist; Norrie Sato, artist; and G. R. Bishop, of City Light; and Tom Burgher, landscape architect as advisors.

Andrew Keating is a Seattle artist. He received his B.A. from Hobart College in New York and his M.F.A. in painting from the University of Washington. He has been included in various group and one-man shows, and most recently in exhibitions at the Seattle Art Museum's Modern Art Pavillon, with Buster Simpson, and at the Travor Gallery. He is. . .

*[Volkersz said: ]*

And it's the end of that article. This article was undated.

*[Volkersz continued reading, from another article:]*

*Wenatchee World* special writer, Hu Blank. "Grand Coulee's New Attraction: Park Has 180 Unusual Windmills." (Grand Coulee)

"There will almost always be action in North Bend Bicentennial Park. One hundred and eighty of the 781 unusual windmills of the descriptions that the late Emil Gehrke built as a hobby during his lifetime will continue to whirl inside a fenced enclosure. They constitute Grand Coulee Dam's newest tourist attraction.

"Elsie [Schnook], operator of a motel here, is the inspiration for the colorful display. She stimulated a lot of other people and civic clubs to help her pay tribute to Gehrke, who along with the late Mrs. Gehrke, were her neighbors along the highway to Bridgeport.

"The windmills, also called wind sculptures, have as rotating devices such odd things as children's sand buckets, hubcaps, teaspoons, toys, lawnmower blades, ironing boards, waffle irons, and parts of stoves.

"Ms. Schnook emphasizes the tremendous cooperation she got from local clubs in making the display possible. The Rotarians put up the wire fence. The local C.B. club moved the windmills from the Gehrke yard to the more accessible spot along the Coulee City-Grand Coulee highway. The Lions Club erected them, putting them in concrete tubs. Girl Scouts of the area painted the tubs, once parts of washing machines. The Wilder Company graded the site. Flowers were planted by Yoshika Imanura, a contractor at the Grand Coulee Dam powerhouse, and his wife. And teenager Darren Morris worked with many of the clubs.

"Ms. Schnook herself repainted all of the windmills in her backyard before they were erected for public exhibition. One hundred and fifty local businessmen purchased the whirling devices from the Gehrke family, leaving just 30 more to be sold to make the enterprise financially complete. Ms. Schnook said that she had personally gone through the guestbook the Gehrkes kept when they were alive. It showed that 17,650 people came to see the windmills over the 13 years they were up. Visitors came from every state in the Union and 47 foreign countries. "Now thousands more will be able to see them in Gehrke Memorial Gardens, as the exhibit area is officially called, Ms. Schnook said with pride."

*[At end of reading, Volkersz said:]*



"Gehrke's picture also appeared in *National Geographic* of December '75 in an article called "Can We Harness the Wind?"