

## Interview with Anna Hoff (AH)

with comments from Anna's Daughter, Margaret Hoff Turnes (MT)

Conducted by Michael M. Miller (MM)

June 19, 1993

**MM:** This is Michael M. Miller Germans from Russia Bibliographer at North Dakota State University. Its June 19, 1993 and I'm in the room with Anna Hoff formerly of Salem, North Dakota. Anna your 89 and you were born in the Ukraine in 1903. What was your birthday?

**AH:** December 7, 1903.

**MM:** And you were born in what village?

**AH:** In Russia Belze (003) Ukraine, Russia

**MM:** In the Ukraine and there were 9 children in your family. There was 9 children in my family. 3 sisters and 6 brothers.

**AH:** Yes.

**MM:** Now tell me a little bit what was the name of your mother and father?

**AH:** My father was Mattaeus and my mother was Margaret.

**MM:** What was her maiden name?

**AH:** Margaret Barnhardt

**MM:** And what kind of work did they do in Russia? Was your father a farmer?

**AH:** My dad was a farmer.

**MM:** Can you tell me a little bit about you were 61/2 years old when you left the Ukraine, do you still remember a little bit about living in the Ukraine?

**AH:** Not very much.

**MM:** Did your mother and father talk much about life in the Ukraine when they came here to North Dakota?

**AH:** I was only 6.

**MM:** Tell me a little bit about what they talked about when they lived in the Ukraine? What did your folks say when they came to North Dakota and talked about it when you were a child growing up they must have talked about it?

- AH:** Oh, they cut the grain down and then they made it in bundles and then they went and took some grain and made a rope out of it and then they took those bundles that they had gathered and wrapped that around the grain and then so they stayed together.
- MM:** Oh, and that's how they would harvest the grain.
- AH:** That was the harvest the grain.
- MM:** Right and then what did they do--
- AH:** And then they hauled it in and then they put it out on the ground and then they thrashed it with horses they had horses hitched around you know and then the horses went round and round all the time and tramped that wheat, shredded all those ears you know and then they worked the -- (022) off and then they raked it. Well I seen that they raked it off the straw and then they had a shaft you know and then put on a big sieve and they shook that and shook the chaff off and then have a kernels. And then they blew 'em in the wind I think in the wind.
- MM:** That's very interesting.
- AH:** Oh, they had a (028) cleaners where the handles was on and they had sieves and they worked you know and then the kernels they stayed.
- MM:** Now we are going to have, Anna, we are also here today with your daughter Margaret, Hoff, Turnes who of course knows a great deal about your heritage and asked you questions before but I am going to include Margaret in our conversation because she remembers some of the things you would tell the family before and so Margaret I want to thank you also for joining us now and feel free to be included in our conversation once in a while I may ask a question but why don't you go ahead and ask her the first thing you are thinking of.
- MT:** Mother, why don't you tell you they baked bread in Russia?
- AH:** Oh, they had home made with bricks and mud they were ovens you know they put the straw in and whatever it was and then when the ovens got hot they raked that straw out that I can remember too yet. And then they raked the straw out and put the bread in, they didn't have any thermometers or anything like that and the bread pans they were home made you know they must of bought the tin or something and they were all round and then they had (443)
- MM:** Was it pretty good bread?
- AH:** Oh, it was good bread.
- MM:** Real good – bread you ate a lot of that bread?
- AH:** Yah.
- MM:** What else did they make in that oven?

- AH:** Yah, they were home made.
- MM:** Anna, did they make anything in the oven besides bread?
- AH:** Kuchen.
- MM:** Kuchen.
- AH:** And suchar (sugar) kuchen they call it wedding kuchen they roll that dough out real thin and then they put cream on or whatever and they put sugar and cinnamon on and was it ever good.
- MM:** Was it, and do you remember that at 6 years old you remember having some of that kuchen in the Ukraine?
- AH:** Oh yes, my modder (mother) always had some when I was a teenagers and put in them boxes count out with sheets didn't have anything else and it was (052) boxes covered with sheets and stored it under the beds.
- MM:** Oh really. Now Margaret what else you have some other points you want to ask her?
- MT:** Mother, can you tell him about the peddlers the Jews that used to come and sell stuff in Russia? Tell him what they sold, they come and sell stuff like radishes and material?
- AH:** Yah, they were the Jews they come and they had big, big wagons they had yard goods in bolts and then whatever you wanted they measured it off, they measured it off like this that was a yard.
- MM:** I see. Right, was there scales?
- AH:** Maybe they had scales too I don't know anyway that was usually a yard and in Russia well they had gardens but they didn't have any radishes. My folks never raised any radishes but that was (063) come through you know and they had all this nice radishes and my dad loved them so much always bought some. But why they didn't raise any radishes in Russia maybe the temperature wasn't right could be.
- MM:** Anna, do you remember what else did they raise in the garden?
- AH:** They raised cabbage, beets and carrots and potatoes.
- MM:** And did they do a lot of canning?
- AH:** They did no canning.
- MM:** No canning.
- AH:** No canning, my mother never canned until we came to this country and she learned it from my aunt and my aunt was here a few years before we came and then she learned it from Margaret ah...
- MM:** What did they used to cook? Did they make a lot of soup?

**AH:** Oh, they made--

**MM:** Remember some of those dishes they made?

**AH:** Pork that was cured then was boiled and mashed potatoes and sauerkraut.

**MM:** What about vegetable soup?

**AH:** Oh yah that was made all the time.

**MM:** And that was borscht soup?

**AH:** Borsccht soup.

**MM:** And how did they make that?

**AH:** Well they cooked the vegetables and then they put cream in yet. I never put cream in mine. That's too rich. I give some to my son and then he took it home and puts cream in it.

**MM:** I see, what about beets, did you eat a lot of beets?

**AH:** Oh yah beets and carrots and cabbage and potatoes.

**MM:** Did you make a lot of noodles a lot of dough?

**AH:** Ah, they made the homemade noodles.

**MM:** What kind were they called?

**AH:** (081) noodla.

**MM:** And what else?

**AH:** Shoop noodla, dampf noodla and then they made these stretch it with dough they call it fried dough here. Some call it Indian bread and some call it---

**MM:** Did they did they usually have bean soup with that? Did they make this dough with bean soup?

**AH:** Yah, and they made a lotta bean soup they had a lot of dried beans you know. Oh yah, they raised dry beans. My mother never liked bean soup, I never learned of making bean soup at home, but her mother made it and I was a little girl and I loved it, and then she never made it, but I have a recipe at home that I found and that's really a good bean soup.

**MM:** Did you learn how to cook from your mother?

**AH:** Oh yah.

**MM:** And what were some of your favorite recipes she had?

- AH:** Favorite recipes tsucher kucha (sugar kucha)
- MM:** What was that again?
- AH:** Tsucher kucha (sugar kucha) that rolled out put sugar and cinamon on.
- MM:** What else?
- AH:** What else did she have? Oh I like those that they fried out in lard. They roll them they stretch it you know fried it in lard. What else did she make I can't remember so much?
- MM:** Did she ever make cheese buttons?
- AH:** Oh yah, kase knip and cheese knip and (096) sauer kraut with little buttons with the sauer kraut in the dough that was good.
- MM:** And did you make those over here in America too?
- AH:** Oh yah my folks.
- MM:** Now let me ask you about being back in Russia as a child did you play some games?
- AH:** Some games they played cards and they played checker those square deals, checkers I think they call 'em. Yah, square deals with the numbers on I think they call 'em checkers.
- MM:** Now let's talk a little bit about what you remember in Russia as far as going to church?
- AH:** What I remember my father had company evenings I can remember that real good and they played cards and they must have played with money cause they come to our place and they had those benches in the hall and living room and then they had chairs and I was in the living room too. And my dad got so made he must have been losing all the time he then took the cards and threw them away and my mother didn't like that but he start playing again.
- MM:** Now in the home, Anna, did you have to do some work in the house when you were young?
- AH:** Some work in the house, well my aunt had wood floors this one aunt, but we had dirt floors and there slick they were real slick and we swept them and then they put sort of a dust on 'em and it helped with get the fine dust off I guess.
- MM:** Now, Anna, the house you lived in the Ukraine in your village in the Ukraine, how many rooms were in the house?
- AH:** There were only 2.
- MM:** Two rooms in the house?
- AH:** Just 2 rooms.

- MM:** And the rooms were the kitchen ---
- AH:** Kitchen and a living room and then they had those homemade stoves there and then the beds were behind.
- MM:** Did you have a barn?
- AH:** Oh yah, the barn and where the horses are and the cows they were all in one, they were all in one.
- MM:** Was the barn attached to the house?
- AH:** No, huh huh.
- MM:** Did you have kind of a fence?
- AH:** We had those mud fences you know.
- MM:** Tell me about those fences?
- AH:** They were just like sod you know put up but they were schmeared with something and then they were painted white they looked kinda nice.
- MM:** And they had a lot of flowers?
- AH:** Oh yah they had some flowers.
- MM:** And so you had this fence around the house--
- AH:** They had some batchler buttons and then they had some holly hocks.
- MM:** What about did they have some vinyards some wine, did they have any wine a lot of grape?
- AH:** We didn't but my aunt had a fruit garden that was my father's side, she had all kinds of fruit she had pears and then my grandma she preserve 'em with sugar and they would keep all winter then.
- MM:** Your grandmother what was her name?
- AH:** My grandmothers name was Margarite (143 some of those (142) in Mandan area they were some sort of relations.
- MM:** Lets go back to the village now was the church in the village was that far from your house? Your house?
- AH:** Yah we had a church but we never had mass every Sunday but the people come together and they had rosary and vesper and a priest came from a different village. I can't remember how often he came but anyway he came from a different village.
- MM:** Do you remember singing some songs as a child?

- AH:** Yah, my Dad really could sing and so did my aunts.
- MM:** But did you do much singing?
- AH:** My husband says, "Du cansht blose die gansa liet." I haven't got a voice. The goose song that's the one I could sing.
- MM:** You haven't got much of a voice just like me. What were some of the names of the songs they would sing?
- AH:** No.
- MM:** Don't remember.
- AH:** I was too young.
- MM:** Do you remember ah having Christmas or Easter when you were a child in Russia? Do you remember what Christmas was like?
- AH:** Yah, Easter dyed eggs and what not and at Christmas the (161) come and scare the kids out and the (162) he bring goodies.
- MM:** So you remember all that. Did you continue that tradition when you were in North Dakota too? The same kind of Christmas here.
- AH:** No.
- MM:** Christmas was different?
- AH:** That was different.
- MM:** How was it different?
- AH:** There was no Christmas tree or anything like that. But then this lady she would dress up in white and she had a curtain on and that was the -- (167) and she bring goodies for the kids and then they had one dressed up to scare the kids off that was the (168) with the fur coat you know and then the (169) gonna get you he's gonna get you then he had a chain that rattled scare the kids off.
- MM:** Do you remember that? Did he ever scare you?
- AH:** He had something that rattled, I didn't see the chain.
- MM:** What did you get for a gift? What did they bring you for a gift? Remember the gifts you got?
- AH:** Doll, everything dolls and fruit, peanuts and nuts and stuff like that and some candy that were wrapped up they were rolled up like this and then the ends were put in then they were the (178) they called them (178) .

- MM:** Oh, what were those? What did they taste like?
- AH:** They were candy. They were hard candy and some had filling in it they were good. You know few years ago they had some in the store here they looked just like it. Super Valu had 'em.
- MM:** Anna, do you remember the school? Did you go to school in the Ukraine?
- AH:** No, see I was 6 in December and then my cousin she was the same age she went to school because my folks figured that what I learned in Russia that won't be any good in America. But then after evenings in that benches outside beside those fences and then I be sitting beside her and she'd read me my cousin and then see I couldn't because my folks didn't send me to school.
- MT:** Was that cousin Amelia?
- AH:** Amelia. We wrote letters forth and back. I still have a holly card I don't know I suppose you destroyed it that she sent me.
- MM:** Amelia was that on your dad's side or your mom's side?
- AH:** She was on my father's side. Her name was Amelia yah but I mean her mother name.
- MT:** Say mom can you tell him what your mom would say when somebody got hurt and she would go say that once.
- AH:** You don't understand anyhow.
- MT:** Yah but say it anyway, say it once.
- AH:** (201)
- MM:** Oh I understood that, Anna.
- AH:** That's the way she did when some of us come and had a sore or something and she'd say, (205)
- MM:** Anything else you remember, Anna? And does Emily still know that?
- AH:** Yah, Emily still knows it.
- MT:** Can you tell him the one that grandma used to say to us. Das ist? (206)
- AH:** Das ist (207), no I forgot it.
- MT:** Oh you forgot that one.
- AH:** Those shoop nuddla that mother made in Russia.
- MM:** Were they pretty good?

- AH:** They had those homemade stoves and they had a big cast iron pots and covered them and then they cooked them in there and they were good. But we didn't have that in the states.
- MM:** Now, Anna, you were 6 ½ years old and then you left the village. Why did you leave and come to America?
- AH:** Because there was no more farm land available, no more farm land and that's why they come to the state because it was available up here you know. And then there was claims you know they could claim you know but when we came in 1910 there was no more claims to be had only out in the Killdeer area and my dad went up there and there was so hilly and so rocky and he didn't take no claim up there. But some of our friends Hartman's and Thomas's they took some claims up there.
- MM:** Now do you remember coming over, Anna, from when you left Ukraine and you came to United States do you remember coming on the train and then on the ship?
- AH:** Yah, my uncle picked us up in a wagon and hauled us to the train and from there we had a train to Liverpool and there is where a boat was waiting for there.
- MM:** Do you remember the name of the boat?
- AH:** Lusitonia.
- MM:** The Lusitonia.
- AH:** There was 2 ships Lusitonia and (231) they were sister ships and the one that arranged all this this traveling and tour he was a teacher he was a teacher in the village and then he got that boat got that all arranged and he came to the Killdeer area. There's where he settled up.
- MM:** Now do you remember coming over on the ship? Do you remember the ship ride over to New York? Do you remember about being on the ship?
- AH:** On the ship my mother was so sick she couldn't stay up, she threw up all the time. And then there was the 4 little kids the youngest one was so big and heavy that was Adam and then he want attention all the time, but my father wasn't sick but my mother was oh was she ever sick and my father when we left Russia he was singing when we left and we go on the wagon he was singing as he was really singing and my mother said, 1' " (246) "you get it yet" .You know he did we were here how many weeks then he want to back to Russia again. See in Russia was all these villages and they had company and here was the prairie and no company and that he missed I guess. And then Ma said, "Never I'll go back to Russia with you" because you wouldn't say anyhow you'd want to come back again and we stayed. And then we bought a little farm and then that was just 1 quarter and then be bought a bigger one was 2 quarters.
- MM:** When you came to America did you go to school?
- AH:** In the states that fall went to school right away.
- MM:** Tell me about school.

**AH:** I couldn't understand one darn word of English, and those people around there they were all Germans but they were Germans from Germany not like us we were Russians and they teased us. You know cause we were Russians.

**MM:** What did they say?

**AH:** Oh "er dummer Russa, You dumb Russians".

**---END OF TAPE---**