

## Interview with Eva Baer

Conducted by Brother Placid Gross

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**PG:** Today is December 11, 1997 at the Richardton Health Center. I am Brother Placid Gross and we are going to talk with Eva Mishel (sp) Bauer. When were you born?

**EB:** I was born July 25, 1901 on the farm.

**PG:** When did you get married?

**EB:** October 14, 1919.

**PG:** What was your father's name?

**EB:** Ferdinand Mishel

**PG:** Your mother's maiden name?

**EB:** Susan Forester Mishel.

**PG:** Was your father born in this country?

**EB:** I don't think so as far as I know.

**PG:** He came from Russia, right?

**EB:** Yah, they were married over there.

**PG:** Your parents were married in Russia.

**EB:** Yah.

**PG:** Do you know your father's parents?

**EB:** Well I didn't know him, but his name was Sebastian Mishel.

**PG:** What was grandma's name?

**EB:** Well he was married to three wives. Now I don't know how they all died, but one was a Gardner as far as I know and the last one was a Jochim.

**PG:** And your father's real mother?... You're not sure which one it was?

**EB:** No, I am not sure. He had three wives. I'm not sure.

**PG:** We were talking about the grandpa, right? Did grandpa have three wives or your father?

**EB:** My grandpa Mishel had had three wives as far as I know.

- PG:** But he died in Russia.
- EB:** Grandpa Mishel? No. He had cancer and I think he died in Richardton, but he got sick in Kansas and my dad went down and got him.
- PG:** What was he doing down in Kansas?
- EB:** I guess they tipped the buggy over and his wife broke her leg and then he took her to another country – thought she'd get better.
- PG:** You said at Kansas. Were you living in Kansas?
- EB:** Yah, I don't know how come they lived in Kansas.
- PG:** They come from Russia to Kansas?
- EB:** They come from Russia to here in Richardton.
- PG:** How did they get to Kansas?
- EB:** I don't know how he got to Kansas.
- PG:** Maybe they went to Kansas first. Maybe they went from Russia to Kansas and then up to here.
- EB:** Might all be, I'm not sure.
- PG:** What about your mother? She was a Forester.
- EB:** Yah, she was a Forester, and her parents lived up there beside the church, the one that went down. They bought that and that's where they lived.
- PG:** The house was real close to the church? That was a stone house, huh?
- EB:** Yah, that had steps on each side where the house split or something so it fell over.
- PG:** What was your mother's first name? Did we say that already?
- EB:** Susanna.
- PG:** Susanna Forester
- EB:** Yah.
- PG:** What was Susanna's parents' names?
- EB:** Jacob Forester and her name was Friez.
- PG:** Do you know grandma's first name?
- EB:** (A45 Mary Eve) they called her.
- PG:** Do you know what village they came from in Russia?
- EB:** I'm not sure. (A48 German)
- PG:** There is a Karlsruhe and that sounds right. What did you do all of your life, what work did you do?

- EB:** Farmed. A little of everything – had a few sheep, cattle, few horses, pigs.
- PG:** Did you have turkeys?
- EB:** Oh yah, I had a lot of turkeys. Not many geese, I couldn't raise geese – I don't know why. I had ducks and turkeys and chickens.
- PG:** Did your mother ever talk about the old country?
- EB:** Oh yah. They all had to go out to the field and take a kettle of soup along out, and they ate all from that soup. They had to work in the fields too.
- PG:** The women worked in the field too, didn't they?
- EB:** Yah, they all did. They cut the grain by the scythe and then they made from the grain to make the buns.
- PG:** What other work did your mother do over in Russia?
- EB:** I guess just help out in the field
- PG:** Did she milk the cows?
- EB:** In Russia or over here?
- PG:** In Russia.
- EB:** She never said nothing about that.
- PG:** Your mother and dad were married in Russia, right.
- EB:** Yah.
- PG:** So they were adults already when they came over here
- EB:** Yah, they never had any children yet. The children were all born over here.
- PG:** They got married, and then they left over there and came here.
- EB:** Yah, they went with dad's parents. See, they come over and then they stayed by Foresters. He was from Russia too.
- PG:** So your dad's parents came over here too.
- EB:** Yah, both parents come over here. They said the ship was rough and a lot of them were seasick and they had to throw-up and everything went back and forth.
- PG:** Do you know how long they were on the water?
- EB:** No, I don't know; must have been on the water a couple of days.
- PG:** Yah, two weeks maybe.
- EB:** Maybe, yah. See my grandpa Mishel married a young women and then they had a child – do you know Adam Mishel?

- PG:** Yah
- EB:** Well she was by him. See grandma was a young bride, and she didn't want to take care of that child, so my mother had to take care of her.
- PG:** Grandpa Mishel married a woman that had a child.
- EB:** No, *they* had a child.
- PG:** They had a child. But she didn't want to take care of it.
- EB:** Well, she was just a young bride. So my mother had to take care of it.
- PG:** You don't know anything else about the ship coming over?
- EB:** Well they talked about them sharks I guess
- PG:** Sharks?
- EB:** Well, great big fish how they come against the ship.
- PG:** Maybe a whale
- EB:** That's what I mean, yah.
- PG:** Did your father ever talk about the old country? Did he say anything?
- EB:** No.
- PG:** Did your parents start to talk English over here?
- EB:** Mother didn't know too much but father could talk pretty good. He learned by himself. He says when they looked for some horses they wrote a name on a piece of paper looking for some horses; they couldn't talk English so they give him the paper.
- PG:** Did they talk about the church in Russia and what it was like?
- EB:** No, not that I remember, but they had church over here in the schoolhouses and once she said that there was some firebugs, and then they thought the Indians were coming; then they rolled around and (A105 tape cuts out) so they could protect themselves, and they were just firebugs.
- PG:** Did your mother get homesick for Russia?
- EB:** No, I don't think so. She was so busy all the time I guess.
- PG:** She did not have time to get homesick.
- EB:** No, I guess not.
- PG:** Because your mother's parents were over here too. How about your mother's brothers and sisters, were they all over here?
- EB:** Yah, as far as I know.
- PG:** And your dad's brothers and sisters, were they over here?

- EB:** I guess they must have come along over.
- PG:** You think they all came over, your dad's brothers and sisters?
- EB:** Yes.
- PG:** Did they ever get letters from the old country?
- EB:** No.
- PG:** So they didn't have any relatives over here if they didn't get any letters.
- EB:** No.
- PG:** Did you get German newspapers over here?
- EB:** They got the Aberdeen Herald. (A121 German Der Folks Fried)
- PG:** That was printed at the Abbey.
- EB:** Yah, dad I guess learned himself to read German.
- PG:** Do you know any German poems, in German?
- EB:** (A126)
- PG:** Do you know something like (A127 German)
- EB:** No, (laughter). My mother used to sing a baby song, but I forgot it. (A129 German)
- PG:** (A130 German)
- EB:** (A131 German)
- PG:** You don't remember that one, huh?
- EB:** No.
- PG:** Did you talk German to your children? Did your children learn German?
- EB:** Oh yah. They were kind of (A134 stubborn) about it but they all can talk a little bit.
- PG:** But when they were little they could. When they were at home they talked German.
- EB:** Yah.
- PG:** Did your parents talk Russian?
- EB:** We had to Russian hired men and they could talk to them.
- PG:** So your parents could talk Russian?
- EB:** Oh yah.
- PG:** What kind of work did you have to do when you were little?

- EB:** Oh my God, everything – outside and inside. I run every machine that's on the farm, even the header. My husband had to work in PWA and there was grain – barley or oats – and I told him if he harness up the horses I and the boys would do it, so we cut that and by the time he got home we had that cut.
- PG:** Good. Did you wear pants when you went out to work or did you wear a dress?
- EB:** No, I wore pants.
- PG:** Did you milk the cows by hand?
- EB:** Oh yes, all the time. We never had no milk machine.
- PG:** When you were little you had to milk too. You probably started when you were six or eight years old?
- EB:** Yah, I guess so. I know we had a cow that had such a big udder; you put the pail under and it was in the pail – kneeled down and milked her.
- PG:** When you were little, what work did you like to do?
- EB:** I liked to ride the horse; took care of the cows.
- PG:** Did you have a saddle?
- EB:** Oh yah, the horse's name was (A155 Fannie)
- PG:** What work did you not like to do?
- EB:** I didn't like to stack the haystack. It was always sweet clover and he (A160 rolled it down with the rows all bundled up) and I had to tear that apart and by the time I had that apart he had another load. That was the hardest work I've ever done.
- PG:** Stacking the sweet clover hay; that would be hard work. How old were you then?
- EB:** Oh... I was married already.
- PG:** Did you go to school when you were little?
- EB:** We went to Spring Valley School, a mile from Paul's place.
- PG:** How many years did you go to school?
- EB:** I only went to the fourth grade. I had to stay home when mother washed and when they hauled hay to make their way from the upstairs so they could pitch it in.
- PG:** How about your other brothers and sisters, did they go to school?
- EB:** Yah, they didn't go to school too long either, they were about sixteen or so.
- PG:** Were you the oldest in the family?
- EB:** No, (Mary Behm) was the oldest.
- PG:** So the older ones had to stay home too to work.
- EB:** Yah.

- PG:** In your school, were they all Germans or were there other people in your school?
- EB:** Mostly Germans.
- PG:** Did you talk German in school?
- EB:** Well, sometimes and sometimes not.
- PG:** Were you punished if you talked English?
- EB:** No.
- PG:** How did you go to school?
- EB:** We had a horse and in the wintertime we drove and he went back home again – we left him go. His name was Jack.
- PG:** You drove with one horse and then you let the horse run home so your dad could use the horse at home, huh?
- EB:** Yah. Yah, he was a gentle horse. When they had a bronco or something to break in, to drive, they had him with old Jack, tied him on to him.
- PG:** In the afternoon when you went home you did not have a horse to go home.
- EB:** Sometimes we got a ride with the neighbors; they drove.
- PG:** How far was it to school?
- EB:** About a mile.
- PG:** What kind of teachers did you have?
- EB:** I remember one man, his name was Hasper; I think Ed was his name.
- PG:** Was he a good teacher?
- EB:** My dad didn't like him (A199)
- PG:** He would shoot the kids with spitballs with a rubber band.
- EB:** My son was pretty good educated already and they had arithmetic so my son made it and the teacher couldn't make it so the teacher says, "your's must be right."
- PG:** So your son knew more than the teacher in arithmetic.
- EB:** I guess so.
- PG:** Where did the teachers board?
- EB:** We had quite a few of them that stayed at our house.
- PG:** Did you have men teachers or women mostly?
- EB:** Just that one man that I know, Haspert.

- PG:** Where did the teachers come from?
- EB:** I think they lived in town here.
- PG:** I mean were they Germans or were they English?
- EB:** I guess they were English.
- PG:** Did you go to church a lot?
- EB:** Sundays we went to church.
- PG:** Did you have church at home?
- EB:** No, the neighbors I guess; they used to go together.
- PG:** Did you pray at home when you were little?
- EB:** Sure, we always prayed before we ate and had our night prayers.
- PG:** When you went to church when you were little, was it church in German?
- EB:** Latin I guess.
- PG:** The Mass would be in Latin and the sermon would be in German?
- EB:** Yah.
- PG:** When the church switched to English, was that hard on you or did you like that?
- EB:** Of course we liked it, but I guess my parents I don't know, they never said nothing. My parents probably weren't alive no more when it went into English.
- PG:** Do you remember when Father Gregory preached in German?
- EB:** Yes.
- PG:** Could you understand him when he preached in German?
- EB:** Oh yah.
- PG:** When somebody died in your family where did you have the body? In the funeral home or...
- EB:** They usually had it in the house I think. I know (A239) had their child in the house. I don't think that they had it in the funeral home. Then I guess they took them to church after a couple of days or so.
- PG:** Do you still have any old things that your parents brought from Russia? Dishes or blankets...
- EB:** No, I don't think so. She had a set of (A246 blue) dishes, but if she got them from Russia I don't know.
- PG:** You don't know where those dishes are now, huh?
- EB:** No, I know my daughter had some her grandma gave her; she's in Alabama now.
- PG:** How did you celebrate Christmas when you were little?



- EB:** Well, Krish Kindle.
- PG:** The Krish Kindle came.
- EB:** Then the Belzenickel came with a fur coat on and come with a chain.
- PG:** What did the Belzenickel do with the chain?
- EB:** Well he scared the kids. (laughter)
- PG:** Scared them good. Did he come into the house too?
- EB:** Oh yah, oh yah. Kids got scared. Fur coat on and had a chain and [said] "Kids are you good?"
- PG:** Now when you were married and you had children, did you have the Belzenickel too?
- EB:** No. (laughter)
- PG:** What do you think of that Belzenickel? Was that a good thing or was that bad?
- EB:** It scared the kids too much I think.
- PG:** That was not too good huh.
- EB:** No, I don't think so.
- PG:** What about the Krish Kindle?
- EB:** He come with a white sheet or something like that.
- PG:** What did the Krish Kindle bring you?
- EB:** A few nuts and a few candy; maybe an apple and an orange.
- PG:** Did you get any gifts when you were little?
- EB:** I guess they had a doll in a shoe box... (tape scratchy)
- PG:** You hung the doll on the wall. That was so nice?
- EB:** Why sure it was nice. It would break if you didn't take care of it.
- PG:** So you didn't even play with it?
- EB:** No, just look at it.
- PG:** So you did not get many gifts when you were little.
- EB:** Beads for around [the neck] and the chain broke and the beads were gone.
- PG:** What did the boys get from the Krish Kindle?
- EB:** Maybe shoes or stockings.
- PG:** How did you celebrate Easter when you were young?

- EB:** Well they'd bake. They ate a lot of good food; maybe potato salad, and a ham, and doughnuts (A286 German - Shnaboil)
- PG:** (Shnaboil) – snowballs. Did you have Easter eggs?
- EB:** Oh yah. They made the color with onion peels.
- PG:** Did they have other colors too or only the onion peel?
- EB:** No they didn't.
- PG:** You don't get nice colors from the onion peel do you?
- EB:** No just kind of yellow. Then the kids have a nest to put the eggs in, probably got some candy.
- PG:** The kids made a nest?
- EB:** Yah, oh yah, where the Easter rabbit would come.
- PG:** When you were married what kind of a wedding did you have?
- EB:** Just in a house out by the farm because his brothers died that year of the flu; they didn't want no dance or anything; of course they didn't have no room to dance. That was the house where Paul Baer lived.
- PG:** Oh, that was the old stone house?
- EB:** Yah.
- PG:** You came to Richardton to church. How did you drive to church?
- EB:** We had an old Ford.
- PG:** Then you went home to your mother's place?
- EB:** Yah. My husband bought that place from my folks.
- PG:** Then you lived in that stone house all your life.
- EB:** I guess I was about six years old when they built the house. I don't remember so much about it, but I know that they built it.
- PG:** Is that house still standing?
- EB:** Yes, that's still standing.
- PG:** Did you like that stone house?
- EB:** Oh yah. It was a big house; had an upstairs and a basement.
- PG:** Was it warm or was it cold?
- EB:** It was cold. In the summertime it was cool.
- PG:** Did you have a furnace in the basement.
- EB:** I can't remember what they used to heat it with. I guess they just heated it with some kind of stove.

- PG:** You just had a stove in the middle of the room, I think.
- EB:** Yah, dining room.
- PG:** What did you burn in the stove?
- EB:** Coal.
- PG:** When you got married you did not have a three day wedding, huh?
- EB:** No we didn't.
- PG:** You said your husband lived at Halliday before he was married.
- EB:** About a half a mile west of the big flat.
- PG:** Which church did they go too?
- EB:** St. Martin's.
- PG:** So are his parents, the Baer grandparents, are they buried at St. Martin's?
- EB:** My husband's parents are buried down there and three brothers who died of the flu.
- PG:** Oh, three brothers died of the flu?
- EB:** In three days.
- PG:** Oh my, that was bad. Do you know how old they were already when they died?
- EB:** They were all pretty well grown up; one was married, Paul Baer; then was Nick and Tom.
- PG:** They're buried at St. Martin's.
- EB:** Yah.
- PG:** When you got married did you have a bridesmaid?
- EB:** Oh yah. It was my sister and his sister were two bridesmaids.
- PG:** What was your sister's name?
- EB:** Anna. She married Ray Brown.
- PG:** and his sister?
- EB:** She married Carl Heindert. They're all gone already.
- PG:** What about the best man?
- EB:** We didn't have a best man. No, we just had two bridesmaids. It was just a plain wedding.
- PG:** What kind of food did you have at the wedding?
- EB:** We had chicken noodle soup and his mother was blind already so we took some soup out to her on our wedding day.

- PG:** She couldn't come to the wedding?
- EB:** No, she didn't come to the wedding.
- PG:** Besides the chicken noodle soup what did you have?
- EB:** I guess potato salad.
- PG:** Did you eat chicken too?
- EB:** I'm sure they had chicken to make the soup.
- PG:** Did you have a wedding cake?
- EB:** No.
- PG:** That was not the style, huh.
- EB:** No, not there yet.
- PG:** How about Schnapps? Did you have Hokseit Schnapps?
- EB:** I guess they must have. I don't remember.
- PG:** What kind of a dress did you have?
- EB:** A white one, silk.
- PG:** Have you still got it?
- EB:** No, I had it for a long time then I dyed it at made night gowns for the little kids.
- PG:** How did you dye that?
- EB:** We got dye.
- PG:** Oh, you could buy it.
- EB:** Yes.
- PG:** What color did you make that?
- EB:** Light blue.
- PG:** That was a nice color. If your husband lived out by Dodge, how did you ever find him?
- EB:** Well, it was (Kouplad). My mother was a Forester and his sister married a Forester, so it was my uncle and aunt. (laughter) Well they thought I could work good so I guess they needed someone to work and take care of his mother.
- PG:** So how long did you know him before you got married?
- EB:** From July to October. I knew him before, I just seen him, but we never...
- PG:** Was that long enough?

- EB:** Must have been. (laughter) It worked.
- PG:** Well then after you were married where did you live?
- EB:** We lived by his folks in the house for a few months I guess and then they moved a little house there that had a kitchen and a front room and a bedroom. That's where we lived for a couple of years; out by Halliday.
- PG:** Then your husband bought your dad's farm and you moved there?
- EB:** Yah, that was a couple years after [we were married].
- PG:** Did your dad give you something when you got married? Did you get cows from your dad?
- EB:** Yah, two horses, two cows, table, bed, chairs, washboard.
- PG:** But you got two horses too?
- EB:** Two horses and two cows.
- PG:** Usually the men get the horses.
- EB:** I guess I worked enough there so they gave me some. Two black horses.
- PG:** What was their names?
- EB:** One was Kate, the other one I don't know; they were two female horses.
- PG:** What kind of German food did you eat?
- EB:** (A462 rivel milik) soup.
- PG:** I don't even know what that is.
- EB:** That is milk soup with rivels in there. I just made them by hand.
- PG:** Did you make Borscht?
- EB:** Oh yah; put in meat and cabbage and beans and carrots and potatoes and tomatoes, and a little cream.
- PG:** Did you make Halupsi? –cabbage with rice in it.
- EB:** Well, we made raisin and rice and you put it in a casserole and put some sugar, salt, water, and butter on and put it in the oven.
- PG:** Did you make Blachenda?
- EB:** Not too often. I did, but not my mother.
- PG:** Did you bake Kuchen?
- EB:** Yah, my mother made sugar Kuchen.
- PG:** Did you have music in your family?
- EB:** No, they didn't have no music. Well I think mouth organ.

- PG:** Did you sing at home?
- EB:** Well when we milked the cows my sister sang when we had them in the barn.
- PG:** Can you still sing? Do you know the names of any songs that you sang?
- EB:** No.
- PG:** Did you dance?
- EB:** Once in a while, not too much.
- PG:** Did your parents dance?
- EB:** No, they couldn't dance.
- PG:** Did you play any games at home?
- EB:** We ate a lot of sunflowers (laughter); played checkerboards.
- PG:** What kind of games did you play in school?
- EB:** Andy-Andy-Over.
- PG:** Over what?
- EB:** The schoolhouse.
- PG:** Did you break the windows too in the school?
- EB:** No, I don't think so.
- PG:** Did you play cards at home?
- EB:** Yah, Old Maid and something else, but I don't know what that was anymore.
- PG:** What did you do if somebody got sick at home?
- EB:** They had (A539 German gumbascmere) and (linament); steamed them.
- PG:** Were you able to go to the doctor when you were young? Was there a doctor?
- EB:** No.
- PG:** What did you do if you stepped into a nail?
- EB:** Soak it in water.
- PG:** Did you have Brauche? Do you know what Brauche is?
- EB:** No
- PG:** When a lady would pray over you and put her hands on you.
- EB:** No

**(End of interview)**