

Interview with Kathryn Ehli Ternes (KT)

Conducted by Michael M. Miller (MM)

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Edited and Proofread by Jay Gage & Beverly Wigley

MM: This is Michael M. Miller, Germans from Russian Bibliographer at North Dakota State University in Fargo, and it's June 19, 1993. I'm in the home of Kathryn (Katie) Ternes, who I remember as a child when I would go to visit their home, the John and Kathryn Ternes' home, in Strasburg. And it's a real pleasure Katie to be in your home this evening and to visit with you about your life, your heritage as a daughter of our German-Russian people. So what I'd like to have you do is tell us your full name and when you were born Katie.

KT: I was born in St. Anthony, North Dakota, August 18, 1910.

MM: What was your maiden name?

KT: Katie Ehli.

MM: And how did you spell the Ehli?

KT: E-h-l-i.

MM: And your father's name, Katie?

KT: Thomas Ehli.

MM: And do you remember when he was born?

KT: He was born May 24, 1884.

MM: Where was he born?

KT: In Sulz, Russia.

MM: In S-u-l-z.

KT: Sulz.

MM: That was probably a Black Sea Colony in the Ukraine and I'm assuming they were of the Catholic faith.

KT: They were Catholic.

MM: Right, and your mother's name?

KT: Regina Heiser.

MM: And she was born in what year?

KT: She was born on October the 6th, 1884.

- MM:** And where was she born?
- KT:** In Kleinliebental, close to the Black Sea.
- MM:** In the Black Sea [area] of the Ukraine, Kleinliebental; very interesting. And how many brothers and sisters did she have?
- KT:** She has two sisters and two brothers from her mother. Then her dad remarried after her mother passed away and they had six more children.
- MM:** And how many of the children from the first marriage and the second marriage came to America?
- KT:** None.
- MM:** Your mother came though.
- KT:** My mother came with my dad and one brother. He was a year old when they came to St. Anthony.
- MM:** And how old was your mother? What year did she come about, do you remember?
- KT:** In 1909.
- MM:** Your mother came in 1909, so she had memories then of living in Kleinliebental.
- KT:** Oh, yes! Yes.
- MM:** And your father, he was how old when he came to America?
- KT:** He was the same age; they were both the same age.
- MM:** They came to the United States and settled where?
- KT:** In St. Anthony.
- MM:** And that's located -
- KT:** Twelve miles south of Mandan.
- MM:** In Morton County, North Dakota.
- KT:** Morton County.
- MM:** And that's where you grew up of course.
- KT:** Well, they lived with their uncle in St. Anthony. Then they moved to the farm - to his cousin's and they stayed there for one summer. Then he moved to Flasher and started at the Flasher railroad as an assistant agent because he could talk German and there were a lot of Germans around Raleigh [and] Flasher that couldn't talk or understand the English too well. So he was kind of the interpreter.
- MM:** And this was about what year?
- KT:** In 1911.
- MM:** So let's go back to the villages in the Black Sea. Did your parents, first of all your mother, did she talk much about living in the Kleinliebental village?

- KT:** Yes, she talked quite a bit about it.
- MM:** What did she say, for example, what did her parents do as an occupation?
- KT:** My mother's dad worked in the bank. My mother was a homemaker; she was a seamstress. She did a lot of sewing for people. There was a man living in Linton by the name of Anton Senger which you know real well, Rose's Dad.
- MM:** Yes, right.
- KT:** And when my mother came down to Strasburg she met him and he says, "Oh, I knew your mother real well because she used to sew those bustles which," he said, "we called *asses* in German." "And I was a little boy," he said, "and one day, one of the women came out from your mother's house and she lost one of them. I ran after her and told her, "You lost your ass!"
- MM:** And this was in the village in Russia or Ukraine, excuse me.
- KT:** That was in Russia yes, yes.
- MM:** Very interesting. What else did they used to talk about in Kleinliebental, your mother first of all.
- KT:** Oh, she used to say how Mr. Klein that also lived in Strasburg -
- MM:** What was his full name, do you remember?
- KT:** Nicholas Klein. He had a store in Strasburg and she got to know him. When she met him she says, "I knew you from Russia because you used to come to our house many times with my dad."
- MM:** Very interesting. Did your mother talk much about her brothers and sisters?
- KT:** Well, my mother's brothers they both went to college. She said, "It was funny because they got the education and we didn't. We got 8th grade. I was the oldest one when my mother died." And she had to take care of the children. And then one day one of her sisters - she was popping corn - and she went on top of the stove and her dress caught fire. She got burned so bad that she died in the hospital.
- MM:** This was in Russia.
- KT:** That was in Russia after my grandfather was widowed. Then this nurse that was taking care of my mother's sister, she was single and she was a non-Catholic. She took real good care of my aunt, I would say. And my grandfather married her then and had six other children. And she never knew anything about cooking. Then my mother told me one day she asked her, "What do you put in soup for seasoning?" My aunt said then, her name was Mary, "Put in sugar." That's what she put in instead of salt. And when she served it to my grandpa, "Well," he said, "well, what kind of soup is that?" "Well, Mary told me to put in sugar." She told me that story.
- MM:** It's interesting. As long as we are talking about foods and so forth, did your mother ever talk about what they used to cook in the Ukraine in the village?
- KT:** Oh, they made their own sauerkraut and they lived in the vineyards and they had a lot of wine. Instead of milk or coffee or what, they had wine with their food. They did a lot of meats like pork, sauerkraut what the Germans usually - *Bauska*, they made that for Easter.

MM: What was *Bauska*?

KT: *Bauska* was the Easter bread.

MM: How was that made?

KT: Well, they used a lot of butter and they put in coloring, saffron, to color it and it was sweet bread. It was almost like a roll bread and that was their Easter. Their stoves, they were made out of bricks, and she said that made the best bread.

MM: Did she ever explain how they made the bread?

KT: Well, out of the yeast, and they had their yeast, sugar, salt.

MM: Did they make a lot of *Kuchen* too?

KT: They baked *Kuchen*, yah, they had *Kuchen*.

MM: What about your mother, [she] was a good seamstress?

KT: My grandmother was.

MM: Oh, your grandmother.

KT: My grandmother was a good seamstress, yah.

MM: Did your mother learn that?

KT: My mother sewed too, yah. She sewed all the dresses for five girls when we all grew up on the farm here in Fallon [North Dakota].

MM: Here in Morton County, right. Now your mother was how old again when she was in Kleinliebental? When she left, how old was she?

KT: She was 21.

MM: So she has good memories of when she came over to America.

KT: Oh yes, yes.

MM: Did she have to work out in the field?

KT: No, my mother never worked out in the field.

MM: So your grandmother always saw to that she worked mostly in the house.

KT: In the house. Well, see, they had one cow on the farm in Kleinliebental and the cows were out of town. See they lived in the village and then they had to go out to get that cow to milk her and bring her back in again.

MM: Did they have any other animals?

KT: No, huh uh, there was no other animals.

MM: What about going to school, your mother went to school in Russia?

- KT:** My mother went to school up to the 8th grade. She had a good handwriting.
- MM:** Did she learn Russian too?
- KT:** Oh yes, she could talk the Russian language. And when my stepfather - when they didn't want us to understand anything, they talked Russian.
- MM:** Over here?
- KT:** Over here, yes.
- MM:** That's interesting. So when they came to North Dakota they could speak Russian and German?
- KT:** Russian and German. Then my mother, in Flasher, she learned how to talk English. She didn't know how to go grocery shopping and how to ask for things. So this one storekeeper (she was a woman) she said, "Why don't you get a catalog and then just look in the catalog [for] whatever you want and bring it to me, point it out. I know what you want then." Because years ago you could get garden seed, patterns to sew; you could order all those out of the catalog, out of the Sears Roebuck.
- MM:** Ah huh, very interesting. What other recollections did your mother talk about of life in the Ukraine?
- KT:** Well, she had a pretty good life there. She enjoyed her life. She said they went swimming a lot of times in the Black Sea.
- MM:** So she came over to America in the early 1900s. Why did she leave Russia?
- KT:** Because my dad was suppose to be drafted for the army.
- MM:** He was about how old then?
- KT:** Well, he was 21 by that time, no, I am taking that back. She was 20 when she got married and they were 23 when they came to America. My brother was a year old when they came to America.
- MM:** So that was your brother that came to America?
- KT:** That was my brother.
- MM:** And your mother came to America in what year again?
- KT:** In 1909.
- MM:** And she came directly to North Dakota?
- KT:** They both came to North Dakota. And they landed in Mandan and then somebody picked them up, took them out to St. Anthony, North Dakota.
- MM:** So that was your father who came to America because he wanted to avoid the draft.
- KT:** Right.
- MM:** And so he, of course, left some of his brothers and sisters over there.
- KT:** Yes, and his parents.
- MM:** And his parents and your mother's [parents] also.

- KT:** Yes, and they both said, "We know we're not gonna come back again." This was just like a live funeral when they left.
- MM:** Did they ever reminisce about that when they left? Was it difficult?
- KT:** Oh yes, it was hard for them. My mother told me a lot a times she would sit out on the well, they had wells you know with the covers on. She would sit up there and watch the sun go down and cry how far away she was from home.
- MM:** Did they ever talk about wishing they could go home again?
- KT:** No, never.
- MM:** Never brought that up.
- KT:** No, my uncle was gonna come over to visit her on the 4th of July. He said he would be at Flasher for dinner. And he got as far as New York and they closed the - he couldn't come over anymore. He had to go back. He was in New York.
- MM:** And had to go back to Ukraine.
- KT:** Had to go back again, yah.
- MM:** So your father, of course, came to Morton County. But through those years in the early 1900s, did they have correspondence then with their brothers and sisters and parents?
- KT:** Yes, they did. They did write to each other.
- MM:** Do you remember what they wrote about?
- KT:** No, I was too small at that time to be interested in it.
- MM:** Right, and what about going back to Russia? Did your mother ever talk about the kinds of houses they built in the villages? Did she ever mention how they built those houses or how many rooms were in the house?
- KT:** The way I understood my mother when she talked, there was a front room and the kitchen was in the middle and then the other rooms was the bedrooms. It was almost like they have at Strasburg. When I moved down there, there was a lot of houses built like that.
- MM:** What about the kind of fuel they used over in Russia? What did they use to keep warm?
- KT:** To keep the heat, I have no idea.
- MM:** Did they use manure at that time?
- KT:** I wouldn't know that. I never did ask about that.
- MM:** You never talked about that. So when they came to Morton County, they had already gone to school and so forth. And then your mother was, to be sure now, was she married then already when she came to Morton County?
- KT:** Oh, sure!

- MM:** They had been married how long?
- KT:** Yah, well, they had my brother that was a year old.
- MM:** So they only had one child at that time. So they came [over] together and had gotten married over there. Did she ever talk about her marriage?
- KT:** No, she never talked about it.
- MM:** Never talked about the marriage ceremony or anything. What about celebrating holidays, did she ever talk about how they used to have Christmas over there?
- KT:** Not much, not much about the holidays.
- MM:** Not so much about that. The life in Morton County, were they always living on the farm or did they live in town?
- KT:** My dad and mother always lived in town. After he got on the railroad he was transferred to different towns. From Flasher he was transferred to Golden Valley, from Golden Valley to Killdeer, and then to Mandan and that's where he passed away in 1918.
- MM:** Your father passed away in 1918.
- KT:** 1918, of that big flu we had.
- MM:** I see, so he was quite young.
- KT:** Yah, he was sick eight days. He got pneumonia and died.
- MM:** And your mother was left with how many children?
- KT:** Four children, she was 33 years old at that time.
- MM:** And you were how old?
- KT:** I was nine.
- MM:** Do you remember some of that?
- KT:** Oh, yes! I remember real well.
- MM:** And did your mother then remarry?
- KT:** My dad died in October; my mother remarried in January, the same year. And she married a man with four children then and she had four.
- MM:** And what was his name?
- KT:** Adam Frees. And she moved out the farm then and that's where I lived for seven years until I got married. I remember we lived on Main Street in Mandan where Hardee's is now, that's where our house was. When my dad died, we all had the flu; everybody except my mother was up and around taking care of us. When he died they didn't want to take him through the living room where we were laying with the flu, so they took him out of the window, the undertaker [did].

MM: Really, interesting.

KT: And nobody was allowed to go to the funeral. My mother couldn't go to the funeral. He was laying in the undertaker's place for eight days waiting for my mother to get better. She was also sick; they thought she could get out but everybody said, "Stay in, don't go out," because the flu was terrible. In 1918 so many people died. Then they buried him without [her]. There was a Negro woman that took care of us. She was our 'grandma' and she took care of the funeral. Nobody went to church either.

MM: Nobody went to church.

KT: People were afraid of getting the flu.

MM: Right. So how old were you when you got married?

KT: I was 17.

MM: You were 17 when you got married and you met John Ternes. He was the son of whom?

KT: Nicholas and Odelia Kopp.

MM: Was it a long-term courtship or how was the arrangement?

KT: I met John at a wedding over in Raleigh when he was best man and we got acquainted. And then we corresponded for about a year and then we never heard from each other until '25. And then we started writing again and then in '26, he wrote me he was going to come up to see me and that's where we got closer. Then on October 25th we got married, in 1927.

MM: After '27 where did you live?

KT: Out in Grassna, on my in-laws' homestead.

MM: And that's located where?

KT: Seven miles south of Strasburg.

MM: South and west of Strasburg.

KT: Southwest of Strasburg.

MM: So you lived with his parents.

KT: His parents moved to church and we lived alone.

MM: Moved to where?

KT: Over to Grassna, to the Trinity Church.

MM: Nearby there.

KT: Um hum. They built a house. When they heard that John was getting married they said, "Now we are going to build and move closer to church." John and I and Nick, his brother, stayed on the farm with us for a year.

- MM:** How did you find, Katie, when you grew up south of Mandan and so forth, and then living in Mandan, and then going over to Strasburg by Grassna, did you find it a little different?
- KT:** Well, I think our part of the country was a little bit ahead with farming. We had tractors earlier than they did down in Strasburg and I think we were a little further ahead in education.
- MM:** What about English speaking?
- KT:** English, too.
- MM:** Were you already speaking English at that time?
- KT:** Yes, we spoke more English. When I came down there I spoke more English than I did after I was down there for a few years because our German language, my German language, was high German. My stepfather was what they call the low German, so I had a mixture of German then. Then when I moved to Strasburg, that was different again, so I just kept on talking more English than German.
- MM:** And you lived how long out on the farm?
- KT:** Seven years.
- MM:** Seven years, and then what happened with the farm?
- KT:** We rented the farm out to a Baumgartner.
- MM:** When you were on the farm there, were you still using horses or tractor?
- KT:** Oh yes, we had horses.
- MM:** Still had horses.
- KT:** Still had horses, we never used a tractor - had horses.
- MM:** On the farm, what kind of social life did you have? If you wanted to visit, what kind of activities did you do?
- KT:** Mostly was name's days and we did go out for picnics, like with your folks and us. We were real close. We lot of times went out to the Missouri River. And there was a fellow out there, he always caught the fish for us and we had fish fries out there. We would sing and dance, had our own parties. A lot of times we got together and oh, there was single kids with us and some of the men would dress up as the ministers and they'd marry a couple with the Sears Roebuck catalog. That was our own fun we had.
- MM:** Interesting. Was there a lot of dancing in those years?
- KT:** Lot of dancing, lot of dancing especially on name's days.
- MM:** And who was the orchestra?
- KT:** Max Josek, he had the accordion. The one room was cleaned up, took all the furniture out and one table was set by the corner and a chair on top and there's where the musician was sitting on. Then one time we had a big name's day party at our place. Your folks was out and Speckie Keller and Charlie Richter. Charlie played the accordion and Speckie played the trombone, I guess. We had to make our own entertainment.

- MM:** Some barn dances too?
- KT:** Down there not so much, but up home whenever somebody built a new barn or a new granary there was a dance. My folks built a new barn at one time and my mother said, "We're not gonna have a dance. We're gonna have the priest come and bless that barn." Anyway, my brothers and I, one Sunday we got a bunch together and we had a dance. Even Father Gustin was in the seminary at that time, and he came. Father used to be out at the prairie -
- MM:** Yes, talking about religion and so forth, was the church quite important in your family?
- KT:** Oh, yes. Yah, we never missed a Midnight Mass or holiday, Sundays.
- MM:** Was there a lot of German singing?
- KT:** Yes, there was mostly Latin in church at that time. I still have my Latin songbook.
- MM:** But when you were at weddings and so forth when they would sing songs and so forth, was it in German?
- KT:** Yes, that was in German.
- MM:** That was in German. Also when there was a funeral, for example, they'd have some German hymns?
- KT:** That was German, too, yah. And then we had this Father Zellder, which was really a German. He came from Germany and that was more German than either Father Niebauer had or -
- MM:** Father Zellder served what parish when you were growing up?
- KT:** St. Peter and Paul.
- MM:** Oh, this was in Strasburg.
- KT:** No, no that was in Fallon. He was in Fallon before he came to Strasburg.
- MM:** I see.
- KT:** That was his first parish when he came to America, Fallon.
- MM:** Father Zellder was a German-German.
- KT:** Yes, yah.
- MM:** And he spoke high German, of course.
- KT:** He spoke high German.
- MM:** Did the German-Russian people accept him?
- KT:** Oh yes, oh yah.
- MM:** And they got along well?
- KT:** Yes, yah.

- MM:** Did you ever find moving over to Grassna that the Bessarabian people had different kinds of foods than you had? Did they make different kinds of borscht or did they cook a little different?
- KT:** It was about the same, yah; the food was about the same. Some named them a little different than we did, like for *Gholodets* we called *Gholorei*.
- MM:** And what was that in English?
- KT:** Pig feet, pickled pig feet.
- MM:** And what else did they make, do you recall? Did they make any liver sausage or any kind of head cheese and things like that?
- KT:** Oh, yes, *Leber* sausage, *Blutwurst*, *Schwartenmagen* and pigs in blankets. They called [that] down there *Halupsy*; and in our area they called them *Hulooptsi*.
- MM:** They had a little different -
- KT:** A little different dialect, yah.
- MM:** Yes. So you grew up making all those kinds of things.
- KT:** Oh, yes; yah, learned how to make that.
- MM:** And then you lived in Strasburg from what years?
- KT:** From 1927 to 1933.
- MM:** Just six years you were in Strasburg.
- KT:** Yah.
- MM:** Then in 1933 – from 1927-1933 you were -
- KT:** We moved to Strasburg.
- MM:** Oh, you were on the farm from '27 to '33?
- KT:** Yes, yah.
- MM:** In 1933 you moved to Strasburg until what year?
- KT:** Until '57 we moved up here.
- MM:** To Bismarck.
- KT:** Um hum.
- MM:** So '33 to '57 was a long time in Strasburg. Of course, you lived in Strasburg during the depression.
- KT:** Right.
- MM:** And then of course during World War II - and got to know a lot of the people. What were some of your memories, first of all, during the depression years? Do you remember some of those tough years?

- KT:** Yes, those were pretty tough years. Sometimes we didn't have much to eat on the farm. And a lot of times we'd just have chokecherry jelly and coffee and canned sausage probably for a main meal. And then for the cattle there was nothing. That's when we left the farm because we just couldn't make it anymore.
- MM:** In '33.
- KT:** In '33, and we borrowed money from John's mother to start the bar. Your dad was the one that came out and told John that bar was for sale.
- MM:** In Strasburg.
- KT:** In Strasburg. Then we went in and checked it out (Jake Mastel owned that bar) - what he wanted for it. Then John went to his mother and she gave us the money. We had some money; we had an auction sale, we sold all our furniture. Not the furniture, our machinery, and kept our land though and moved in. And we done real good in business.
- MM:** This was in Strasburg until '57?
- KT:** We had the bar for 10 years. Then John went into the sales barn, opened a sales barn and he didn't like that - working with cattle. Then he started hauling grain; well, that wasn't his job either. So then we decided we're gonna move out of Strasburg and look for something else. Then we came up here [Bismarck] and he started working for the Eagles and worked for 10 years until he retired.
- MM:** Let's go back to the farm and your life there. How did you find living on the farm, because you didn't grow up on a farm?
- KT:** I didn't like it; I never liked it. I didn't like to go out to my stepfather either. I didn't want to go. He promised me, oh, you know I was nine years old and I said, "My dad said I can take piano lessons, which if I move out on the farm, I can't do that." He said, "You can take organ lessons. There's nuns down in Fallon and they give music lessons." I did for a few months but I had to ride down horseback every time or stay after school when the kids went home. I didn't go for that. I never did like the farm and I was pushing for town.
- MM:** So you were always a town gal?
- KT:** Yah.
- MM:** What did you find in Strasburg during the 30's and 40's, what kind of social life did they have? Of course they had name's days and they had church celebrations. What in the church were some of big events?
- KT:** Oh, like the church fair and ordinations of priests. We had several of them. And St. Peter and Paul was a big day, which I am enjoying much better than the farm - living in town. I made a lot of friends in Strasburg.
- MM:** And did the women get together with different clubs?
- KT:** Yah, well, we had Homemakers there.
- MM:** Through extension service they had - Homemakers was quite active. Were there any crafts that they did?

- KT:** Oh, yes! Your mother taught me a lot how to crochet and embroider. We quilted; we got together a lot of nights and did quilting.
- MM:** Tell me a little bit about quilting. That's interesting for a listener to hear about. When you made these beautiful quilts, how was that all organized?
- KT:** Well, each one made their own quilt and finished them. And then when the quilt was sewed together, like if it was at your mother's place, well, she would invite her friends to come - "Well, we're gonna quilt tonight." There was sometimes about 12-14 women sitting around one table and everybody was sitting and doing their work. We had a bowl of candy in the middle. Then around 11:00 or so –
- MM:** In the evening.
- KT:** In the night, yah. We did some quilting - some during the day. Lot of times I went when it was at your mother's place or Mrs. Biegler's, I'd go in the afternoon. Then she'd fix supper and then the husbands would come for supper. Then there was also a big lunch prepared for about 12:00 for us women all who quilted and we had fun then.
- MM:** How long did it take to make a quilt?
- KT:** Sometimes we quilted one in two evenings or two, three days. One night when, I don't know if you remember this, Donny got real sick and he was rushed to Bismarck to the hospital. John and your dad took him up. We thought they were gonna come back or they were gonna call and let us know what was going on with Donny. We stayed up all night and quilted at my house, and they stayed up with Donny then.
- MM:** So you got a lot of quilting done that night.
- KT:** A lot of quilting done.
- MM:** Of course you were wondering what is happening so you did quilting.
- KT:** Well, we just stayed up. We were wondering if they were coming home or if something was going on.
- MM:** Right. A church fair even today is quite important in the community of Strasburg and some of the other communities, but what was a church fair like? Tell me, what kind of food did they prepare for a church fair?
- KT:** Well, the afternoons it was chicken soup, rice dressing, coleslaw, mashed potatoes and gravy, and then the chicken that the soup was boiled in, and always the dessert pies. That was dinner. And then for supper we usually had fried chicken and dressing, mashed potatoes again and cakes, I guess. Cakes were for supper. Then the next day, it was always during hunting season so there was always a lot of hunters coming around, and then they usually stopped there for dinner. It was a big dinner the next day and that was vegetable borscht.
- MM:** This is on a Monday.
- KT:** That was on a Monday; it was always a two-day affair. Those cooks that did the chicken soup, they had to go down there at 4:00 in the morning.
- MM:** Who were some of the cooks that you'd remember, some of the main cooks?

- KT:** Lizzy Schreiner was one that went up and Mrs. Bauman. I never had to get up that early because I lot of times worked on the coleslaw, mixed the coleslaw. But we had big turnouts for those dinners. And then there was raffling going on and each one made crafts, took them down to sell them.
- MM:** Then there was bingo of course.
- KT:** Bingo, nickel bingo with corn on [the cards], yah.
- MM:** Very interesting. What about the holidays, you know, of course during those hard years you didn't have too much for holidays, but how did they celebrate, for instance, Christmas? How do you remember Christmas as a child?
- KT:** I remember the first Christmas that I really can remember is when my dad had died. We didn't have any – anything, you know, no money to buy anything. My mother was poor at that time. They had just bought a house and were making monthly payments and that time the railroad men didn't make what they do now. So that Christmas we were invited to some friends of my dad that also worked on the railroad. They had no children; they invited us and we got a lot of Christmas gifts when we were there. We were just shocked. I still have a iron that I got from those people. Then when we came home there was a big box in front of our house that I guess the Salvation Army or some organization brought for us for gifts as we were left alone just in October.
- MM:** This was in 1917.
- KT:** That was in 1918. Then when we moved to the farm, Christmas didn't mean too much out there. All we got for Christmas was probably a hanky and a bowl of peanuts, nuts and a orange or apple. It was not a big deal out there for Christmas.
- MM:** What about Easter?
- KT:** Easter, like I say, there was Easter eggs made and that Easter bread. Then you'd go to church on Thursday, Friday.
- MM:** Did you learn a lot of cooking from your mother?
- KT:** Yes, because I was the oldest of the five girls and I had to do a lot of cooking.
- MM:** How many again were in the family?
- KT:** Eight, three boys and five girls.
- MM:** So you had to do a lot of cooking.
- KT:** I had to do a lot of cooking. And when my mother and [step]dad married, there was two children, the babies were four years old, both of them were four. They were just like four sets of twins: two were six, two were nine, two were eleven. And my mother washed clothes from morning till night lot of times - by hand. She baked bread every other day. We also had a hired man that time, a year-round hired man so there was 11 in the family all year round.
- MM:** So at the dinner table there was a lot of people.
- KT:** There was 11 people and she was not used to cooking for so many people. It was hard for my mother.

- MM:** Was there a lot of canning?
- KT:** Not much at that time no, no, not much canning. No, the meat was preserved in salt brine. There was enough food though. There was always enough pork, chickens and potatoes, apples. My stepfather would go out to town - and they knew when there was a carload of apples coming into town, a train carload. And then he went out with the wagon box got a whole wagon box full of apples because it took eight apples a day for us kids to put in our lunch baskets. Each one had a apple a day.
- MM:** And did you go to country school?
- KT:** Went to country school.
- MM:** What was that like going to country school?
- KT:** Oh, there was about - I have a picture of everybody that went to that school one year. There was about 14 kids.
- MM:** Now, did you walk to school?
- KT:** No, we drove by horses; in spring we walked - two miles.
- MM:** How many months did you go to country school a year?
- KT:** Seven months the first years.
- MM:** You went through the 8th grade?
- KT:** Then it got to be nine months.
- MM:** Did you have to take an examination in the 8th grade?
- KT:** Oh, yes, you had to take exams. Superintendent came out to check on the schools. I just can't remember what his name was.
- MM:** Did the teacher in the country schools speak only German or only English?
- KT:** English and they were mostly teachers from Minnesota.
- MM:** So the children were forced to speak English.
- KT:** Oh, yes, yes!
- MM:** Were there some children that couldn't speak English?
- KT:** Well, the only Germans that went to that school where we went to was our family, the rest were all Scandinavians.
- MM:** Oh, so you had to speak English.
- KT:** We had to speak English. We spoke English when we moved out to the farm. I started school in Mandan. And then we came out there, well, we went to a parochial school for six months and then it got too much for my dad, my stepfather. It was 50 cents a month we had to pay, and for eight kids that ran up to \$4.00. And \$4.00 was a lot of money at that time, where we could go to public school for nothing. So we went to public school.

- MM:** And then you had catechism in the summer.
- KT:** Ah, we had catechism - not too often; just when we went to first Holy Communion - about a couple of weeks.
- MM:** Do you remember your first Holy Communion?
- KT:** My first Holy Communion I made at Mandan. At that time, it was you had to make your second Holy Communion. I made that in Fallon, and I got confirmed in Fallon. My first priest that I went to first Holy Communion was Father Clemens; he later on went to Strasburg. The year I got married I said, "Oh, good. There's somebody in Strasburg that I know." But by the time I came down he was gone.
- MM:** You were married where?
- KT:** At Fallon, St. Peter and Paul Church, by Father Miller.
- MM:** The years growing up in a large family and your mother being left alone and then remarrying and so forth, as your mother grew older - how old was she when she died?
- KT:** Eighty-seven [years old]. Later when they retired they moved to Mandan.
- MM:** But what I'm interested in knowing is, your mother as she grew older, did she talk much about those years living in the Ukraine?
- KT:** No, no. After she grew older she never talked much about it. Most of the time when she talked about it was when she was sewing and I was sitting next to her probably ripping something. She learned me how to embroider. I was closest to my mother because my other two sisters - they had partners, you know, like the ones that were four were two girls and the ones that were six were two girls so they were more out playing and I was stuck with my mother more.
- MM:** You did a lot of housework; you learned to do a lot of things.
- KT:** Yes, I learned how to do a lot of things: scrubbing and cleaning house. My folks used to go to a lot of name's days, weddings and I was the one that did the cooking. That's why I didn't like the farm! We had a big family.
- MM:** Well, I remember you and my mother as both having some of the best meals; and, of course, they'd have lots of people over there. And like German-Russians, there was always extra food if they needed it.
- KT:** Oh, yah.
- MM:** Of course, when you reminisce about those years thinking about growing up in a German-Russian family, what do you think about some of the fondest memories? There was, of course, tough times but what do you think about when you talk to your children or you visit with other German-Russian people and they reminisce? What kind of memories that they like to talk about?
- KT:** The good times we had and the parties we used to throw; and we'd get together and we would do a lot of fun things too.
- MM:** Like what?

KT: Like dress up and go - like Halloween, going to other peoples' houses. Or like New Year's, they would at 12:00 - they would come to one house and wish a Happy New Year's. "Well, now you get up and get dressed and go with us to the next house." And then there was always food there. Everybody prepared a ham and, you know, what you had for Christmas and New Year's. Some nights we were out all night; we went from house to house. We'd pick up as many as - like Ernie Boyer's folks, and Kleins - Bieglers never went along. He was a little different, he didn't never - Or we played tricks on - I remember one time, Pius Kraft - they made the best pickled watermelon, the home pickled watermelon. And Margaret Klein (your aunt) she says, "Let's go and steal some watermelon from them (from Krafts)." At that time nobody locked the doors. So Kleins and us - her and I went down the basement; we knew where the watermelons were, got some watermelons out, took them home and ate them and they never found out.

Or one time I was making soup - that was a lot of fun in the morning when we had the bar. Sunday mornings that was cleaning morning and then some of the friends would come and help clean. They'd have their drinks, and one time I put on the kettle of soup. We lived in the back of the bar at that time. (At that time we always had dinner.) Mrs. Klein and Eugene came and they went out in the bar and they seen that soup boiling and it looked so good to them. So Margaret said, "I am going to take some of that soup out and pour some water in. She won't even find out about that, that soup isn't as good as it should be." We told each other later on [about] the tricks we pulled.

MM: And that was when you were young and, you know, there wasn't television or all those things so you probably spent a lot more time with a group together than today.

KT: Right, right, yes.

MM: Today people watch things.

KT: We were closer, much closer then.

MM: I would have to say that's true; I even remember the closeness. I would come home and they would send the children upstairs and they'd play cards and so forth and there was a lot of closeness.

KT: Yah, the men would play cards; and we would sit in the back and do either embroidering or we'd be crocheting. Then there was always a freezer full of ice cream made. We'd have ice cream and cake for lunch. Your mom always, ah, I don't think there was hardly a day she didn't make ice cream. Then towards the end they had the electric ice cream freezer, which we never had, we turned our own.

MM: But, of course, then in the early 50's television came onto the scene.

KT: Yah.

MM: You were stilling living in Strasburg then.

KT: We still lived in Strasburg, yah, but that didn't bother us too much - television at that time. No, we never got together and everybody sat in the room watching television and not visiting. No, the television wasn't that big.

MM: Wasn't that important yet at those early days.

KT: No, huh uh, no.

MM: But do you remember the first time of listening to a radio?

KT: We were one of the first ones out there in Grassna that had a radio. When that came out there was a lot of people that came to our house to listen to the radio. We had a big console radio and it was a Temple. And we traded that in for a car; I can't remember who we bought it from, but we had a second car. We traded that in; it was Schumacher or somebody was selling it.

MM: You're talking about a car radio now.

KT: No, no the radio. We had a car - we didn't have enough money so we traded the car in as part of the payment.

Break in dialogue

MM: At Grassna when you were out there on the farm and when the radio came into the scene, what programs were those early programs that people would listen to?

KT: Oh, one was "Little Orphan Annie" and "The Guiding Light" was on at that time already on radio.

MM: They were like soap operas.

KT: Soap operas only on radio and I was listening to those and he's on radio now yet. What was his name? I can't think of him.

MM: Paul Harvey, was he on then?

KT: No, no.

MM: He was not that early.

KT: No, no, it wasn't that early. I just can't remember the name.

MM: But you must remember the radio and how important it was during World War II, to listen to the reports?

KT: Oh, yah, listen to the reports of the news.

MM: The boys were gone and so forth. Do you remember some of that when the boys would leave the area of Strasburg and so forth? You were living in Strasburg at that time.

KT: Oh, yes, yes.

MM: Was there a big celebration when they came home?

KT: Oh, yes! When those boys came back - in fact, some of our boys that worked for us in the bar had to go like - Mike Lipp had to go, and even John was supposed to go yet.

MM: Your husband.

KT: My husband John, yes.

MM: Even at his age?

- KT:** Right. Ray Biegler, Matt Fisher - they had the Blue Room and they had to either go to service or go into defense work, so they closed up their bar and both moved to Milwaukee to work. And we were also supposed to go and we had the date set when John was supposed to sign up for draft. Mike Schumacher was on the draft board and we had everything arranged that John was going to truck during the week and Saturdays we'd open up the bar. We'd keep our bar but we'd open it up Saturdays because that wasn't a working day. So Mike Schumacher said to us one afternoon, "You come over. I want to talk to you, John." So he come over - we went over there and he said, "John, just keep working." Don't go up and sign up for the draft. We were the lucky ones.
- MM:** You were the lucky ones.
- KT:** Yah. And like Matt and Ray, they had to move and stay there until war was over. Then they came back and sold their bar.
- MM:** What were some of the other businesses in Strasburg? Briefly just tell me who had what businesses in Strasburg?
- KT:** Oh, there was, ah, Junie at one time there had a bar, Junie Nicholas, A.J. Baumgartner, Fisher-Biegler and ours.
- MM:** There were five?
- KT:** There was five bars at one time. Joe Bauman had the bowling alley and that burned down at one time. And there was a lot of clothes; he picked up the clothes for the cleaners and there was a lot of clothes that were burned. I know John had a suit burned in that. And then there was a craft store and John Ternes had a grocery store. There was butcher Pete had the butcher shop.
- MM:** Was there a barbershop?
- KT:** There were two barbershops at one time. There was Schreiner and Abel, I guess was his name. [He] was a Hollander.
- MM:** What about the Blue Room, was that important?
- KT:** Oh, yes! Oh, yes! That's where we had our wedding dance in. That was always a big dancing place, the Blue Room.
- MM:** Do you remember some of the orchestras that played the Blue Room?
- KT:** Oh, the Mastel boys played. There was a lot of them came down from Bismarck: Otto, Don and -
- MM:** Do you remember Mike Dosch?
- KT:** Mike Dosch played - not too often. The Mastel boys were some of the ones that played the most down there. And Frank Biegler had a band.
- MM:** Do you ever remember John Schwab?
- KT:** Oh, yah! But he never played in the Blue Room much; he was more for name's days and weddings.
- MM:** More private parties.

- KT:** More private parties, yah. Yah, he played for the Melody Boys.
- MM:** What kind of dances were they there?
- KT:** Oh, there were the fox trots and the square dances, polkas, waltzes mostly.
- MM:** As long as we are talking about music, of course, to North Dakota and Strasburg Lawrence Welk was important. Do you remember Lawrence Welk as far as in your youth?
- KT:** No, I never heard of Lawrence before I got married, but I met him about three days after we were married.
- MM:** And how did that happen?
- KT:** Well, our wedding was in my home out in Fallon.
- MM:** And what year again was that?
- KT:** In 1927. Then we borrowed - that was the custom. Nobody had enough dishes to serve a big wedding. It was small comparing to now. So the store always borrowed us some dishes but what we broke we had to pay for and the others we could return. So then John and I, two days after our wedding, we returned those dishes to Flasher to the store. Fred Weber had the store at that time. We heard out there that Lawrence Welk was playing at Raleigh, North Dakota, which was about seven miles out of Flasher. So John said, "Let's drive out. I know Lawrence Welk. His sister's married to my brother." So, here John and I drives out [and] here was Lawrence playing his accordion, had about a five [piece] band. The place he played in was probably about 100 feet by 50, just a small dinky place. Then I didn't meet him until we lived on the farm and I had Art already. One night, just before milking time, here comes a car driving - a sports car driving into the yard.
- MM:** This was about what year?
- KT:** 1929, I would say.
- MM:** And you were out at -
- KT:** At Grassna.
- MM:** Grassna.
- KT:** Yah, and this car came driving up with the top down, nice car, and there was a man and a woman and a baby in that car. I went out; John was still in the field. And they asked me who lived here. Well, I told them, "John Ternes and I'm his wife." They said, "Do you know where Anton Ternes lives?" I says, "Yah, that's my brother-in-law." "Well," he says, "Anton's wife is my sister and I want to go visit them." So it was Lawrence, Fern and Shirley was a baby.
- MM:** Well, that's interesting.
- KT:** And then I told them were they lived; they only lived about two and a half miles from us. I gave him the directions. At that time, I drove the car so I knew how to go. I drove the Model T. They said, "Why don't you come back tonight?" He knew John because John and him grew up together. So we went to visit them that night, Lawrence and his wife. And that was the only time I've seen Fern and then Lawrence

came back later on. I know one time he came to Strasburg to play. Well, we prepared for a big crowd. And John thought, well, the next day the band's gonna come over and spend a lot of money in the bar. I put up a counter in the back serving hamburgers and pop. The next day he came in and he bought a 5¢ bottle of pop. That's all he spent.

MM: Yah, Lawrence wasn't too much for that kind of thing.

KT: No.

MM: Where did they have the music? The orchestra played where, the gym?

KT: No, at the Blue Room, and then the next day -

MM: This was what year about?

KT: Oh golly, that must have been in the middle 30's, because we lived in back of the pool hall yet. We didn't move up there till '33. Then he told us the next day he's gonna play at Ellendale. So a bunch of us got together and went down to Ellendale to listen to him play because we didn't hear him play when he played at Strasburg.

MM: So at that time he probably was traveling up from Yankton.

KT: Could be, yah, because he was with the bus. Then we stayed overnight and the next day we went to a restaurant to eat; and here comes Lawrence with his bunch and they all wore overalls, not their suits.

MM: Oh!

KT: They said, "We don't travel with our suits on because we couldn't afford to pay for the cleaning." So they were saving on their suits.

MM: Do you remember when Lawrence would come on the farm and visit you and so forth? Do you remember that time when he came, did they speak English only or German?

KT: He asked in English, yes, where Tony lived. But when they got to Tony's, that was German. And Fern and I had the same language so we could talk with each other. You know we talked the Beresaner language.

MM: What was that when you said Beresaner, what does that mean?

KT: That's just like Grassna or Liebentaler. You know, like the way you talk German, they call that Liebentaler and out where John was raised that was Grassna.

MM: And where you grew up that was called what?

KT: Beresaner.

MM: And so Fern Renner was a Beresaner. Did you know Fern before?

KT: I knew Fern, yes; but she was quite a bit older than I was. I knew who she was and I knew some of her nieces better. One of her nieces went to Strasburg to St. Peter and Paul Parochial School. She boarded down there, yah.

MM: So then, after that time you went to see Lawrence play in Ellendale in the 30's, and then did you ever see him again perform like in the late 30's or 40's?

- KT:** He came to Strasburg then again and then he played down in the church basement and all the proceeds went to the nuns. That was the last time I think he came to Strasburg with his band. Then when one of Tony Ternes' boys got married he came to that wedding. Then we didn't see him until we lived up here in Bismarck in '59, we went to Escondido. Yes, we had dinner there.
- MM:** Was that '59 or was that later than that?
- KT:** That was '59.
- MM:** What about Lawrence Welk and the television program, do you remember those early years when he started on TV?
- KT:** Yes, we watched him the first time down in Kansas City, Missouri.
- MM:** And what was that like watching a hometown boy that you knew; a lot of people anxious to see that?
- KT:** Yah, well, we were at - Delores and Bill went to school down there and they had a TV at that time and that was the first time we seen Lawrence Welk on. John new him real well so he was real excited to see him.
- MM:** Did you ever go out to visit the Welk family, you know, when they lived on the farm - Lawrence's parents?
- KT:** No, we didn't visit with Lawrence's parents.
- MM:** Did you know any of the other members of Lawrence's family - brothers and sisters?
- KT:** Oh, I knew the whole family, yah, like Mike and John and Louie. We visited a lot with Louie.
- MM:** Do you recall, did they also play instruments?
- KT:** John did. I never heard John play but I knew that John played the accordion. Now Mike was kind of quiet, he never was outgoing. Mike got married after we did. I never went to the wedding; I was pregnant, quite big at time so I didn't go. John went to that wedding. He got married to a Hager and then when she died that was the first time I was out at the Welk home. They lived on the homestead then. Then Strasburg, the Welks and us didn't live too far apart, I'd say about two blocks.
- MM:** That was Lawrence's parents when they moved to town - and that was in the 40's right?
- KT:** Yah, we bought the Schumacher home and they lived across the street from Kleins.
- MM:** Do you remember when Lawrence Welk's parents passed away?
- KT:** Yes, I was there for both the wakes for Lawrence's mother and the dad.
- MM:** Of course, the Welks had a modest life. Do you remember going over and visiting the Welk home?
- KT:** No, no, huh uh, never.
- MM:** Was Eva living in town with them then at that time?
- KT:** Yes, yes, Eva lived with them.
- MM:** You got to know Eva.

- KT:** Oh, yes, I got to know Eva, but she didn't live there with them too long then she went to Aberdeen. See, because Agatha and I knew each other real well, like my sister-in-law. They were kind of – they were real plain people, I guess, with eating and everything cause Agatha - like Selma her daughter said when she was here the other day, "My mother was never a good cook."
- MM:** Interesting. What can you think of going back to your growing up in a German-Russian community like Strasburg? Of course you were married then. Did your children learn to speak German?
- KT:** Ah, Art and Delores did because my mother-in-law wanted me to teach them German so she could talk with them. She even bought me German prayer book, which I couldn't read for Christmas one time.
- MM:** So your mother-in-law never learned English?
- KT:** Never did learn English, no, and she said, "Be sure to teach your children how to talk German so I can talk with them", which I did.
- MM:** And they can still understand today?
- KT:** Oh, yah. Art can talk German good and Delores but Diane can't. Diane talks probably like you do. She never did bother; by that time Grandma Ternes was dead.
- MM:** And your parents learned English?
- KT:** Oh, my mother was real good in English! And she read English papers. She read that magazine – gosh, what was it called? Every paper she got a hold of she would read. She was a great reader.
- MM:** They probably subscribed to *North Dakota Herold*?
- KT:** Yes, she had that - they had the *Weisefreund* and she had the *Flasher Record* or *Tribune* or whatever it was called.
- MM:** That was in English, what about the German papers? Do you remember *Der Staats Anzeiger*, did she have that?
- KT:** No, no, she never had that.
- MM:** But the *North Dakota Herold* was very important to her.
- KT:** She did have the *Staats Anzeiger*; my mother-in-law never had it. She had the *Josefsblatt*, my mother-in-law but my folks had the *Staats Anzeiger* and the *Herold* and there was always a story in there – a continued story that she would read when my dad had company. They didn't want to read but she read to them.
- MM:** What were the stories about?
- KT:** Gosh, that I wouldn't remember, it was a continued story.
- MM:** Did your mother or father through the years have correspondence with anyone over there in the Ukraine?
- KT:** Not that I know of. I am sure she did write because she got some letters, a few letters that I know, but I don't remember her writing. But she did write when I got married. That was a daily letter, I mean, a

weekly letter and if I didn't write probably every other week or two, she'd send me a letter that had a stamp in there so I would write to her.

MM: For you?

KT: For me.

MM: Right. What about the uncles and aunts of yours that stayed in the Ukraine? You had no correspondence with them - your mother's brothers and sisters. Because your mother came with your one brother, the rest stayed. Did they ever find out what happened to them, those who stayed in the Ukraine? Did your mother ever talk about that, what might have happened?

KT: I wouldn't know. Well, she never found out much either because the brothers had to go and serve. And one of the sisters wrote that the parents starved and the rest of the family was sent over to Siberia. And two of the girls, these two pictures that I showed you, they married Polish guys.

MM: And there was no contact at all since the 30's until this date.

KT: Since the 30's. Oh, yes, there was when they lived in Mandan. I would say that was in - when these last pictures were sent in '27 or '29, I think it was when they were sent. She had letters from home but then nothing very long so she didn't have too much contact with them.

MM: So it could be today there may still be children or grandchildren living.

KT: That could be. I always think there should be because there were some that were older, especially her half sisters or brothers. There should be some because there was one was born in '23, because he was two years old when he sent that picture. He was a Heiser, George Heiser; that must have been her brother's son.

MM: Your mother died in what year again, do you remember?

KT: I'd have to look that up.

MM: Was it in the 30's?

KT: Oh, no! My mother died since we've been living up here. I would say in the 70's, yah, I'd have to go back and look. Yah, she became 78. She was in the nursing home for two years; the rest of the time she lived in Mandan by herself.

MM: She, I'm sure, had some fond memories of this life coming over here, you know, when she was a young woman.

KT: Oh, I am sure! Yah.

MM: And then seeing what it was like - things changed so dramatically; there was electricity and then there was a vehicle. Do you remember the first time when there was an automobile?

KT: Oh, yes! I remember driving in a car I'd say when I was about seven, eight years old, because my godmother lived out in St. Anthony and they'd come in with the car and I would drive out with them and stay for a couple of weeks with them.

MM: That's the first time you'd seen a vehicle.

- KT:** Yah, my parents never had a car. My dad died young and then when we moved out to the farm. My stepfather had a Reo. Have you ever heard of a Reo?
- MM:** What was that?
- KT:** A car - that was a big car, one of the ugliest cars that was made I guess. It had a big round back on it. They were ugly looking cars. And we'd shine that car up sometimes.
- MM:** You were real proud of that. You'd go to town with that, go to Strasburg? I bet they'd show that off!
- KT:** At that time, now see, that was the first car I remember. Then my stepfather, he was a little man, but he always had big cars like a Maxwell Overland 6. One time I know he had a Phyllis. What was that name starts with a P? Anyway, he always had big cars to drive. Well, there was a big family; he always had to have - Phyllis Overland, Phyllis still isn't right. Baby Overland, that's what it was. Baby Overland, you don't remember those anymore. Yah, always had those bigger cars.
- MM:** What about the 4th of July? Did they celebrate 4th of July?
- KT:** We went to Mandan for the 4th of July when we grew up; went to the rodeos, fireworks in the evening.
- MM:** What about when you got married west of Strasburg there, did they have a 4th of July?
- KT:** Yah, we went to the 4th of July in town.
- MM:** Was there any kind of music in Strasburg?
- KT:** Yes, they had a bandstand in the middle of town and there was a band playing at night. And during the day they would just [be] moseying around. Yah, I remember my first 4th of July was we went to town.
- MM:** And what was the name of the band or who was in the band do you remember?
- KT:** Oh, the Klein's played. I remember them being in the band and - See at that time they were all kind of strange to me yet.
- MM:** Because you were out on the farm.
- KT:** Yah, we were out on the farm, but I remember the Kleins because the Kleins and us got friends when we lived on the farm yet.
- MM:** What was their full name?
- KT:** Eugene Klein and Margaret.
- MM:** And Leo Klein, do you remember him?
- KT:** Oh, yes! Yah, I remember Leo. Yah, he went to school at that time. I remember when Phil graduated that year, I guess when we got married; Phil and I are about the same age. Then they put on a play one time around Christmastime and we went into that play; we must have been married about a year and a half because I had Art already by that time.
- MM:** What else can you think of that was kind of special to you in your early years, holidays or customs, or anything that you used to do that we haven't talked about? Can you think of anything else?

KT: Well, one thing that I enjoyed when I moved down the farm was I had a real good friend in Mandan that we went to school together and we were neighbors; that she'd come out and stay with us all summer, and then I got to go to stay with her for a few weeks at Mandan. Then another time I got a vacation. See I always planned as soon as I'm old enough I'm gonna go to Mandan and go to school, which I never did, I got married instead. And after harvest time my dad and mother said, "Well, now you can have a vacation." So he took grain to Mandan with the wagon cause it was higher there than at Flasher. So that day he said, "Now today you can drive along with the team to Mandan." I packed my little black suitcase then went along with a load of grain and stayed for eight days and that was one of my best times I had.

MM: You were how old then?

KT: I must have been about 14, 15.

MM: You went in with the horses.

KT: With the horses and we stopped down the elevator and he didn't want to drive with the team and horses through town, and I walked from the Mandan elevator up to where the Mandan High School is. That's where my step-aunt lived, and I was close to my step-aunt. I stayed there for a week and that was the time I crossed the Missouri Bridge; that was new at that time too. They took me over and showed me the bridge crossing.

MM: Did you have much contact with the Native American?

KT: Well, when I was a little girl I still lived in Mandan, we had those fairs and the school kids got off those days when the fair was. Then we walked down to the fairgrounds and I bought some candy. I don't know if I bought them uptown or down there at the fairgrounds; those candy were like dollars, in a tube. I went around to the tents and gave those little kids that were in the tents - gave them some candy and I didn't get home until it was getting close to dark. My mother was out looking for me. We lived way uptown, you know where Hardee's is now. The fairgrounds was quite a bit for me but I walked from that place. It got dark but I got a good scolding for staying out.

Yah, I knew a lot about the Indian. They would come – see, we lived on Main Street and they would come like from Fort Yates, Cannon Ball, just caravans of wagons with their belongs on, their tents and the kids. There was just a whole line and we'd sit out and watch them come in. So I wasn't scared of the Indians at all.

We had no grandma, but about three houses from us there was a old Negro women living. She dressed about like the Germans from Russia, long dresses and up to the neck and she couldn't remember how old she was. Her hair was just as short and curly as the perms are now and we called her Grandma Kopperud. She was the one that was invited for my mother's wedding dinner when she got married the second time. She took care of us, brought us food when we were all sick with the flu. We didn't know the difference that she was black or not. I mean, we knew she was a Negro but she was just one of the best friends.

MM: So you survived the flu, but many others didn't?

KT: A lot of them didn't, no. When my dad died the doctor said my brother and me were not going to make it because we had such high temperatures. So my mother bought a whole lot then for all four of us in the cemetery. Then she kept them until when one of my sisters died and was buried right next to my

dad then. Yah, that was a terrible flu; not just in Mandan - out in the country and all over. My stepfather's wife and my dad died seven days apart and then the priest, Father Clemmons, got them together. He knew my stepdad and he knew my mother and he had said, "You each need help." It worked out!

MM: Yah, everybody got along and they made the best of it and you have had a pretty good life. You've been alone now how many years?

KT: It's gonna be nine years on September 3rd that I am alone.

MM: And you are how old today now Kathryn?

KT: I am going to be 83 in August.

MM: You're living an active life here. I see you have a wonderful garden just like you had at Strasburg on the farm. You've got a beautiful garden, a beautiful yard and are very active. And I'm glad you kept up your heritage both in cooking and all kinds of things and you have a lot of wonderful memories of all those years. And we are going to close our conversation, but perhaps you'd like to leave a message with those of us who might listen to this conversation years in the future about this German-Russian heritage, and your folks having been born in the Ukraine and came over here, and so forth, and made a good life. Are there any messages you'd like to leave with us?

KT: Well, I am glad they did come over because if they wouldn't have, we'd have probably had to go through that Bolshevik war too. I am sure we'd have been in with it - wouldn't be here.

MM: You'd be probably somewhere in Russia or Siberia, but what we need to do is help you in perhaps finding relatives because there could be a possibility of that.

KT: Yah, I would really, really, really like that too because I have nobody. That's the way my mother was when she came here - she had nobody. My dad had cousins from both sides but she had nobody.

MM: It must have been a lonely feeling.

KT: It was. She said she a lot of times sat and cried. She cried a lot; I can remember my mother crying an awful lot, yah. All she had was us four children. Sure, she had four stepchildren but I am sure it's just like with me, when my brother and sister died I could feel it, you know, the hurt. I had two stepbrothers die and a stepsister. Sure, it's hard, but it's not the same.

MM: Not the same, not of the same bloodline.

KT: Huh uh, it's not the same. It's funny; and we grew up together. For seven years I lived with those [stepbrothers and stepsisters].

MM: Your mother had to start a new life, lost her husband so young, came over here and had to leave her brothers and sisters and parents and so forth. She could write quite a story.

KT: She had an awful rough life. Oh, yes, she could write a book. Even from home she lost her mother young, and with a bunch of kids. She was like a mother to those kids then for a whole year. Because she was ready to get married and her dad said, "Why don't you stay another year with me and help me out?" She did and then she lost her fiancé or whatever it was at that time. She found my dad, and she

met him at the church. She always said, "That's a good place to meet your husband is on the church steps."

MM: And she led a good Christian life and, of course, you have led a good Christian life. I think it was faith that kept a lot of these people going.

KT: I would say, yes, and I learned a lot from Strasburg people. I got to say this to you, Mike, I learned a lot from your mother, a lot of cooking. Your mother and I were close.

MM: Well, that's real good because I think the people down there are good, wholesome people are still close today; they would help each other out if they had to.

KT: Oh, I guess, but she learned me a lot how to paint. I never knew how to paint and, like I say, a lot in cooking different foods.

MM: What did you learn that was different than what you knew in cooking?

KT: Well, she learned me a lot making different noodles and her filling for the turkey or chicken, whatever she filled, that was different than what we made. I learned that from her. Her pig feet were different and, like I say, there was a lot. When we'd paint she'd ask me to help her and we'd paint together.

MM: By the way do you remember making your own soap?

KT: Oh yes, yes.

MM: How did you make your own soap?

KT: Well, they took and melted a gallon of fat, one quart of water – Well, first you would take one quart of water and a box of lye. Then you stirred that up and then you'd melt your lard and pour that in until it was thick like fudge. Then you'd pour it in a box and let it set overnight and cut it the next morning.

MM: Good soap?

KT: That was the soap we used to wash, yah that was good.

MM: Your clothes were nice and white.

KT: Yes, yah, because the lye that was in it. Oh, I made a lot of soap. That was after butchering, that was the thing to do - make our soap for the year. Yah and we saved every drip of bacon fat that we cut off.

MM: Lots of things you remember, of course you don't do all those things today. But the next generation is not doing a lot of those things because it's work.

KT: They don't believe it, I mean, that you lived that way.

MM: It's like a fantasy fiction story sometimes and, of course, it's a little more real to me because I visit with these people and I know it's real because the story is repeated by many people.

KT: And the same thing so you know it's true. There was a lot of times that I had to bake bread and I didn't know where to go to find the kindling for the [oven] to bake it. This was another thing we were ahead of Strasburg, we always had coal because the coal mines were so close to us, so we had coal all summer

long. We burned our kitchen stove in the summer kitchen that we baked our bread in and did the big cooking. When I came down there was no coal; I had to go out in the fields and pick cow chips.

MM: You remember that?

KT: Oh, yes!

MM: Tell me a little about that. I know we are changing the subject but that's interesting for me. This was in what year?

KT: That was in '27 or '28.

MM: So that was quite a surprise for you.

KT: Yes, because we had the coal at home and we had kerosene stoves to burn, which down there hardly anybody had a kerosene stove that time. Then, I think it was the second year, my folks bought a new kerosene stove - a three burner. But we had a kerosene stove already in Mandan in 1918 and that my mother took along out to the farm. So when they bought this new kerosene stove, my mother said I could have that old one. So John and I hauled that down with a Model T Ford; we could take it apart. And John said, "The only time you can burn that stove is on Sundays." Because Sundays when you work with wood that you find around the yard or cow chips you get dirty; and the kerosene was only about 10 cents a gallon and we had to save that. So I was happy just to have the kerosene stove on Sundays! If you tell the kids now they wouldn't believe it.

MM: You burned cow chips until what year? You started in '27, of course you were in Strasburg -

KT: Oh yes, yes, I think we still burned cow chips when we went into town; also picked corn cobs, you know, where the pigs ate off the cobs. We dried them.

MM: What about the winter months because you'd need a lot more fuel then.

KT: Well, then we had coal, yah. In the fall there were carloads of coal come into town and then we had coal. But just for the winter months; summers we never burned coal.

MM: And the house you lived in was built of wood?

KT: No, that was built out of sod.

MM: So you lived in a sod house?

KT: That was a sod house covered with wood. The windows were about this wide.

MM: So that was about two feet.

KT: About two feet wide those windows, yah.

MM: And who built that house you lived in?

KT: That was an old man by the name of Emil Kopp. There was a Emil Kopp that had a store in Strasburg. You probably don't remember this. He had that store when I got down to Strasburg. Then there was another Emil Kopp that built this house and it took him years to build this house. It just took him a whole year to

build the bricks because it was made out of straw and manure and such. Then he moved to Canada and sold that house and my father-in-law bought that house.

MM: Oh.

KT: That was the only two-story house beside the parish house that was a two-story in that area out there.

MM: And that house, what kind of floor did it have?

KT: It had a wood floor.

MM: Do you remember ever a floor that was not wood just ground?

KT: Oh, yes! There was a older house built onto that. That was built before that and that had these floors; that had a kind of clay they made up.

MM: So, how did they keep those clean?

KT: They just sprinkled them with water and then swept them; that was the only way. And those houses were built out of rocks. Now, my stepfather built his house that I lived in out of rocks, and they also had the windows this wide.

MM: Two feet wide.

KT: He built that before he got married the first time; he had that house built. And all the barns were built out of that. Sure, there's still some of those buildings out there on that farm.

MM: And at that time there was, of course, no electricity.

KT: No, no electricity. No, we moved to town without electricity or telephone. Ah, when I was single yet, there was a guy coming around and he was selling Delco lights. Have you ever heard of those? That they buried the tank under the ground and then you could get your own electricity and you could get a iron with that, a curling iron. Few farmers got that but my stepfather didn't.

MM: What about these different sales people that come around, they'd come around and try to sell things to you at the farm.

KT: Oh, yes! That was every fall the Watkins man came around with a big truck. He had all the spices and all the extracts. Then there was a peddler, we called him, he came around with the material. He had a big van full of material; tried to sell you material and we bought some. And I know my mother, when the Watkins man came around, she used the tub to put the stuff in. That's how much she bought: liniment, vanilla extracts, cinnamon, nutmeg. All those spices we bought from him because they were a little cheaper than the store.

MM: That lasted the whole winter.

KT: Yes, and you know with 10 in the family you needed it. She actually took a big washtub and set it out and that's where everything was put in as we bought it. Nectar to make Kool-Aid, he sold all that.

MM: Any other sales people come around?

- KT:** Yes, there was also a guy that came around - when I was home I liked music. Like I said, I wanted to take music lessons. One time I begged my stepfather, "Why don't you buy us a phonograph so we have some music in the house?" There was nothing at that time! Well, finally, I got him. He says, "Okay, I'm gonna order a Silvertone phonograph." I don't know if you remember the Silvertone; that was one of the best machines. Well, my parents had a Tom Edison. Do you know what a Tom Edison phonograph is? It had the discs.
- MM:** And you had to turn it.
- KT:** You had to turn it and it had a big speaker on it. And my folks had that at Flasher and Mandan; we took that along out. Well, with eight kids you know what happened to the records then. Pretty soon we had no more records. So from then on I always wanted a phonograph again. So he ordered that and it was a pretty good machine. Then they had a lot of records that you could order from Sears. Then one day a guy came around and he was selling Victrolas; had those all on a pickup. I could work my stepfather a little and I said, "Why don't we trade this one in and get that Victrola?" And he made a deal with him and we got the Victrola. Then after that my stepsister got that Victrola which I would have loved to have. It was beautiful piece of furniture. I don't know what happened to it.
- MM:** What kind of music did you like best during those years?
- KT:** Well, at that time we had dancing music cause we had a lot of entertainment - young kids that would announce, "This Sunday we're gonna have dance at our place." The parents would go in a different place and had their own parties and we had dances. We danced to the phonograph. I can remember when we had "Barney Googles", that was a good one and "Why Did I Kiss That Girl?"
- MM:** What orchestras did you have at that time? Do you remember some of the music? Who were some of the most popular entertainers then?
- KT:** Ah, we never did have any entertainers or any accordion players either around our area there. It was mostly phonographs that we danced to. What was that dance that came out that was where we picked up our feet and -
- MM:** Dancing was very big at time.
- KT:** Oh, yah!
- MM:** That was a big entertainment wasn't it, more than ever? Good exercise too.
- KT:** There was a lot of dancing, yes.
- MM:** And they were good dancers?
- KT:** Oh yah, yah, good dancers.
- MM:** Did you learn to dance just by going to dances or did you learn at home?
- KT:** Just by going to home parties. Home parties, that's where I learned.
- MM:** And they would teach each other?

- KT:** Yah and when I became about 14, 15, when my folks were invited to weddings, we got to go along. That's where we met a lot of the young people too then and we'd learn how to dance at those weddings. There was accordions then being played.
- MM:** And these were more than one-day weddings?
- KT:** Ah, a lot of them were a couple of days, yah.
- MM:** Lots of dancing.
- KT:** Yah, the next day the closest family got together and then they'd help cleanup and there was dancing again and food.
- MM:** Anything else you can think of Katie that you'd like to mention? We've talked about a lot about different things and, of course, music has always been important in everybody's life and bringing happiness either in church or the home or in a dance hall.
- KT:** And then on church feast days down in Fallon - that church was also called St. Peter & Paul. And there's a big church feast too and there always was a dance at night and we got to go to those dances, yah.
- MM:** And you were already a young teenager then, so you learned young how to dance and you danced through all those years, and probably you are still dancing.
- KT:** Not much.