

**Wilmette Historical Museum  
Oral History**

Abstract

Interviewee: Eleanor Dauer, Granddaughter of, and employed (1929-1938) by, Charles Brethold  
Interviewer: Robert E. Berns  
Date of Interview: January 13, 2000  
General Topics: History of interviewee's grandfather's business called Charles A. Brethold  
Builder of Homes.

**Minutes into  
Interview**

**Topics Discussed**

0 to 5 min.	Information about the business and her role Charles Brethold started company after moving to Wilmette in 1883. Company did construction and sold building insurance. Had many employees including Eleanor (worked for 9 years) and Charles Knobel (worked 49 years). Approx. 600 custom houses constructed from Highland Park to Rogers Park Business during the Depression
5 to 10 min.	Design of the typical Brethold house and story of house where the interview took place. Large homes mostly in Prairie or Colonial style. Listing some of the homes built in the area. How building was financed. Company also financed most of the mortgages.
10 to 15 min.	When Eleanor worked for Brethold and the business following her grandfather's death. Business was liquidated to keep reputation good intact Information about Brethold before Wilmette. Trained in the meat business not in master building Houses her grandparents lived in Model homes. They lived in a house, furnished it, family said they liked it, and the home was sold with the furniture.
15 to 20 min.	Family was not involved in the Wilmette government, but probably contributed monetarily.