

Interview with Magdalena (Maggie) Eisenbeis (ME)

Conducted by Delmar Zimmerman (DZ)

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Wishek, North Dakota

Transcription by Margaret Templin

DZ: Today is January 31, 1996. I am Delmar D. Zimmerman a volunteer interviewer for the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection of the North Dakota State University Libraries in Fargo, North Dakota. It's a pleasure to visit with Mrs. Maggie Zimmerman Eisenbeis in Wishek, North Dakota. At the outset I would like to note that Mrs. Eisenbeis is my mother and we are conducting an interview in her home. We will get right to the questions here. What is your name, your date of birth and where were you born?

ME: My name is Maggie Eisenbeis. I was born July 27, 1912; four miles east of Benson in a two room house.

DZ: What is the name of your father and in what village in South Russia did your family once live?

ME: My father Solomon Eslinger came from Grossliebental Russia. In 1908 he came to Ashley, North Dakota. He sailed by ship to Detroit, Michigan. From there they came by train to Ashley where his father, Conrad Eslinger was. They arrived there by train.

They stayed there until the spring of 1899. Then another son was born and they moved to a house four miles east of Danzig and that was where I was born.

DZ: Your father's name was Solomon Eslinger. When and where did he die?

ME: He died January 10, 1943. He was buried in the cemetery by his own church on his own land. That was near Danzig. It was about two miles north of his home.

DZ: What is the name of your mother and what village in Russia did your mother's family once live?

ME: They lived in Friedenstal, South Russia. Her name was Katrina Carolina Solzer (SP) 37, daughter of Fred and Carolina Weisenburg. They had four children when they came to the United States, the fifth child, Wally, was born soon after they got to the United States.

DZ: When and where did she die?

ME: She died in her home February 17, 1957, and was buried in the same cemetery that my dad was buried.

DZ: How many brothers and sisters did you have in your family?

ME: There were fourteen in all, seven boys and seven girls.

DZ: Can you give their names in the order of their birth?

ME: Yes. They are Pauline, Jagel, Sam, Carrie, Willie, John, then myself (Maggie), Conrad (he died at the age of one year old), then Fred, Lydia, Rose, Edwin, Emma, and Eugenna.

DZ: That should make all fourteen then. Do you have any recollections of what your mother told you about the old country, living in South Russia?

- ME:** Yes I remember. She told us she would gladly go back tomorrow if they had the money. She didn't like it here, and was homesick for her old friends.
- DZ:** Did she say how they lived over there?
- ME:** She didn't say how it was over there, but they had four kids and they helped with the work. They were very well based over there. I don't know what she liked about it.
- DZ:** So, she liked it so well she would have gone back.
- ME:** That I remember. She told me she would go back.
- DZ:** Do you have any recollections of what your father told you about the old country, living in South Russia?
- ME:** He was homesick too, having had relatives over there. He still had a brother over there yet. He said he wouldn't mind going back because everything was makeshift here and they had to get along with their two-room house. They had to use cow chips to cook their meals. They didn't have any money at that time.
- DZ:** What did they do over there? Did they have a farm?
- ME:** I don't know. They didn't say.
- DZ:** Do you remember family stories about the ancestral German villages of South Russia? Did they ever say anything about the small towns over there?
- ME:** Yes they talked about it. They liked it there. I don't know how it was, but I believe it was a nice country.
- DZ:** Do you remember any village names, and did they mention any village names?
- ME:** Only those two, Grossliebental and Friedenstal.
- DZ:** Do you remember times when your ancestors wished they were back in the homeland? I suppose you already answered that.
- ME:** Yeah. They would have liked to go back. They were homesick for the people there.
- DZ:** Do you recall your family receiving letters from the old country?
- ME:** Yes, lots of them and I had to answer them. I was my father's secretary. I had to write them back.
- DZ:** Did your family wait for news from the relatives who stayed in Russia? Were they anxious to find out from them.
- ME:** Yes, they were anxious. I don't remember what I wrote back but I know I answered the letters.
- DZ:** So they were glad to write and to receive letters.
- ME:** That was when I was eleven or twelve years old. I had to write letters for them.
- DZ:** What language did you speak as a child?
- ME:** We spoke the German language.
- DZ:** Do you know the name of dialect?

ME: I wondered that what was.

DZ: There were different dialects. It was just German, then as far as you know?

ME: It was just plain German, not the German that they speak over there.

DZ: Not the high German?

ME: Yes, we knew German. We didn't know any other language until we went to school.

DZ: What were some of your childhood chores that you enjoyed doing when you were a child? What were some of the chores you had to do?

ME: Well, we had to help our parents. We had to pick up cow chip for our morning breakfast and for our daily use, that was all we used.

We didn't have a floor in our house. We had straw as a floor for many years until I was old enough to remember, I was about ten or eleven.

DZ: What chores did you like to do?

ME: I had to help with many things. We had to do anything we were asked to do. They always had something for us to do, we never complained about it.

DZ: Were there any chores that you didn't like to do? You didn't have any choice, did you?

ME: No, we milked cows when we got old enough. I say that food was scarce at that time. I often think of that when Mother made some blonkugen (SP) 120 as they said in German. They just mixed flour with water and fried it on the stove. There were no pans to put it in, this was used for our breakfast.

DZ: If you didn't do the work that was expected of you, how were you disciplined?

ME: We were never disciplined. No, they were good to us; we weren't bad.

DZ: You probably did all the work then?

ME: Well, they worked us. We didn't have to scrub the floor. We took the straw out and put fresh straw in. That was work we had to do every week.

DZ: What was it like in your school?

ME: School was like any other school when we started.

DZ: Do you remember the subjects you had?

ME: Yes, I started out with the first grade but I can't remember my teacher. I know that Harold Heisler and Arnold Heisler were two teachers, they stayed for several years. They were the Postmasters at Danzig and were good teachers too. Mrs. Engin, was a good teacher too.

I graduated from the eighth grade, in 1929 held at the Ashley court house. It was the first graduation they had there. There were eight graduates.

DZ: How many students were in your school?

- ME:** Well, there were quite a few, we had about sixteen or seventeen, I think.
- DZ:** In all eight grades?
- ME:** In all grades. The first through the eighth grade. There was one teacher to one school room.
- DZ:** How much education do you have?
- ME:** Just through the eighth grade. I passed the eighth grade. My father wanted me to go to high school, but I didn't want to. I didn't want to leave home. "No, I'm not going to stay in Ashley," I said. He wanted me to stay in Ashley with the Shiabes (SP) 151 that he bought the house from. They would have kept me for nothing if I stayed in school but I turned it down. I didn't want to.
- DZ:** So you could be at home. You must have liked the work at home. Were there kids of other nationalities in your school?
- ME:** No, not at that time. We were all alike.
- DZ:** Can you tell us a little about your playground experience, things that you did on the playground?
- ME:** Oh yes, just as soon as they called recess we would run around the school house, hide from each other. We would play games and have a lot of fun.
- DZ:** Do you remember the games you played?
- ME:** Pompom Pull Away, Hide and Seek, and Drop the Handkerchief, we had all kinds of games. We would hide around the school.
- DZ:** How did you get to and from the school?
- ME:** We walked.
- DZ:** How far did you have to go?
- ME:** We walked just over the field, it was not quite a mile.
- DZ:** You walked every day.
- ME:** We had to walk every day, through the blizzards and everything. Sometimes they picked us up with a sled. Most of the time we walked. We carried our lunch in a paper bag. We had syrup bread, liverwurst and boiled eggs. The syrup bread they soaked it until noon.
- DZ:** So, there were no hot lunches at that time.
- ME:** No, there was no hot lunch. We ate the same thing for lunch day after day, the same lunch most every day. We didn't have a change very often.
- DZ:** Did you have play ground equipment, Merry-go-rounds and swings and things like that?
- ME:** No. For the swings we had were a rope in the tree. We put a rope in the tree and a board in the rope. That was our swing. We could swing one at a time.
- DZ:** Did the boys or girls play ball?

- ME:** There was a ball but they didn't play any games like they do now.
- DZ:** You mentioned some of the teachers. Is there anything you want to say about the teachers, about discipline or how tough they were?
- ME:** No, they weren't tough. They would explain it, and would stand us in the corner and that was all. They never hit me, I was good friends with the teachers. They were Arnold Hesler and Harold Hesler.
- DZ:** The teachers never hit one of the students, but they would stand us in the corner once in a while. You never went to town school, did you?
- ME:** No. My sister, Eugena, went to town school.
- DZ:** Did she say there was a difference by attending farm and town school or was it pretty much the same?
- ME:** I was gone at that time. I didn't hear how she liked it but I guess all the other kids went. There were four of them, two boys and two girls who went to the same school. The school was in Danzig which is now closed.
- DZ:** Now we are going to switch from education to religion. In what way was religion and the church an important part of your upbringing?
- ME:** That was different from the way it is now. We would drive in the bobsled to a neighbor's house on Sunday. We had services in their house on the Dovers' farm. They had meetings there every night. Walt picked us up in a big bobsled horse-drawn and we went over there. No matter what the weather or how cold it was, they always went.
- DZ:** They didn't cancel because of a little cold weather?
- ME:** No. Then soon my dad and some other members, the Stovers and the Walshes bought a church from the Lutherans in Friedonia, and moved it to my father's land. That's where the cemetery is now, and they had church there for many years. I think it was in 1956 when they changed it and then went to Ashley for church.
- DZ:** How far did you have to go to church at first?
- ME:** That was only a mile and a quarter.
- DZ:** Would you walk or take a sleigh?
- ME:** As long as we didn't have a car we would take the sled and horses. There were those that came walking from Ashley, that was Leaner and Fischers' at that time.
- DZ:** How far was that?
- ME:** That was eight miles.
- DZ:** And he walked?
- ME:** And he walked on Saturdays. He caught a ride once in a while. He would stay over night at our house, then went along to church with us.
- DZ:** You would say religion and the church was very important?

- ME:** More important than it is now. People went to church at that time. Now they don't go anymore.
- Yes, that was when Dovers had it in their house, and it was a small house. Three or four families got together for church every night. I can't see, Walt died so young. He was sixty-one years old when he died at that church.
- DZ:** In what language was church services and prayers?
- ME:** They were always in German. We had a Bible verse every Sunday. We had to remember it until the next Sunday. John Dogol was our teacher. He said, "Be sure that you know it next Sunday." He gave little prizes for those that learned it. Those verses that we learned at that time I still remember. They don't do that nowadays anymore.
- They celebrated birthdays too. They had a gift of money for how old you were. You would have to put it in a little cup and they saved it and they bought something for it.
- DZ:** That was one way of getting some money. Do you remember when the services or prayers switched from German to English?
- ME:** Wasn't that in 1956? I don't remember. I think when Dad was sick that year, that's when they really went into the English services. I think that was in 1954.
- DZ:** So as long as you were with your parents it was German all the time, never English at that time. Not until much later.
- ME:** They had German services for funerals and everything. I think it began to change in the 1950s. They still had German then but English came in more and more.
- DZ:** Were your parents alive at that time? How did your parents feel about this change when they started talking English in church?
- ME:** They weren't alive in 1957. My mother was alive but she was unable to go to church anymore. She was home all the time in a wheelchair. At that time I wondered which minister we would have, German or English.
- DZ:** What did baptism and confirmation mean to you?
- ME:** Baptism was nice. I wasn't confirmed. I learned for confirmation and every thing but the minster went away that spring. There was no confirmation that year so I never was confirmed. The rest were all confirmed. Baptism was nice. That was in the Wishek Baptist Church in the basement. Don't you remember, that was in 1942.
- DZ:** Were there any special festivities relating to baptism or confirmation? You said you were not confirmed, how about baptism, was that a special occasion?
- ME:** That was a special occasion. There were thirty eight, I think, were baptize on that Sunday.
- DZ:** Was there framing of the baptismal certificates?
- ME:** I think it should have been but we didn't think that far ahead. I don't know, I haven't got mine.
- DZ:** Were your parents and grandparents involved in the founding or the joining of another church?

- ME:** They were Lutheran when they came here but they changed to the Evangelical church. That's when they started that new church.
- DZ:** Do you know why they changed?
- ME:** No, I don't know why, but I suppose there were other churches. I don't know whose idea that was.
- DZ:** You said from Lutheran to the Evangelical, then later on you became Baptist. How did your family deal with death? When somebody died how did they handle that?
- ME:** Well Dad was the first one to die. We knew that he was quite sick for a while before he died. He was a sugar diabetic and his feet fell off from the knee on down. I think everybody was glad when he died. My mother took care of him as long as she could. He died at home in his bed. I remember the morning they called when he died.
- DZ:** What did they do then after he died?
- ME:** That's another thing. There was no undertaker at that time. Well, Nickish was the undertaker then but they didn't embalm at that time. They came to the home and got everything ready. The body would sit in the home until the funeral was. The way they put that stuff on, I don't know.
- DZ:** How did the people grieve? You said that people were glad he had passed away so they didn't really grieve.
- ME:** He wasn't old, he was only 65.
- DZ:** What about when somebody died unexpectedly, how did they handle that?
- ME:** I suppose that would be something different. They say if someone dies fast that's better than if someone suffers that long.
- DZ:** What about funeral songs, what kind of songs did they sing at that time?
- ME:** I don't remember. Reverend Kough and Reverend Stuttes from Bismarck helped at the funeral services. Reverend Kough spoke in English, that's where that started. It started in 1940, I think. He was a young reverend and Reverend Stuttes was the older one. Reverend Stuttes was the district superintendent from Bismarck, he came down and preached the sermon.
- DZ:** Are you familiar with wrought iron crosses as grave markers?
- ME:** Yes. We had that. We put them in each corner. I think at that time it was only a marker that they put the name on. Then later on they put the tombstone.
- DZ:** What about the wrought iron crosses?
- ME:** I think that was the church.
- DZ:** Then your family didn't have the special design for grave marker just the corner stones and then the tombstones.
- ME:** No. That's all I remember.

- DZ:** Does your family have any heirlooms and objects of sentimental value that has been handed down? Something that has been in the family for years and years and handed down.
- ME:** What do you mean?
- DZ:** Like a tapestry or jewelry, or anything like that.
- ME:** Well my father had some. I and the boys took some of his things when he died. Like hardware things out in the barn, tools and things. When my mother died we got some things too.
- DZ:** Do you still have something from your mother?
- ME:** Oh, yes. I am going to save it too. I have a white bedspread, one of the earliest bedspreads. Its laying in the drawer, I don't know who I should give it to. That was the first bedspread Mother had. I have two or three shawls too.
- DZ:** Are there any stories connected with that, like with the bedspread, or she had it and gave it to you?
- ME:** I took it. I figured the rest were at home and they got more than I did but I took some things that I wanted, but not too much.
- DZ:** Who are the keepers of the family treasures? They never really had any single thing that somebody kept and said, "This is what the family has"?
- ME:** No. Each got their share.
- DZ:** How was Christmas celebrated?
- ME:** Well, it was different than it is now. We had a Christmas tree with wax candles. We would light them. Somebody had to watch so that the tree didn't catch fire.
- We got Christmas presents like we do now. We got our package of popcorn, a bag of apples and oranges, and a few peanuts, that was all. As for gifts I can't remember what we had any. There was no exchange of gifts at that time. Later on we might have, I suppose.
- DZ:** Do you remember some of the Christmases during the war years or the depression?
- ME:** There wasn't any difference then. We still had candles on the tree. I remember how long we had them in Church, but we had candles on the tree as long as the program was. Somebody had to watch it so the tree wouldn't catch fire.
- DZ:** Do you know anything about Belzenickel and Das Christkindel?
- ME:** Don't you?
- DZ:** Not really. What is Belzenickel?
- ME:** That Belz, means Santa Claus. Das Christkindel meant something to eat. I remember that. Yes, it was very different.
- DZ:** That was important?

ME: Yes, that was at that time. Everybody got new dresses for Christmas and that was something to show off, which we never did. We never got new clothes, we had to wear the same dress for school all the time. Mother had to wash it out.

DZ: Christmas was a happy time.

ME: Yes, both Easter and Christmas.

DZ: The next question is what were the Easter activities? What did you do for Easter?

ME: That was the same. We got a nice Easter dress. They gave programs once in a while, when we had to say a little line. It was nice, I think, we celebrated.

Those holidays always meant much more than they do now. They used to celebrate Easter Monday every year, just as much as Easter Sunday. Now they don't celebrate any. There are two holidays during the week, and our church doesn't care anymore. They had church every single day that was a holiday and they kept it too. It usually rained on those days at that time. It was funny. Now they don't celebrate them at all.

DZ: But Easter was very important?

ME: Easter and Christmas and all the holidays were important. They celebrated and they didn't work either. They quit work early. I mean Easter Sunday and Easter Saturday, that meant a lot. They quit work early and got ready for Sunday, but now it is different.

DZ: What was special about marriage ceremonies?

ME: Well nothing. Got married, sat on the wagon and went home. I was married in the home, and my sister was married in the home too. We had noodle soup for dinner. We got ready and went to the farm home south of Blair.

DZ: That was my next question. Was there a reception held in your home?

ME: Yes. They had a dinner fixed but only for the family, not anybody else was invited. I've still got my wedding dress. I paid twelve dollars for it.

DZ: Was it the custom to have an accordion music and dancing?

ME: Yes. A lot of them had that.

DZ: Did you?

ME: No, we didn't have anything. We had the marriage then we had the dinner and that was all. Gramer Nuderbasher (SP)462 was the pastor, we sat on the wagon and went home. We took the stuff along. That was 14 miles from there.

DZ: The next question was how long did the celebration last; one, two or three days? So in your church it was pretty short?

ME: Yes that was real short, about two minutes for the marriage ceremony.

DZ: Did they sing any German wedding songs that you can remember?

- ME:** No, they didn't have songs at all. We had accordion players in the bunch. John could play the mouth organ and Sam could play the accordion. He was a good accordion player but they didn't play it for my wedding.
- DZ:** Did you have a "chivaree"?
- ME:** No, we didn't have them at that time.
- DZ:** What kinds of food were served at the wedding?
- ME:** Noodle soup, chicken and I suppose everything that went with it. We had a wedding cake but I don't know who baked it.
- DZ:** Did you have any Schnapps or any homemade beer?
- ME:** No we didn't have anything to drink. We used to have extra Kuchen at that time.
- DZ:** Were the bridal clothes, decorations and flowers made by the family? You said you bought your dress for twelve dollars.
- ME:** We didn't have any flowers. I don't think it was decorated. We didn't decorate but most of the families made their own.
- DZ:** How did you meet? Are there any stories about lost loves, jilted brides or unusual courtships, lonely hearts clubs, arranged marriages? How did you meet?
- ME:** We met at the Dobler house. There was a bunch of young people who would meet there on Sunday nights. That's where I met Reuben.
- DZ:** So you just got together as groups?
- ME:** We went together for seven years.
- DZ:** How far away was the Dobler house?
- ME:** It was about a mile across the lake, a little more than a mile. We walked across the lake in the winter but in the summer we had to go around. We got our car in 1920, I think. He had an old model-T so that was about 1920 or so.
- DZ:** What kind of occasions were there available to meet your spouse? Were there just family gatherings?
- ME:** No. That was just young people gatherings. There were more families there. The Johnsons from up north and there were the Zimmermans, Art Zimmerman came down there. There were a bunch of kids at those gatherings.
- So we all got together at that house and played games. I don't know what that game was. You had to sit on each other's lap and they exchanged, I don't know what they called it.
- DZ:** What kind of work did women have to do outside?
- ME:** We did anything the men did. I had to plow with three horses in the spring, I was eleven or twelve years old. I helped along with anything. I milked the cows in the evenings, I came home and I had three cows to milk. There was a lot of work the women had to do.

- DZ:** Do you remember the special German food that your mother cooked or baked? What were some of them?
- ME:** There were strudels, dumplings, kasknefla, aogleknefla.
- DZ:** Any others?
- ME:** Kasnefla, zalot, kuchen and pluchinda and we ate lots of dough meals. They were cheap and they could afford making them. When you have a big family you have to save money at that time.
- DZ:** Are German foods still prepared in your kitchen, such as bread, strudels and kuchen.
- ME:** Oh yes. There are several breads in my kitchen. I made some bread yesterday and I made some knefla the other day. I made some sweetsour potatoe salad, everything is good.
- DZ:** Was there music or entertainment in your home?
- ME:** As I said my brother played the accordion, and John could play the mouth harp. They were the only ones. My dad used to sing songs. When they built the new house in 1929, Eugena was just a small girl. He had her up on his shoulders and walked around the house and sang church songs.
- DZ:** Were you ever encouraged to play a musical instrument or to learn on your own?
- ME:** No, I never did.
- DZ:** Did you ever learn how to dance?
- ME:** No, I never. My parents didn't let us go to dances. We couldn't go.
- DZ:** Were the children allowed to stay with the parents when the parents had company?
- ME:** No, why is that? I think that the kids have a right to know what we are talking about.
- DZ:** So they didn't let you stay when they had company?
- ME:** We had to stay in the basement and they went upstairs. They had their own company. Well I don't know. I don't think we wanted to either.
- DZ:** If you could sing could you sing a song from when you were a child. Can you sing a song?
- ME:** "Gott ist de Liebe", but I can't sing. No, I can't sing a song. There are other German songs.
- DZ:** What was the attitude of the older generation toward dancing? I think you have answered some of that already.
- ME:** Well, they didn't like the dancing at all. We had music in the barn and the boys sleep in the barn on Saturday night. They had accordion music. My dad came over there and stopped them. He said, "We don't have any music or dancing around here."
- DZ:** Did you ever attend a barn dance?
- ME:** Yes, once at the Brickmans Dance. They used to have barn dances there.
- DZ:** But you didn't make a practice of going there?

- ME:** No, not if they found out.
- DZ:** Was there a community meeting place for young people at that time?
- ME:** No. We always met at the homes. There was no community place that we could go to. We met once in a while at my house, the barn at the Doblars, and at the Johnsons where they had the accordion dance.
- DZ:** Did they have meetings at the homes? You said that they had church meetings in the homes. Did they have any other kinds of meetings? Nothing that you can remember.
- ME:** Yes. I can't remember. They had church meeting but I can't remember other meetings. When the school burned down, that was when I was married.
- DZ:** Do you remember any of the games you played as a child?
- ME:** There were the school games, I think. I can remember Drop the Handkerchief. I know that was a good one. Hide and Go Seek was another, and Pompom Pull Away. I don't know another.
- DZ:** Were there any stories or fairy tales that you heard?
- ME:** I suppose but I can't remember any that I know was good at. We told a story in school. No, I couldn't tell a story. I couldn't even make one up.
- DZ:** Were your parents and grandparents superstitious about certain aspects of life? Did they believe in the boogie man, or hooting owls or walking under ladders?
- ME:** They said when a black cat walked across the street, it would cause an accident to the people at night.
- DZ:** Yes we used to hear about the "Narcups". What was that supposed to have been?
- ME:** There were people who would come in and scare you I think.
- DZ:** Did they use that to scare the kids?
- ME:** I think if you didn't go to bed the "Narcups" would come. That was the saying.
- DZ:** Anything else. How about the boogie man?
- ME:** The boogie man, I don't remember what he does. I have no idea.
- DZ:** Did they say anything about walking under ladders or anything else? Sometimes when you are superstitious they don't walk under ladders.
- ME:** When you dreamed you walked on the roof, and then you walk on the edge. You won't fall off.
- DZ:** Did that happen a lot or do you know?
- ME:** I don't know, but they believed that at that time.
- DZ:** Can you identify any healing techniques that were used, like when someone was sick what did they do? Did they do anything special for healing?
- ME:** Yes, we did that. Like when you were sick when you were small. They tied a Bible verse on a piece of paper in a little bag, and you had to wear it three or four weeks, and you got well.

DZ: What did that cure?

ME: When you were small you got convulsions. I think we did it for that. When the navel band came out we wrapped up a quarter and taped it on there and let it stay on it so many weeks.

DZ: That was suppose to heal it?

ME: Yes that was suppose to heal it and make it stay in. That I did, I know.

DZ: How did your family feel about "brauche", or folk medicine?

ME: I feel good about that. I think those old women knew more than the doctor did in those days. I would never have gotten well after Bob was born. I was in the hospital for twelve days, they didn't do anything. They just sent me home. Then I had to go and look out for myself. I went to Mrs. Folk in Wishek. She was an old lady at that time. She said at that time, "How can you live like that?" Your tonsils are draining puss and you swallow heavy. They open up and close and open again, you swallow that stuff in them. They opened and you've got blood poison. That's all I had at that time.

BREAK IN DIALOGUE

DZ: We were discussing "brauche" for your son Bob's ring worm. You said he did or what was he suppose to do?

ME: Bob was suppose to come out to the barn, he can't do it otherwise. It was a farm at that time but he never went out to the barn. He noticed it was gone in a few weeks. So he did it without Bob being there.

DZ: Do you know what he did? Did it have something to do with the barn?

ME: I don't know. He would never tell. It had something to do with the manure. He never said anything about it.

DZ: He never said if he buried something, or dug something up or moved something. That was one of his secrets, I suppose.

ME: Sometimes they used a string and they would cross you several times, making a cross on you with the string. Then they would bury the string. What they did to Bob that time, I don't know.

DZ: So there was some "brauche" being done at that time with Bob?

ME: Yes, ringworms. I had a ringworm one time, a great big one on my arm.

DZ: Did someone "brauche" for that?

ME: Yes. With ashes from the inside of the sunflower seed. You burn that up and use the ashes for it and spread it on there.

DZ: Now who did that, that lady?

ME: Yes she did.

DZ: She put ashes on the ringworm?

- ME:** Yes, she burned up the soft part of it in the inside of the sunflower seed, then she put the ashes on the ringworm. I don't remember how many times she did.
- DZ:** Then it was gone when she was through with it?
- ME:** It was gone but you could still see it.
- DZ:** Do you think there are different sicknesses today as compared to the past?
- ME:** I think we never found out our sicknesses, they didn't know what it was. Don't you think there were heart attacks at that time?
- DZ:** But they didn't know what they were. At that time did you hear of cancer or AIDS or anything like that did you?
- ME:** No, we never heard of them at that time.
- DZ:** Besides these "brauche" and other things you did, do you remember any other home remedies or cures? Did you do anything yourself if you had a cold or were sick.
- ME:** I think colds are easy to prevent if you take care of yourself right away. If I put Mentholatum salve on my nose at night it helps. I still do it every night and I think it can prevent or cure a cold. I don't know, but I believe in it.
- DZ:** What do you remember about the role of midwives? Do you remember midwives and did one every come to your home?
- ME:** Yes, I was delivered by a midwife, she was Mrs. Christina Culps, Conrad Culps mother.
- DZ:** So a midwife delivered you?
- ME:** Yes, and you too.
- DZ:** Me, too?
- ME:** Yes, her name was Mrs. Klein and Mr. Klein. He was the doctor, that was the first time with a doctor.
- DZ:** And what did they charge?
- ME:** They didn't charge much. I remember they charged five dollars.
- DZ:** What would have happened if somebody did not have the five dollars?
- ME:** We all had it at that time. Ruben worked on WPA making seventeen dollars a month. We paid five dollars for rent and five dollars for that and five dollars for food. We didn't eat much then. Now that doesn't sound like much.
- DZ:** Did your parents use any expressions in other languages? Like in Russian, or Platt Deutsch, or Turkish, or French, or others?
- ME:** No they only talked German. They wouldn't even talk English. We talked the language they knew when they came over and that is what we learned. No, we didn't talk any other language.
- DZ:** Can you remember the name of the German Newspaper that you received in your home?

- ME:** Yes, I could read it today, "Der Staatsanzeiger" and we got the Aberdeen paper too. I don't know what it was called. Oh here it is the "The Dakota Farmer" from Aberdeen, South Dakota.
- DZ:** The "The Dakota Farmer" too?
- ME:** Yes, an it had a lot of recipes and nice readings in there.
- DZ:** I guess we will talk a little bit about that later on. What about a church newspaper or something like that, were there any German ones?
- ME:** Yes, but I don't remember their names. It was a German church paper, but I just don't remember the name of it anymore. We used to get it in church, the name I forgot.
- DZ:** What kind of information did your family get from the newspaper?
- ME:** Well there was the latest news like any daily paper today. We got that once a week already at that time but I think we got a lot out of it. That was way back when the capital burned down, that was something else. I think it was in the 1930s. We saw that, it was pictured in there. Everything that was going on in the Dakotas was in there, we liked that.
- DZ:** Was it just North Dakota or North and South Dakota news?
- ME:** The news was mostly North Dakota but anybody could read it.
- DZ:** Were there any funnies or comics?
- ME:** Oh yes. Not in the German paper, though. I don't know where they came from. We got those cats in there, what ever you call them.
- DZ:** But you do remember the funnies and comics, though?
- ME:** Oh, yes.
- DZ:** Do you remember when your family got it first modern convenience like electricity?
- ME:** Well, we didn't have it when we built our house. I think we had it wired when it came. It was in 1929. Whenever it come the house was ready.
- DZ:** Was that quite a change?
- ME:** Yes, that was quite a change, but I don't remember what year it was.
- DZ:** How about your first car?
- ME:** In 1920 my dad bought his first car, a model-A.
- DZ:** How about your first telephone?
- ME:** That was in 1938. When they got an operator and we got it for the shop.
- DZ:** Because you were living out of the city limits?
- ME:** Yes, we were out of the city limits. We were down from Arlis and the Howard lady that was on that line then, she died. They asked if I would take it until they got somebody. So I had it for I don't know for

how many years. Whenever they called from a distance, they called me and I had to go and tell the people. It was ten cents a call around town.

DZ: So there were no telephones in town. You were in town but you were out of the city limits. So you had the first telephone in town then.

ME: That's why they got a telegraph for the railroad but no depot. That is why when they got the telegram they got me so I could let the person in town know about things. Like I knew when a person died. No one had a telephone yet. What year was that, I think it was the 1940s.

DZ: What year did you get the telephone, do you remember that?

ME: Gee, I don't remember.

DZ: But you do remember that you had the first one.

ME: That I had to levy ten cents a call and I had to run way out.

DZ: Then you had people come in to make calls?

ME: No, not many.

DZ: So you had more giving messages?

ME: It was more giving messages to the depot and the depot would deliver. That was the way it was.

DZ: What about windmills? Do you remember the first windmill?

ME: Yes, I remember them but we had nothing to do with windmills. There are still some when the wind blows. Yes, you see them by Hazelton. We didn't have anything to do with them.

DZ: Do you remember the early days of radio?

ME: Yes, that again, I don't remember when we had one.

DZ: You remember the first radio but you don't remember the date?

ME: I don't remember my folks having one.

DZ: When you had your first radio, do you remember what were some of your favorite programs?

ME: Yes. There was Jack Benny on every night and I Love Luch and who were those two black men?

DZ: Amos and Andy probably.

ME: Amos and Andy, those three programs. I remember them, and that was way back in the 1930s. I don't know if I had one at home, I don't remember. I think we had a radio when we moved to town in 1934.

DZ: Do you remember the early days when you were watching television?

ME: Yes, I remember. We got one from Kip Miller. That was a black and white television.

DZ: Do you remember watching the Lawrence Welk Show?

ME: I remember that I watched it.

- DZ:** Do you remember any other shows that you watched?
- ME:** There were quite a few but I don't remember what they were.
- DZ:** Which family member do you remember the best, your mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, your brothers or sisters? Which one do you remember the best?
- ME:** Olivia was the one that we always remember the best, she did so much for us. My grandparents were always good to us, she always had candy in her pocket. My parents were good to us too, they did everything they could, I think. We had to listen and that was all.
- DZ:** You say the ones you looked up to the most were your mother and father and then your family member would have been Lydia?
- ME:** Lydia would have been the one. She helped us out a lot. Whenever I was sick she would come.
- DZ:** Whenever there was a need she was there. Is there anything else you would like to say? So far is there anything you forget to say? You said yesterday something about marriage but you should mention who and when.
- ME:** My first marriage was to Reuben Zimmerman, May 31, 1932. It took place in our home in ??????. The Reverend Knut of Ashley did the marriage service. Then we had dinner and we went to our farm south of Blair.
- DZ:** You had three children and their names were?
- ME:** We had three boys, the first was born on the farm in 1933, Dalmar. I had a midwife, Mrs. Kline. The second one, Bob, was born in November 1934. The third one was Glayle. He was born on his grandmother's birthday April 15, 1946. We had Dr. Barrett. I have six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren from the Reuben Zimmerman side.
- DZ:** That was the first marriage with Reubin. He passed away January 10, 1965. Your second marriage was with George Eisenbeis on October 14, 1969.
- ME:** He had two daughters and two sons, four step-children. There were nine step-grandchildren and about six step-great-grandchildren. George past away on September 19, 1980.
- DZ:** Is there anything else you would like to say?
- ME:** Well, I wish I had my grandchildren and great grandchildren closer by, but they are all far away. I never get to see them. No matter where they are, they are all far away. Oh, I see them once in a while but they don't live around here so that I see them often.
- DZ:** Now one other thing. Yesterday when we talked dialect, I thought of this later on. This might be important, you know some Germans say "houm and heim" (SP)B 982...
- ME:** And "Haushalt"(SP) 983 instead of the English "home".
- DZ:** Are there any other words like that? What about "flas" (SP) B 986? You said
- ME:** "Mina Flaska" (SP) B 986. What else is there? And there is GERMAN DIALOGUE. I don't know what the difference is.

DZ: Anything else you would like to say?

ME: I worked in a cafe for ten years from 1954 to 1964 at thirty-five cents an hour. It then went up to forty then fifty cents an hour. My boss was Ted Miller.

When I got tired I moved to Wishek and worked in the retirement home for five years. The retirement home opened up in Wishek in 1964. They asked for cooks. I went over there and was second cook for five years, from May 1964 until October 1969. My last raise was for \$1.49 an hour, when I started it was ninety-six and one-half cents an hour.

DZ: So the times have changed.

ME: Times have changed but still that was no wage at all, \$1.49. Working all these years for nothing.

DZ: Anything else you did?

ME: I was a news correspondent for the Ashley paper when I was eleven years old. I wrote the local news for the newspaper.

DZ: That would have been for the "Danzig Farmer News"?

ME: I sent it to Ashley and I got paid five cents an inch for it. When we moved to Lair and I got married I wrote the Lair farm news.

We only lived there two years and then we moved to town. I wrote the news there too. We took over the ????? (SP) B028 and then we moved away.

When I came to Wishek, I wrote the local news for Bob when he was the editor, that was for the Wishek Star.

DZ: How long did you do that?

ME: For ten years. When the creamery opened in Wishek I worked there. He paid a little better so I got twenty-five to thirty dollars a month for the news.

I gave hair cuts for kids. There was no barber in town at Lair. I only charged twenty-five cents but I never got paid it.

DZ: You never got paid from anybody?

ME: Never got paid except once in a while the Stoltzes gave me a quarter. I gave lots of haircuts.

DZ: Did they get a barber?

ME: Yes, and then I quit right away.

DZ: You could have charged something.

ME: Well no, they didn't pay me.

DZ: Is there anything else or is there anyone else you know we should interview?

ME: Yes. There are lots of them.

- DZ:** Give me some names.
- ME:** There is Sam Eslinger. Also Bertha Ruth, her parents came from Russia.
- DZ:** She is pretty old isn't she.
- ME:** Yes but I think she would be interested in that. I was thinking of Mrs. Amanda Fetser, and Harriet Hare.
- DZ:** Now we have some questions here especially for women. Was there anyone in the family who had a talent for sewing, textiles, basket making, weaving or bobbin lace?
- ME:** My mother used to do a lot of sewing and I did too. I sewed all our clothes until we went to high school. I also gave hair cuts until high school. We usually got the old clothes from our minister. They did not wear out their clothes and they thought I could make some pants and jackets from them, which worked fine. There was no one who crocheted. Rose is the only one who does it now but she never did at home. Yes, I sewed a lot, I sewed until I couldn't see anymore. I sewed everything, even winter coats.
- DZ:** Did everybody do that?
- ME:** No. You had to be alone for that. I was surprised that you went to school.
- DZ:** Didn't your sisters and brothers make their own clothes?
- ME:** No, they didn't. Sam's wife was a good sewer too, otherwise, no one.
- DZ:** Besides getting the fabric from the preacher where else did you get it?
- ME:** Anybody who had old clothes brought them. I sewed a lot for Lilia Kruse at that time. When her husband was in the service she lived with her mother and she came up and I made suits for their little boy. His name was Ron.
- DZ:** How did they use the old clothes? Did they just hand them down from one to another?
- ME:** Yes. When they were too small for you I just gave them away to somebody else.
- DZ:** Do you recall your mother having quilting parties?
- ME:** Yes and she sewed her own. They didn't have quilting parties like they do today.
- DZ:** Can you describe what took place? How or what did they do?
- ME:** She sewed it at home but she didn't have any quilting frames. Unfortunately, we didn't have any at that time. She made one quilt and I don't know who got it. She held it in her hand and sewed it. I don't know how she did it.
- DZ:** What are your memories of women's activities and recipes from the "Dakota Farmer" from Aberdeen, South Dakota? Was there anything you remember?
- ME:** Well, I remember the good ginger snap cookies. There were pig recipes, cook recipes, and hot dishes recipes in there. It was too bad when we didn't get it anymore.

DZ: We are getting near the end. Are there are any questions you would like to ask or anything that hasn't been included? Did we forget anything, or is there anything else you would like to mention? Was there anything that was done in your home in Danzig, Liar, or Wishek, any activities?

One thing I was thinking of, in the days when you made hay or when you thrashed, have you got any experiences that you would like to tell us about?

ME: Yes. My dad used to have a thrashing machine for a few years. We had to help. The boys usually were hired out but the girls had to do the work at home. We went out shocking then we went along with the thrashing crew, Conrad Kulp and Godlup Sulzenfamilies. We had to help cook for each family. There were about six or seven families that came for thrashing and then I would go along as a cook. I don't know how we did it.

Then I went to work for John Bender when he was thrashing. I had to help cook then. He was the only one who paid good, five dollars a day. The others paid us what they wanted. There was no set price for a cook.

DZ: Are there any other experiences that we should talk about?

ME: No I can't think of any more.

DZ: Thanks a lot.

ME: You're welcome.

END PART 1 – START PART II

DZ: We are going to start interview questions for part two which talks about courting, marriage, relationships, family life, family in the world, education and politics.

The first question is what did your parents or teachers tell you about marriage?

ME: Yes. My parents told us about marriage. My dad says when you get married, you are young yet but marriage is forever, not just for a few months. It is until someone dies.

DZ: Did the teachers say anything?

ME: The teachers never mentioned anything about marriage.

DZ: What did you learn about marriage seeing your parents relationship or the way they lived? What did you learn?

ME: Well we learned everything at home, whatever we had to work with there and do things. They taught us how to cook and how to milk the cows. We had to work with them and we did just that.

DZ: Did they do things together?

ME: We did things together. I think we were well satisfied when we did. We never had any trouble getting along.

- DZ:** Were they both the boss or was your dad the boss? How did that work?
- ME:** My dad and my mother?
- DZ:** Yes.
- ME:** That was the dad's business. Whatever he told us, it just would be like that.
- DZ:** The man was the head of the household then.
- ME:** Yes, man of the household. He had to arrange the money so there was enough for everybody to live on. We had very little income from the beginning so we knew there wasn't much left.
- DZ:** Now when you got married, was that different from your parents marriage or about the same? Was the father the head of the household?
- ME:** Well, yeah he was the head of the household as long as we were married. What he wanted to do we did. I think that was the only to work it out.
- DZ:** Should it still be that way?
- ME:** If it would be like that it would cause lots of troubles that would be amongst the families.
- DZ:** There would be fewer troubles, fewer problems today if the man was the head of the household. Were the marriages of you parents or grandparents arranged or coupled?
- ME:** No they went together. I know that. They weren't coupled together. I don't know how they say it but we did not want to be coupled, no way.
- DZ:** They went together and dated and then got married.
- ME:** Anyhow, those coupled, I don't know if you know a person who got coupled and got married. That doesn't work.
- DZ:** What did your parents teach you about raising children?
- ME:** They didn't teach us anything. We had to do it on our own.
- DZ:** How did you know who was supposed to do what?
- ME:** Well, they had to work for us, for everybody. I don't know what you say for that. Raise the children and raise them in a way so they do the right thing. They shouldn't go out to everything and have parties and they should stay home more.
- DZ:** And do their work.
- ME:** Yeah, do their work. I think that has a lot more to say than if they run around and don't listen. We are raising a good family, I think and we have no trouble.
- DZ:** And then you kind of carried that over to your own family.
- ME:** Yeah. That's the way we learned at home and that's they way we taught you.

- DZ:** Did husbands and wives have equal authority or rights in making major decisions? We probably talked about this a little already.
- ME:** Yeah well, there are some things that the mother knows better than the father, about what to do. And I'm sure they got along with that.
- DZ:** So even though the husband was the head of the household when there were other problems, they talked things over and decided things together.
- ME:** Yes there were no arguments, except for the money. We never had any money. We were too big of a family for doing things like others did.
- DZ:** Were you able to express your feelings of anger, sadness, fear or criticism as a child? When you got angry or sad or mad or afraid, could you go to your folks and tell them?
- ME:** About getting angry, I don't know.
- DZ:** Were they good listeners? Did they listen to you if you complained?
- ME:** They did but the only trouble that we had was with the milking. We had a lot of cows. We milked about thirty cows at one time. That's where the trouble came in. There was only me and the other two or three children and we had to milk all thirty cows. That was not for one family, it was too much.
- DZ:** So what did you do then?
- ME:** Well we had to do it that way. The boys were hired out and all they earned was ten dollars per month. That was not worth it.
- DZ:** Even though you didn't like to do it, you knew you had to do it. Your parents made you feel like that was part of your job, part of your upbringing. How was love and affection shown in your family?
- ME:** We had that before didn't we? Well, I think we all got along good. We worked together and played together and we ate together. So when we had our new house then it was different. We lived out of the basement. We lived alone more. The kids got the basement and the folks were upstairs.
- DZ:** But everybody got along even though they whole family was in the same house.
- ME:** Yes we got along.
- DZ:** Was there competition between the boys and the girls in the family?
- ME:** That I don't know if there was. The boys were gone and the girls grew up by themselves I guess.
- DZ:** How were the children disciplined if some of the kids did something wrong?
- ME:** Well, they didn't get the car to drive for a few days.
- DZ:** That was when they were older. How about when they were younger, before driving age?
- ME:** No, they never got it before driving age.
- DZ:** Did they get lickings or anything?

- ME:** No, didn't get a spanking but a talking. That helped them. But when they were gone all day long you didn't want to give them the car to chase around.
- DZ:** When your family members had disagreements, how were they settled? You said there were no real big problems.
- ME:** No, there were no problems with the farming practice. Well, the girls had to go into the field and the boys were gone. So there was no way of saying no - we just had to do it.
- DZ:** Everybody knew that it had to be done.
- ME:** Father couldn't do it alone. We had to go out into the field and do the work. We worked as much as we could and then came home and would milk the cows.
- DZ:** How were grown up children treated when they had conflicting religion and marriage decisions? Let's say the boys and the girls married into different religions.
- ME:** They all joined the church where they belonged. Lydia, she joined the Lutheran church and Rose the Evangelical church.
- DZ:** How would they know where they belonged? How did they decide that?
- ME:** They went to church before.
- DZ:** But did they go on the man's or the woman's side?
- ME:** On the man's side.
- DZ:** And your parents approved of that?
- ME:** Well they didn't have anything to say about it.
- DZ:** They never complained about it either.
- ME:** "Go to church," they would say.
- DZ:** That was the main thing, just so you go to church. They didn't care where.
- ME:** I think everybody went to church. Everybody had a church. There were Lutherans: Emma, Eugena, Lydia, Edwin, and Pauline. There were five.
- DZ:** They were all Lutherans. And the other religions of the children?
- ME:** They stayed with what the parents were, Evangelical. They belonged to the same church as Rose did, so they went and said they are still going, United Methodist. I think they all go to church. Jake went to the Assembly of God Church, that's what Art said.
- DZ:** Any others?
- ME:** Well the others went.
- DZ:** What are the other churches then? You went to which church?
- ME:** The Baptist church in Leier and now I joined the Baptist church in Wishek when Reuben had died.

DZ: So the boys and girls, if they got married and they wanted to go to a different church, the parents were just happy that they went to church.

ME: Yes. And they are still going to church today.

DZ: Was anybody ever cut off from the family?

ME: What do you mean by that?

DZ: When somebody ever did something way off, was he ever cut off? Like you are not a part of this family anymore.

ME: Oh, no. That they would never do.

DZ: Who cared for families in their older age? Like you mother and dad or their grandparents?

ME: Well, my sister did. My brother did first. He lived in the farm there, so my mother stayed there for a while then she went to Rose and she died there.

DZ: Son and daughter.

ME: Son and daughter took care of her.

DZ: Did your grandparents or parents have friends outside of the family with whom they shared private thoughts, emotions, or feelings? If they had any secrets or anything did they share that with anyone?

ME: Well, I'm sure they did. They had friends like the Waltzes, the Wetzles, and the Doubles.

DZ: They were mostly neighbors.

BREAK IN DIALOGUE

DZ: This is tape two of the interview with Mrs. Maggie Eisenbeis, Wishek, North Dakota. We were just asking about people moving out of North Dakota and you said that some moved to South Dakota and California. Did you stay in touch with them?

ME: Oh yes. I did a lot of letter writing and I always had a return. There were five of them who moved to South Dakota, one moved to Sioux Falls and the others moved to Aberdeen. They went job hunting. There were no jobs around here so they worked for the city and they are drawing good retirement now. One of my sisters who died lived in South Dakota, died two years ago and the other one is quite sick with a stroke.

DZ: Who made the money decisions in the family? I think you have already answered that.

ME: I think the men should do that. I think that is the men's business. In our family most of them did it.

DZ: Were there other ways of borrowing money other than from the bank?

ME: Oh yes, if we needed some we would ask some of the sisters and brothers if we could borrow so much for so long. Then we would pay it back again. So that is what we did.

- DZ:** You worked that out amongst family members then. Now the questions on courting, family, and relationships, in the family and the world. What was the most important religious teachings in your home?
- ME:** Well my father, every evening at supper time when we were done with eating, he read the Bible and would read the Bible verses. He did that most every evening from the beginning.
- DZ:** You said earlier that you attended church.
- ME:** Yes. We attended church more than we do now. I think the church was one of the leading interests at that time.
- DZ:** Did you find comfort in doing that?
- ME:** We liked to go along. I went along with the bumps and horses and all.
- DZ:** You weren't frighten by all the religious teaching?
- ME:** No. That didn't bother me, what I learned at that time I still remember.
- DZ:** So you would say that you were encouraged not discouraged by them?
- ME:** Encouraged by them. I appreciated all the things they did for us. I think if you don't learn from the time when you are small, you don't learn at all.
- DZ:** If you had any questions about religion did you ask your mother or your father?
- ME:** I suppose that we did discuss it but as I said he would read the Bible and would ask us to remember the chapter. I wouldn't remember anymore. We had to learn Bible verses in Sunday School too.
- DZ:** How did your family get along with people that were not German-Russian? Were there any Jews, Indians or Germans?
- ME:** There were Jews. We had Jews as neighbors. We got along well. I think they were good people. I remember them. That's the way the Indians are, at my brother-in-laws in Aberdeen. He says all he has to do is give them the snow blower. They come over and he gives them the snow blower and they open his drive way. They open up everything when it snows. They like to do it for him. He told me on the telephone the other night that they told him, "Stay in when it is cold. Don't go out we'll do it for you."
- DZ:** Do you feel the same way about Jews today with your own family?
- ME:** If you treat them right they are just as nice as other people.
- DZ:** Were you ever afraid to say you were a German?
- ME:** No. You still can talk German can't you?
- DZ:** Yes I can talk it.
- ME:** Does Dora talk?
- DZ:** No, not very much.

- ME:** We should not forget that. At least once in a while we should. They are both German and they both could help.
- DZ:** Dora is one of the grandchildren that she is mentioning here.
- ME:** And the great-grandchildren could learn if they were taught at home and talked to. They would be glad later on if they would know a few words and they could say that their parents taught them.
- DZ:** Have you felt comfortable expressing your German-Russian background? When you talk to someone you are not afraid to say you are German Russian.
- ME:** No. I still talk German when I am among other people. They always talk English and every once in a while I put the German in there. I don't think it's fair not talking it.
- DZ:** So you are very proud of your German expressions.
- ME:** Yes, I think that's good.
- DZ:** Did speaking German effect your relationship with others at school, town, or church? I think you said that you didn't talk English until you went to school. Did that effect your relationship with others?
- ME:** I think it was 1954 when they changed the church to English. We couldn't talk German in school, we had to talk English.
- DZ:** Could any of the other children talk English?
- ME:** There were some but they couldn't talk much either. We first learned when we went to school because the folks didn't know English. Most of them were German, they couldn't do anything to help us. The night school. That was where my dad went and learned English. That is where the neighbors got together.
- DZ:** How do you feel about a German brogue?
- ME:** What is that?
- DZ:** That is when you talk you kind of sound like a German. When someone has a German brogue it makes no difference to you. Even when someone has quite a brogue.
- ME:** No, I don't think so. Oh, they talk different, and it sounds different.
- DZ:** I, myself think brogues are kind of nice. What do you think of the survival of the German language in the German-Russian community? You probably answered that a while ago when you said you thought your grandchildren should be able to talk German, because it would be nice to have that carried on.
- ME:** Even if it was only a few words that they remembered. That would be nice. I know they get a kick out of saying it, when they talk with one another. When Eian and Rachel talk they have fun with it and still they know their German.
- DZ:** Eian and Rachel are grandchildren. So that would kind of answer number question 27. Do your children or grandchildren speak German? They don't but you think it would be nice if they could.
- ME:** They should learn if only a few words.

- DZ:** How available were your educational opportunities? You said you went through the eighth grade.
- ME:** I had the privilege and chance of going to high school and learn, but I didn't want to be away from home. If they would have gotten me up in the morning and taken me there and got me in the evening and brought me home I would have. I didn't want to stay there all the time. They were really our boss who rented our house to us, and wanted me to stay with them.
- DZ:** I remember what our dad told us when he wanted to go to high school, what his dad told him. [GERMAN DIALOGUE: "wistastach. As oslamstach."] He wanted to go to high school but his dad said he was going to get his high school in the barn.
- ME:** That was the main point. They had to farm to make a living and there was no money for school.
- DZ:** Did your educational experience include your own children's education? What do you think about that now? You went through the eighth grade but your children had more.
- ME:** You all had good schooling, you all have good jobs and you all have a better retirement.
- DZ:** Why do you think that is? Why didn't your children stop at the eighth grade?
- ME:** I didn't let them. I told them they had to go to high school and you went on your own. They went to Valley City during the summer months and taught in the winter and earned some money. Bob went to school in Whapeton. Gayle was the last one, he had it rough. He was only eight years old when Reuben got sick the first time. He fought for himself while growing up and still does.
- DZ:** He went to Whapeton Trade School and learned a trade and still does it today. Right.
- ME:** Yes, and he cooks as good as a woman. He learned at home and I worked in the café when he was still in high school.
- DZ:** So you figured you had a eighth grade education and you wanted your kids to have more?
- ME:** Yes, I figured they should have schooling. I had a little money and they did. I am thankful for that.
- DZ:** If you had more education how do you think your life would have been different? Let's say you had gone to high school and to college or at least finished high school. Do you think your life would have been different?
- ME:** Well I guess I wouldn't have had to work in the cafe for that small amount of wages, for thirty-five cents of fifty cents. The most I got was in 1969 when I quit was \$1.49 then I got a raise. I always got under \$1.49.
- DZ:** You think if you had gotten a high school education you would have gotten more.
- ME:** Well sure. Maybe not, I don't know but they didn't pay as much as they do now. I'm sure I could have gotten a lot more.
- DZ:** I don't think you told me this before but you were a pretty good speller when you went to school weren't you?
- ME:** Yes, but I did miss one word. I went to the county contest at school, with Esther Weiworth and John's Esther. Just by not being able to spell Esther. I spelled it E-S-T-E-R. I won the school championship

though. I went on to the county, and remember that day. I couldn't figure out why I couldn't remember how to spell Esther. That's an easy word.

DZ: Your mind went blank. That happens to everyone. You think it is an easy word, you think it's right but it is wrong. Now a few questions about politics. Were your parents interested in politics?

ME: Yes. My dad was very much interested in politics. He would go to meetings and donate money. I was going to mention the governor that was in, Governor Sorley. He worked for the Republican Party very much. So we all had to go and vote when we were old enough. He stressed to go and vote.

DZ: Did they go to political rallies or political meetings?

ME: I don't know. Dad might have but I don't remember.

DZ: Do you remember some of the political issues that your parents were interested in? Did they ever talk about prohibition, the days of liquor or the women's right to vote?

ME: Oh yes, the women's right to vote in 1920. I remember them talking about it. Yes he was a politician, all right.

DZ: Did you vote often?

ME: We went to all the elections including the school elections and all others. This is the first time, this year, that I didn't vote.

DZ: It's by mail this year.

ME: Bob brought it but I think I threw it away.

DZ: We can pick one up for you at the post office. You can still vote.

ME: Really.

DZ: They changed it this year. You vote by mail and that is the only place you can vote.

ME: We were steady voters, where ever the vote was. If there was an election or something.

DZ: Was there a president that your parents felt strongly about? Do you remember what president this was?

ME: President Eisenhower, he wasn't president at that time. That was during World War II. Before that they mentioned President Hardy.

DZ: This next one you answered it already. What political party were your parents interested in, which was the Republican? Were you ever involved in certain political issues?

ME: Yes. We are Republicans, we went to represent things.

DZ: You haven't gotten into where you stressed farm programs, abortions or anything like that?

ME: No. We didn't do anything like that.

DZ: Is there anything else you would like to add concerning your family life or your relationships? Is there anything we have forgotten? I think one question I forgot yesterday is number 56 part one. How is your

family history and culture being passed on to the next generation? How are we passing that on from your generation to our generation?

ME: We haven't anything to pass on.

DZ: You have a lot of scrap books, haven't you? Didn't you keep an everyday diary?

ME: They aren't interesting to me anymore. I don't find anything in them when I look at them. Do you know where they are? Those books are right here. You go back and you don't know what year you are reading about.

DZ: You have the dates though.

ME: Yes, the dates and the years are in there. I look through those scrap books every once in a while.

DZ: Now on your mother's side, your mother's family, you have a history book too, right? Not a jubilee book but a family book, an Eslinger book?

ME: Yes, my mother.

DZ: The book you have here is from 1844 to 1980, from Europe to America.

ME: Yes, she is in there too.

DZ: Do you know if somebody has extra copies?

ME: No, I didn't ask yet.

DZ: You ask and we'll try to get one and give it to NDSU.

ME: If not take mine.

DZ: You should have an extra one.

ME: I remember the time when we had school when we moved on the farm. The school house burned down in Lidia district #4. Do you remember that? You were too small to remember that.

DZ: Why? What happened?

ME: I had sat you in the high chair. The teachers bedroom was in the back of the house. We boarded the teacher that winter for ten dollars a month. Being that the school house had burned down school was held in our upstairs in the house. It was kind of cold and you were in the high chair in front of the stove, and you fell down. That was something!

DZ: How long did they have school at your place?

ME: That was when school started in October until spring. They had school board meetings there in the house every month. I fixed them lunch and coffee and they enjoyed that.

DZ: Is there anything else?

ME: Yes, there is a lot more.

DZ: This concludes our interview.

BREAK IN DIALOGUE

DZ: We are back. You said you wanted to add something else, one more thing.

ME: I would like to add my children and grandchildren. They are Delmar and Delores, and both have two children: Delore and Delette. Two grandchildren who are Ean and Rachel Zimmerman. Then is Bob and Verna near Rasler. They have one daughter: Suzanne. Twograndchildren: Ben and Marchanna. Then comes Gail and Cheryl Zimmerman near Okerland. They have three children: Wendy, Christopher, and Dustin. Three grandchildren: Taylor, Kelly Zimmerman and Amanda Magrean and four stepchildren.

DZ: Thanks again.

ME: You're welcome.