

ROUGH DRAFT

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Magdalena Schlichenmayer
May 21, 1976
by Timothy J. Kloberdanz
at "The Settlement"--near Bethune, Colorado
Tape #1, Side A

TJK Today is May 21st, 1976. This is Timothy J. Kloberdanz and I am about to interview 90 year old Magdalena Schlichenmayer, wife of the late Gotlieb Schlichenmayer at her home three miles northeast of the Settlement near Bethune, Colorado.

You were born, then, in Nebraska--what was the name of the town that you were born in?

MS Talmach (Talmadge?)

TJK Talmach. And that was eastern Nebraska, then.

MS Yes.

TJK What was the year you were born?

MS In '86. 1886.

TJK In 1886. What month and day?

MS June the 1st.

TJK June the 1st, then.

MS See they're gonna celebrate my birthday two days sooner. (Laughter)

TJK Oh, I see... oh,

MS Because it's on a Sunday, you know. Now one of my sons lives in Nebraska...

TJK Um hum.

(In?) (Hay Springs?)
MS And uh, uh, Hastings, Nebraska.

TJK Oh yeah. Hay Springs (Hastings?).

MS And uh, they haven't moved there too long. They're gonna come home, they're gonna come up and I have a daughter living in Rocky Ford and she's gonna come home.

TJK Who did your daughter marry? In Rocky Ford?

MS Bauder.

TJK Oh, a Bauder. O.K. Now, there were Bauders in this area, right? There were Bauders, or isn't that the same bunch of Bauders, or not.

MS Well, uh, the Bauders that I knew of, they all lived in Burlington. That's left. My daughter's husband passed away. She's a widow. She lives in Rocky Ford. Vernon and his family, they live in Hay Springs, Nebraska. They're gonna come home (Laughter). For my birthday.

TJK Oh, that's wonderful. You'll have quite a gathering then, too, I guess.

MS. Yes, oh, uh, I had ten children.

TJK You did?

MS I lost three of my boys. One of them was a little baby--he'd be about (pause) oh, fifty-five years old, I think. My oldest son, he died about three years ago. He had cancer. One of my boys got killed in a car wreck. (Pause) That's about nine years ago.

When he got killed--Elmer. I have two boys here living with me.

TJK Um hum. Oh, they farm here then?

MS Yep. Yeah, they do the farming and they got cattle...

TJK Um hum. Ah, I see. Now, what were your folks' name? Your parents, what were their names?

MS Weisshaar

TJK Weittar? What was your father's first name?

MS Huh?

TJK What was your father's first name?

MS John.

TJK John. And your mother's name was...?

MS Christina.

TJK Christina. And what was her maiden name?

MS Wilhelm.

TJK Wilhelm. And they were from Russia then?

MS They were from Russia.

TJK Hum. Do you remember the town they were from in Russia?

MS No, I don't. That I don't know.

TJK Was it Russia, or Bessarabia? Do....

MS Well, it uh, uh, was Russia, I think. But I don't, I wouldn't know, I don't remember that anymore. My mother's been, my dad died when he was only 56 years old. That's been a long time. My mother died when she was 81. She died about 30 years ago now. It was 30 years in February, when she died. So, uh....

TJK Did they talk much about the old country, or uh. . .?

MS Oh, yes.

TJK Did they?

MS Yes. (laughter) Yeah, mom especially, she uh, she got really homesick for it, you know, like that.

TJK She did? Yeah.

MS Dad never talked too much, but uh...

TJK What did she miss in the Old Country? What did she miss? Was it the country, or the life, or...?

MS Well, I guess the life, I guess.

TJK Yeah. Yeah. Hum. Do you have any idea when they came to America? When did they emigrate? When did they leave Russia?

MS Well, uh, that I don't know for sure, but I, uh, I was born soon after they came.

TJK Oh, you were?

MS And that was in '86. So it must have been '85 when they...

TJK ...Came over from Russia, then.

MS Right.

TJK And did they land in Nebraska, then –

MS Yeah, they landed in Nebraska.

TJK Did you have relatives there?

MS Well, mom had a few of the distance relatives. That's how they came to there. Then they came to Idalia. In '87.

TJK Um hum. In '87. What did your parents do in Russia? What did your dad do, did he farm?

MS Um hum.

TJK Oh, he was a farmer, then.

MS Yeah. Yeah, well, really just worked for his father, I guess. But anyway, they was farmers. But in Russia, you know, they had to, they lived in a, they called it a dorf.

TJK Oh, a village, like.

MS Yep. Then they had to go out, rent pieces of land, you know. I know Grandma Schlichenmayer, she always thought it was so much better-we had hail here one time, and they had hail and we didn't. And it's only a mile apart, you know. She thought that was something terrible. In Russia that everybody, when one got hit, they all got hit.

TJK Oh, they did? (laughter)

TJK But they had hail in Russia, too, then?

MS Oh yes, yes, they had hail there too.

TJK Why did they leave? Did they ever talk about why they left Russia and came to America?

MS Mmm, mmm, that I don't know. Well, I do ... Grandma Schlichenmayer was what told me. They uh, there, it's because they didn't have no place. Couldn't get, they had to get out in the rains, you know, and they heard (and rake?) about come over here and all of them could take a claim of land, you know. That's the reason the Schlichenmeyers came and I image my folks did too.

TJK Oh, I see, hum. O.K. You say you left Nebraska and you came to Idalia, and what year was that now, when they left and went to Idalia?

MS In '87.

TJK In '87. Hum. Did they have relatives by Idalia?

MS No. No.

TJK How did they come, by train?

MS Well, they, I don't know. One of my cousins, or second cousins, Jim Hasbrook, his wife, she was here a week ago, it's better than a week ago and wanted to know if.....they had a gathering down here , a prayer meeting, or a, or something down here in this church, and then she brought that up and she came and asked those questions, and I answered what I could answer, and...

TJK Um hum. Oh, I see. Hum.

MS You know a lot of things, uh, I uh, I just can't think. My brother Bill lives in Burlington. He's younger than I am. He was born in 1902. He's quite a bit younger than I am. He remembers quite a few things. Better than I do.

TJK Really?

MS (Laughter) He talked, he's a talker, this guy. He likes to talk likes and/find things out, always did, you know. I guess he just asked mom a lot of questions.

TJK He did? He did, then. Hum.

MS (Laughter)

TJK Then he had that interest for a long time?

MS Yes. He had more interest in anything. Now, I heard a lot of things too, and a lot of things I forgot now. I just don't remember. Bill knows them. I don't. (Laughter)

TJK Yeah. The older people in the Settlement here, did they ever get together and talk about, you know the old days and the Old Country?

MS Yes. Yes sometimes.

TJK Did they? Did they?

MS Yes, sometimes they did. Now, the reason my folks came over here, my brother had a sister living over here. He took a homestead, that's just a hundred and sixty acres, then some, all of, a lot of people there but they was no relation, no relation of any kind, to them, you

know, and they took homesteads too, and some of them was a little my folks better off and they bought what they could you know. And my folks didn't have nothing but the 160 acres. They moved over here. That's about 3 miles, I think, 3 miles southeast of here. That's where my brother Karl lives now.

TJK Oh, I see. Now, when did your folks, and your family leave Idalia and come here, now? To this area?

MS In 1901.

TJK In 1901. So they didn't come with those others, the others who came in 1890--they came a little bit later too, then?

MS Yes.

TJK Oh, I see. Where did they first settle when they came here?

MS When they came here?

TJK Yeah, into the area right here? Did they...

MS Well, right down here where my brother, Karl, lives now.

TJK Oh, is that how far now?

MS Oh about, about three miles, I think.

TJK South?

MS Southeast.

TJK Southeast. And that's where they homesteaded then, huh?

MS Um hum. No, they bought that.

TJK Oh, they bought it? It was already homesteaded?

MS Yes, that was already homesteaded. They, and dad bought that.

TJK Hum. Who'd they buy that from?

MS He sold his homestead. See, he took homestead over by Idalia.

TJK Ohhh. He sold his.

MS He sold his homestead over there and bought this over here.

TJK Ah. Who did he buy the homestead from here.

MS Oh, they were people by the name of Lavear.

TJK Lavear, oh they weren't German then, were they?
(English?)

MS No, they wasn't German. They was Amish people and I never even knew their people, I didn't know the people. They had already moved away from the place when dad bought it and so I never got to see those people.

TJK Oh, I see. When do your memories begin about, like what is like about the first thing that you remember?

MS When what?

TJK What's the first thing that you remember? Even just as a small child? Is there anything that sticks out in your mind that you remember? (Pause) Like you remember Idalia, don't you?

MS Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, I remember I even don't but mama always told me when they moved to Idalia they built them a house, a sod house. They didn't even have no windows or doors in it for a while Wray was the closest town they could get something or

or St. Francis. I don't know now where they got their stuff, but I guess Wray was the biggest one. Then, their dad went and worked out, he had to work and work for other people, you know. And mom had to stay on the place and-and I don't know, one morning.

(Laughter)

TJK Oh, I see. (Laughter)

MS Run to the neighbors, you know. Mom had to go, she, I was asleep and she felt oh I'd sleep a long time, you know, and I woke up sooner than she thought. I got up and mom wasn't there so I run to the neighbors.

TJK And then that worried her, I bet.

MS Yes. It worried her. But, that's why I remember when mom, mom told me that a lot of times, and then that neighbor's woman told me that so many times. They was only a quarter of a mile from our place, from the folks' place.

TJK Did your folks like the prairie out here, did they ever talk about that? Compared to Russia? You know, like...

MS Oh yes.

TJK They liked it out here then?

MS Yeah, my folks liked it out here. Mom got kind of homesick, you know, being strangers and everything, you know. But, uh, she got so she liked it. Mom likes, mom didn't want to come over here much. She liked it better by Idalia than she did over here. Daddy wasn't satisfied (laughter).

TJK Yeah. What did you dad like about it in this area? What did he like...?

MS Well, he liked the church, see we're Lutherans. Over there was no Lutheran.

TJK Huh. There are Germans over by Idalia, though, aren't there?

MS No. Yeah, the most of them were at that time, not all of them though.

TJK Uh huh. But they weren't our kind of German though, were they? I mean they weren't from Russia, were they, those Germans?

MS No. They, most of them from Germany.

TJK Oh, from Germany. Then they talked a little bit different, didn't they?

MS Oh, yes. They talked Low Deutsch.

TJK Oh, I see.

MS They was a few came out from Russia. My folks associated more with them than...

TJK What families were those, do you remember, the ones who came out of Russia? Their names?

MS Brenners.

TJK Oh, Brenners. They came from Russia, then?

MS Um hum. Yeah, there's some Brenners over there yet, the young ones--and one Brenner lives here in Burlington. Ray

--Ray Brenner, he runs a garage.

TJK So your family homesteaded southeast, then? Your folks?

MS Nope, bought it.

TJK I'm sorry, yeah, they bought it. That's right, they bought that old homestead.

MS They bought that. Yeah, and there was only a farm house and a sod barn there when they came there. Only two rooms, two pretty big rooms and we were six, or seven, kids and the parents, you know, and they lived in two rooms. (Laughter)

TJK Oh, my. Hmm.

MS My folks had really a hard time. They went through a awful hard time. (Pause)

TJK What kind of crops did they raise? In the early years here when they first came. What...?

MS Wheat, and corn ... and cane. Cane was usually the most, afterwards they put it to milo and things like that, but at that time it was mostly cane, and millet, cane and millet and wheat and corn. Is what they usually raised, and then mama always made the big garden. They raised potatoes. We did too when I first came here. My husband homesteaded this place.

TJK Oh, this place now is...your husband's first name was what?

MS Gotlieb.

TJK Gotlieb Schlichenmayer.

MS He homesteaded this place here. I've been on this place 69 years.

TJK 69 years? What year were you married?

MS Huh?

TJK What year did you marry?

MS 1907.

TJK 1907. Did you marry in the church, the Lutheran Church, here?

The old rock church?

MS Yes.

TJK Oh, my. Where did that stand? Did that stand right where the

Lutheran Church is now? Right on the same spot?

MS I think it's out on the, no a little bit further south, I think.

TJK Oh, a little, oh between the parsonage and the church, where it is now--that's where the old rock church stood...How big was the rock church, was it a big....?

MS No, it wasn't too big. I don't remember just how you would call it, but uh, oh it was a pretty nice church. And then that's why they built that new church, it got too small.

TJK Oh, and they tore it down then, right?

MS Um hum.

TJK What did they do with the rocks?

MS Uh, don't know where they put them. Tore it down. So was the

first parsonage.

TJK Oh, that was torn down too?

MS Uh huh. Then they, and we didn't have no parsonage there, for a long time. The minister had to live in Burlington. Whatever minister we always had and then drove out. He had the church in Burlington, and we always had, one Sunday we had early church and the next Sunday they had early church. Then finally we got so, we, got built a parsonage again. But you know these ministers, quite a few of them, they don't like to live out in the country anymore.

TJK Um hum, yeah, yeah.

MS They want to live in town.

TJK Yeah.(Laughter) Did you take the horse and buggy to church in those times?

MS Um hum.

TJK Or did you walk, or uh...?

MS We, uh, horse and buggy.

TJK Horse and buggy, then.

MS Horse and buggy, or saddle horse.

TJK Or a saddle horse.

MS The kids had to walk a lot of times, when they went to chur...when they went to Sunday School and when they went to German school. See

they had German schools...

TJK Oh, they did?

MS That was just a German, German uh, church.

TJK Oh, German speaking then?

MS Um hum.

TJK How long did they speak German in the church?

MS Boy, I don't know. It was quite a while. I think when they built the new church, I think that was in '27.

TJK '27.

MS I think that's...

TJK Yeah, I think you're right. I went by there--that cornerstone-- I think you're right. '27.

MS Then they English, parts--and some German and some English. Then finally--all English.

TJK Oh, you have no German in the church now, then?

MS Huh uh, no, no, we haven't had no German...

TJK What about German singing?

MS No.

TJK None of that either?

MS No, not anything German anymore. Not a thing.

TJK Hum. Did the people around here still speak German though?

MS Oh yes.

TJK Oh do you? Hum.

MS Oh yeah, the most of them--we do. That's all we do talk.

TJK Yeah. Hum. But in church though it's English now?

MS Yeah. Church is English.

TJK Now, someone was telling me at one time...now they call this "The Settlement" today, but that wasn't always called that was it? What did they call this in here where all the people settled? Did they have a name for that?

MS No, I think that was the Settlement.

TJK Just the Settlement?

MS That was the Settlement. That was quite a few people--the most of these people, the elderly ones, the old ones are mostly all gone. They all moved around here, I don't know. See, Margaret Meyer's folks. She was--I don't think she was confirmed here. She was already confirmed when they came to America.

TJK Um hum. I think so too, she was about 19 when they came over--see, she was pretty old. Because--some of the early books, they say they called this Freedomsveld. Did you ever hear that before, Friedenfeld.

MS Yes. I heard it. Otherwise I don't know. Now, my folks, in Russia
(probably Gnadental)
what they always called this Nadenstald that's what they called that part where they lived there.

TJK Oh, that's where they lived then?

MS Um hum. Nadinstave. And that's about all I know.

TJK And then someone, well, Reverend Thorburg was telling me a few minutes ago, he said that there was a place called Landsmannchurch. Where was that now? The Landsmannchurch?

MS Well....

TJK How far would it be from where we are right now? Just roughly.

MS Well, uh, I think uh, about 7 miles, we go 7 miles east on 385 and where they have that church somewheres around there is pretty close to 385. But at that time though there was no 385 route that way but uh, and then I think, I don't know, would you know the Humpps?

TJK I know about them, yeah. Edward?

MS Uh, George.

TJ k George Humpps.

MS George... Clifford, Humpps. Where Clifford Humpps lives. They was just pretty close to where they had a church. That's where my folks went then too.

TJK Was that a German church?

MS Um hum.

TJK Oh, that was?

MS Oh yeah, that was a German church. Then they had, on my folks' place they had a Lutheran church for a little while. But when

all the other people came in, those German people--they didn't, they wasn't no Lutherans, and they didn't want to go to a Lutheran church.

TJK What religion were they then?

MS And now this church that they have up there now, I was confirmed over there in that church. That's uh, they call that St.Gows...

TJK Evangelical?

MS Yeah. Then the most of them all went there. There wasn't enough Germans so they could keep a minister. Then this Landsmannchurch, the one on my folks' place....

TJK The one southeast of here?

MS No, the one over by Idalia.

TJK Oh, oh that one, oh yeah.

MS Um hum, that was over by Idalia. Then they finally couldn't keep a minister anymore. This minister that had the Landsmannchurch came over and had this one, and the Landsmann, you know. Goes back and forth--horse and buggy. (Laughter)

JK Did it get that name because of the creek--did the creek go by there, the Landsmann Creek?

MS Yes.

TJK Oh. How did that Creek get its name, because that's a German name, isn't it? Landsmann?

MS Yes. Landsmann, that's a, I don't know uh, what all of that was,

but I never did get over there much, you know.

TJK Yeah, they tell me there's a cemetery still there, by the Landsmannchurch. Are some of the Germans still buried there then?

MS Oh yes.

TJK Oh, they are?

MS Yeah, there was quite a few. That was all German, that never was no American church.

TJK Okay, that was all German.

MS At that time. Never. Well, finally when Burlington, see when we, when my folks came to this place over here, Burlington wasn't hardly anything there. It's a great big town now. (Laughter) My folks came in 1901.

TJK Um hum. And then you and your folks then--early pioneers. (laughter) Do you remember all the sod house days?

MS Oh, yes. (Laughter)

TJK Now, some of the people around here still live in sod houses, don't they? A few that ... where they've remodeled. Going by on the road it looks like, you know, the big thick walls, well is this, is this sod right...

MS No, ours is not a sod house, but adobe.

TJK Oh, yours is adobe. I just noticed that now.

MS Yes. And this year, we built that house and uh, it rained all

summer that time and we uh, it's too wet. It was so wet you know. They'd always uh, mixed the mud, and then put it on top of each other, you know, with a fork, and then scrape it, oh they had to work real hard to make it, and then that's why we got such big walls.

TJK Oh, I see. How old is this house then? Would you say? Just

MS We built that in '15.

TJK In 19...Oh, you helped build it then?

MS Oh, yes. Yeah, I helped build this house. (Laughter)

TJK That's tremendous, that you helped build it. Hum.

MS Yeah, this old building, right north of here, that's what our first house was.

TJK The shed right here?

MS No, this house.

TJK Oh, the house.

MS It looks like a house. It's adobe too.

TJK That's adobe too.

MS Um hum. And never was framed. Still was, uh, my boys had that for blacksmith shop.

TJK Oh, I'll have to take a picture of that later then. Hum. But this is adobe house? It's so nice and cool in here now, does it usually stay cool in the summer?

MS Oh yes, it's uh, nice and cool and it's warm in the winter. More so

than a, a real frame house. Course uh, when they uh, fix em real good, you know, insulate them and everything you know, they are pretty good too. But some of them frame houses that they don't, now this frame house right over just about a quarter of a mile, that was my husband's brother's place. There's nobody living there. They died. Him and her both died. Now and the daughter, their girl, my brother Karl married her, and James--they had one boy, he lives in Burlington. James Schlichenmayer. That was a cold house. Never was insulated, you know, and just built up, but it's still standing there.

TJK Do many of the families here still live in adobe, in the sod houses then? Were there quite a few?

MS All of these people have adobe houses.

TJK Most of them do yet.

MS But they have framed them over, they look like frame houses, some of them.

TJK Yeah, you don't know less you're inside. Like I say I just noticed now with the thick walls.

MS Yeah, and ours got the biggest I think (Laughter).

TJK Oh, but that means that it's the warmest, then. Oh yes. How long did that take you and your husband to build the house just then? Did just you and your husband build it?

MS Oh, we had help.

TJK Did you? How long did it take to build the whole thing?

MS Oh, I don't know. We started in the spring and then we finally got it finished, and we did finish it little bit too soon. It was kinda wet yet you know and then it settled. There's a crack there, you know. You can see--on the wall there, it cracked, and we had to patch it up. The boys thought if we paint on the inside again they're gonna take some uh, and scrape it off, you know, and then paint even, you know, it stands this far out, you know, and it don't look very good. But we haven't planned on painting it yet. (Laughter)

TJK Um hum. Hum. Now, like your folks and everyone--how did they know how to build sod houses? Did they learn this in Russia? Did they build adobe homes, or ...

MS Oh yeah.

TJK Oh, they did?

MS Um hum.

TJK So this wasn't anything new to them, then, was it?

MS No, that wasn't anything to these people when they came here. That's, I guess that's why they have them.

TJK Oh, I see.

MS You know, and then my dad, my dad and another man from the Settlement here, he's uh, they built houses for other people.

TJK Oh, because the other one's didn't, like the English people, some of them I bet didn't know how then, huh?

MS No, they didn't know how. (Laughter) There was even some German people over by Idalia that my dad and this other man, they built houses for them. Just little houses. (Laughter)

TJK Yeah. And they showed them how, like the adobe? Now, they never built the sod, they used the adobe, then, right?

MS But our house over by Idalia, that was a sod house.

TJK That was sod.

MS Um hum. They'd uh, break it with a plow you know and they'd hove it, and then laid it on top. I don't know. Mom and dad built that one over there. Mom and dad alone.

TJK Um hum. Now, how was the adobe made, when you made this in the early days? Like you should, you would remember that. How was the adobe made? What went into the adobe?

MS Well, they put mu...uh, uh, dirt, you know. They plowed it up (pod?) and put it all in the pot and poured water on it, and took horses and made horses trod around, horses had to trot around, you know and then they put straw on top and put the horses on again and had them make the horses go round and round and round and round. (Laughter) And made it, mixed it up, and of course they had to scoop it then too then, you know. Kinda scoop it together again, till it was pretty good sized mud, and then they laid it, they made a foundation and then on top of the foundation they always, about that high...

TJK About what, eight inches, or ...

MS It was more than that.

TJK Oh, about 10 or 12 inches?

MS Um hum. That's the way there. And they hauled it with the wagon. Put it on with a fork, and oh, I'm a telling you, that was hard work. (Laughter)

TJK Oh, I bet. How did you get the blocks square?

MS They didn't put em square.

TJK Oh, they didn't?

MS No, they just kept a putting it on and on, as long as well, ours is, on the outside, supposed to be 30 by 30. Well, and then they took one wall first, and then the next day, well they made it around, and when it got high enough, then they put the windows, measured it off, what was to be a window and a door. And that's the way they laid it around. And then scrape it, you know. With a, I know dad used to always stood that way with a fork, you know.

TAPE #1, SIDE B

TJK ...adobe then?

MS Um hum. Because if it rained real hard, or rained quite a bit, it washed off. Then finally, we got so we could frame it. Then we didn't have to plaster it no more.

TJK Um hum. Huh. My. Now what about water. Did you have any problems

getting water here?

MS Oh, uh, just the windmills.

TJK Just the windmills.

MS We had to carry the water. Carry all the water and our, uphill too. Our well is down there and the house is on (laughter)

TJK Oh, that was all the water for the drinking then, and the cooking, and the...

MS And everything.

TJK Now did the men and women help both, or was that women's work?

MS (Laughter) I don't know, I carried a lot of water. Then when we planted trees, when we planted these trees out here I carried water to them.

TJK Oh, there were no trees here at all?

MS No, there was not a thing. Prairie, that was all.

TJK So then you brought the trees in. What kind of trees did you bring in?

MS Most of them are Dutch Elm trees. We had uh, oh I don't know, cotton-cotton trees, they brought them, we got them from the river down there, you know, and planted them. But they didn't last too long, it got too dry, they--uh, Elm trees, they take dry more. Some of them did die too, and we had some fruit trees too, but they most all died, but the wild plums, we still got them.

TJK Um hum. I noticed when I came in out by your gateway, you have

some of those yellow roses. Did you bring those in?

MS Oh yes. We planted those and we planted everything. I liked but that so well, I don't know what they call that, but it's to go around the fence, but George's got Peacocks, they fly over and they sit on there and they press it down. (Laughter)

TJK Oh you mean you have peacocks now? I saw the turkeys when I came in but I didn't...and chickens

MS Oh Yeah, no, they's got turkeys and geese/and peacocks. (Laughter)

TJK Hum. What do you do with the peacocks? Are those good eating, or

MS I don't know, they, some of them say they are, we never have tried you know. it.. He sells them.

TJK Oh, he does?

MS And uh, he has sold sometimes some feathers see, they have real nice feather, and when they lose them, we pick them up and then can sell them. But he has never advertised it or anything and he never got too much about that.

TJK In the early years when you came were there many wild animals out here?

MS Well, nothing but coyotes, I think.

TJK Just coyotes, you never had wolves out here, did you? Gotlieb?

MS Well, Gotlieb's said he seen wolves. I never did when I got over. Then there. was no more wolves around here. But he said when he was, when they came, he was 11 years old when they came from

Russia. He said then there was wolves, and badgers and skunks...

TJK And rattlesnakes? Many rattlesnakes?

MS Oh yes. Um hum. Rattlesnakes. Quite a few.

TJK Did you have them in the area, like where you were here when your husband and you were living here? Did you have rattlesnakes?

MS Oh yeah.

TJK Oh, you did?

MS Yeah, there's still rattlesnakes. Yeah, there was while, we had rattlesnake on our place last year. And a pretty big one too. Yeah, there's still rattlesnakes, and bull snakes and there's bull snakes on the place now.

TJK Um hum. Did any of the people in the early days get bit? By rattlesnakes, do you remember? Anyone?

MS Uh no, well they did some of them get bit, but we didn't know them. It was uh some down by the river and one over east here once, but I don't know. That's practically every year one of them got bit, by a rattlesnake.

TJK What about prairie fire, did you ever have fires here?

MS Yeah, they had fires too, but not too bad.

TJK Um hum. It never came into the Settlement, here, did it-- and burn any homes?

MS No, no. It never burnt any homes here. It got started sometimes pretty bad, but they got it, got it whipped before it

burned a place, you know. But not too bad--fires wasn't too bad. But down on the Landsmann they said they had fire sometimes, they had a fire once that went clear to Burlington?

MS Well, I think about twenty-five miles, something like that.

TJK And that burned all that prairie off then?

MS Um hum. They had lots of cattle. You know it made it bad that time. But otherwise, I don't remember.

TJK What about hail? Did you have bad hail here in the early years?

MS Oh my, yes. My, yes. We had bad years.

TJK When was the worst hail storm that you remember since you lived here so long? When was the first one that you remember?

MS Well, the one that I can remember is uh, I think was about, real that I can remember real well was about oh maybe about 15 years ago. We was completely hailed out about 3 years ago.

TJK Three years ago, too?

MS Um hum. And then we had some hail last year, not too bad--and Yeah, was kind of early, didn't hurt too much. Yeah, We had to shingle our that roof that one time.

TJK It was that bad, it knocked them off?

MS Knocked the shingles off.

TJK Did you ever lose calves, or...?

MS No, we never did. We never lost any. Now, last night, boy there was a really a sharp thundering. Oh, my yes.

TJK But you didn't get any hail though, did you?

MS No, no hail last night. But it was really sharp, and I kind of, I felt kind of scared about it, and it cracked so terrible hard, and I always wondered then, I said to the boys--if it hit something. Well, they didn't know, you know, and then uh, one of our neighbor's boys, he has a place down here by this other it church, right north of that church, he owns that and it uh, hit in his bales, feed bales--burned 160 bales, I guess.

TJK When was this?

MS Last night.

TJK Last night? Burned all those bales. Was anyone ever killed by lightning in the early years here?

MS Yeah, um hum. Yeah, there was a young man got killed about 3 or 4 miles, well I think just about maybe a mile south of the church--on top of a roof. They were shingling a house, they was building a house and they were shingling that house and there was 5 or 6 men on that, on top of that, hit that one man, young man, and...

TJK Yeah. What was his name, do you remember?

MS Wall

TJ Wall

MS [inaudible] Wall.

TJK They were German people, weren't they?

MS Yeah, they were German. Yeah, he got killed on the--that's all I remember.

TJK Um hum. Humm. Of all those things that you knew in those early years, like the hail and the prairie fires or the snakes -- what was the worst thing that was the hardest thing to cope with? The hardest thing to accept, do you think?

MS Well....

TJK You know, being that you were farmers, what was the worst that...?

MS Well, I think the hail.

TJK The hail was the worst?

MS I think so. We didn't have just too many such bad hails but we did have... real bad hails and then real bad blizzards. We had real bad blizzards, sometimes.

TJK Yeah, humm. In 1949 did you have a bad blizzard then, when ...people always talk about 1949. Did it, was it out in this area, in eastern Colorado?

MS You mean here?

TJK Um hum.

MS Well, yes, it could have been--I know we had a bad hail but I don't know when.

MS Oh, I mean a blizzard--a snow storm--in '49. Do you remember that, I think it was in January.

MS Oh yeah.

TJK That big one, when the drifts came.

MS Yeah, and uh, a bus full of kids from Bethune froze?

TJK That was in '49, wasn't it?

MS I think so. That was a bad one.

TJK How high were the drifts on this place at that time, do you remember? How high the drifts were?

MS Well, uh, they were really high. I couldn't tell just how high.

TJK Did they come up to the house, though?

MS No, they usually was between the house and the barn, you know. But it was so that we couldn't hardly see the barn. Oh, then we had bad ones. And then that one time when I felt was the worst we ever did have, that happened so fast, and my husband had gone to Bethune and my two oldest kids was down by the church for school, confirmation class, and I was here and we had a little baby. I was here with the baby all by myself and it was just terrible. My husband finally made it, he finally got home. But the kids didn't. They had to stay with the minister, you know. It was a single man and they didn't like that. (Laughter) They did and then the next morning they drove. They was just kids and the horse that they drove--we had bought that not too long ago. We bought that from south of, oh towards Bethune, you know. Freddy said he was afraid that he couldn't handle him. He wanted to go

south, especially they wouldn't want to go north, you know--the blizzard was from the north. His place, that horse's place was south, you know, and he said he didn't think he could handle him, so they didn't hitch him up and bring him. (Laughter) They had to stay. But that was a bad one.

TJK Yeah.

MS Oh, that was a bad one. My husband finally made it.

TJK Yeah. What were the '30's like here, were the '30's hard years?

The 1930's?

MS Oh, I say. Dust storms.

TJK They were bad here, then?

MS Oh, they were terrible bad. Terrible bad. Yeah, they was bad here.

TJK Did many of the people leave at that time?

MS Oh yeah.

TJK Did they? Where did the families go then?

MS Some of them went to California, and some of them went to Oregon, and some of them came back again.

TJK They did? (Laughter) After the '30's were over--or the storm?
(Laughter)

MS Yes. Yeah, some of them came back again.

TJK Well, how did you survive then? If the dust storms were so bad, you couldn't do much farming then, could you?

MS No.

TJK Then how did you survive?

MS Well, I don't know--awful poor. (Laughter)

TJK Like, what did you eat during those times?

MS Just whatever we could find, whatever we could get. Well, we had chicken and cattle, so we just lived on milk and butter, we had, we could, we milked it those days, you know. Was kind of poor too, we didn't have too much, but then we had to get along some way.

TJK Umm. You made it, you survived, didn't you?

MS Yeah, we made it--we stayed here.

TJK Then you always had enough to eat then, I mean you never starved?

MS No, no we never starved. We sometimes had poor eats. Didn't have what we'd like to have, you know. But we made it. But we always had enough.

TJK You always had enough.

MS We always had enough.

TJK You might have had help from somewhere else during that time then. (Laughter) Yeah.

MS Yeah. Yeah. Quite a few people left. Some of them came back. Now Adolphs--Adolphs, well they don't live anymore. Barbara was about my age, and she's been gone for a little while and Gotlieb died

sooner yet, her husband, and there were, there's no place there now, no more.

TJK No more.

MS Where they used to live. They moved to Burlington. They lived in Burlington towards last time, but they're both gone. Two boys, three boys--George lives in town. Little Gotlieb lives north of town. Herman lives west of town. Three boys and one girl. She lives in Burlington. Schick, her name is Schick. They went to again Oregon, but they came back/ And my brother, one of my brothers he went to Oregon. Well, when these Adolphs, the women were sisters, and my brother's wife, she thought, well, Gotlieb and Barbara--they're doing so good up in Oregon, they're going to go up to Oregon too, so they sold their stuff and went to Oregon. My brother never liked it very much. They would of come back--and Adolphs came back again, but my brother's--they were, they didn't have enough to come back. He died, they both died up there. They're both gone. That was my oldest brother, next to me. He got to be pretty old too. He got almost up to 80 but--he died then.

TJK The Schriders were telling me last night they were, uh, some families I think went down to Mosca, Colorado. Because they said, I think, Martha Adolph, she was married down there in the Lutheran Church in Mosca--did you ever hear about that--in Mosca, Colorado, down in southern Colorado? (Pause)

MS Well, I guess....

TJK In the '20's, this would have been in the '20's though. Not in the '30's, but in the '20's. I didn't know if you heard about when

people moved down there--and these were people from the Settlement here.

MS Yeah, I guess uh, there's people went uh, some of the people before we came over here, they went to Dakota.

TJK Oh, to Dakota.

MS And some of them, one family that lives straight south of here about two miles--Strobel was their name--she went to Dakota. But they're all gone. But some of the young ones, now there's Emil. and Albert Strobel--they live here in the Settlement. They was just, they called that one that left to Oregon Uncle. That was their Uncle, you know. Yeah, some of them went to North Dakota—oh, quite a few, quite a few--went to Dakota.

TJK Um hum. I was going to ask too, in World War I was there much difficulty here in speaking German, because I know in other areas of Colorado people were not allowed to speak German--did you ever have any trouble here? During World War I? Oh, you did?

MS Um hum. Yeah. (Laughter) One of my boys that works in the red front store in Burlington (Laughter) he was kind of little yet you know, and when he went to school (Laughter)--then they wasn't supposed to talk German in school, you know. One time well he come home and he said, "Boy," he says, "I don't care what they say--I'm German and I'm gonna talk German." (Laughter)

TJK Oh yeah. Well, that must have been hard on him because he spoke German at home, right?

MS Yeah. He talked German, and he couldn't talk English too well yet,

you know. He thought he was German and he could talk German.

(Laughter) He had to talk English.

TJK At that time they really said you had to then?

MS Um hum. Yeah, they had to.

TJK Hum. Did the church stop speaking German at that time, or not?

MS No, they didn't stop the church.

TJK Oh, they didn't?

MS But uh, still always kept talking, and talking about it, you know.

Finally, they didn't say too much about the church, but finally I guess they--ministers and all of them, they thought English. And they was quite a few people came here and they were English and some boys married English girls and some girls married English boys and of course when they had children there was no English But church--no place around, well they was in Burlington. But then they was too poor to go clear to Burlington to go to church and put their kids in Sunday School. Then this had to be--oh, some of these elderly ones, they got mad--when they started English. talk They couldn't talk English, you know. (Laughter) And they didn't like it, you know.

TJK Oh yeah.

MS But I was uh, they didn't have no, much German school anymore--and my kids, my husband, he was never much for anything like that, and he couldn't read or write English--see he was 11 years old when they came out here from Russia, and they never had no school hardly.

Just what little, you know. Then he could never help me very much. When they started the English Sunday School, then I was for that. I said, Boy I just can't teach my kids--I can't do it all the time. They couldn't read it, I had to read it for them, and then read it to them until they knew it, you know. I said, I can't do that. They went to English school and then they could read that, you know. And then we got--just as soon as they started English Sunday School and then I went and got the books that we needed and then we went to English. Some of the them went to the German--they had German and English, you know.

TJK Oh, German and English?

MS I never did sent mine to German anymore, because that was too hard on me--I couldn't. I had all those little ones and then those bigger ones. They couldn't read German and then I always had to read it to them, just learned it to them, you know. I But couldn't do that no more. But some of them people, now, my husband's mother, Grandma Schlichenmayer, she was really mad about it, but I told her, I says, why didn't you learn Gotlieb to read so he could read so (Laughter).

TJK Yeah, yeah. What about World War II. Was there any trouble then? I mean, uh....

MS No, there--World War II wasn't too bad. Wasn't just too bad. And still-----there was, uh well, some of my boys had to go.

TJK Oh, they did?

MS Um hum. This one that got killed in the car wreck, he was over in Germany. He was in Canada first, and then they put him through--

and then over to Germany. He was over in Germany and in the worst place, too. He....

TJK Was he on the front, then? I mean was he ...

MS Um hum.

TJK Oh, Fighting in the front lines?

MS Yeah, he was on the front. But he never, he never got hurt that way, but he said so many did, and they got hurt so bad and then they always, they laid there you know, and they wanted him to shoot them. He said he just couldn't do that. When he first came home from that time, why sometimes in the night, you know, when he had those dreams...

TJK Nightmares?

MS Boy, he would scream--bloody murder sometimes, you know. It would then scare us so--when we'd go back and see him, well then he woke up, you know. Well, he would say, Well, he says, there was a man again wanted me to shoot him--and I can't, he says. (Laughter)

TJK Oh, my. Humm. Humm. (Pause) Now, uh, in this other one here, there are uh, let's see--there are two churches. There's a Lutheran and this one is, the north church is

MS They first called it the Congregational Church, and now it's Hope (pause) Hope Congregational, I think, or something like that--it's changed now too, a little.

TJK Oh, yeah, have there always been two churches, now?

MS Hum um. See It's people are uh, elderly people all belong to the Lutheran church.

TJK Oh, they do?

MS But, uh, they, I don't know, somehow they didn't like the minister and then they got to quarreling and they separated and they finally built the church down here.

TJK Oh, there was a split then?

MS Um hum. Yeah. Yep.

TJK When did that occur--do you remember--what year it was when the church split like that?

MS Been a long time ago.

TJK A long time ago?

MS A long time ago.

TJK You were here when that happened, though, weren't you?

MS Yeah. Oh, yeah.

TJK Were there some hard feelings too, then?

MS Oh, yes.

TJK Oh, that's too bad.

MS Yes. I know they was. And then after they had this church built then some of ours, some of the elderly ones, you know, when they didn't like that minister too well, they moved down here and then they stayed here a little while and then come back again and they

was running back and forth. That wasn't very good either. (Laughter)

members? But now this church down here is gaining (anothah?)
members?
(neighbors).

TJK Oh, it is?

MS Um hum. We don't gain too many here lately. Well, we have quite a few they
come from Burlington. They all moved to Burlington but they still come to
this church. So we have a pretty nice church. Thorburg is our new minister.

TJK Um hum. Yeah, I met him, you know, this afternoon. Humm.

Now, okay then, on Sunday, from next Sunday, that will be the
day when you celebrate your 90th birthday, then. (Laughter)
like I say Oh, my. That will be like I say, quite a gathering. I

MS Yeah, I it will. When I uh, my daughter-in-law, Pete's wife, they live by
Burlington, north of Burlington. Now Pete is the auctioneer. His name is
Emil, but Pete is a nickname. (Laughter) And everybody calls him Pete,
you know. That's Pete and nobody, nothing else, you know. I don't know.
His cousin started that and they finally got so and he liked Pete better
than he did Emil and (laughter) and she works at the highway (pause)
what, oh they have office there you know and she works there and he's
the auctioneer. And she's the one I guess that brought it up. She told me
then, and I said oh, why do you have to make such a commotion? But
afterwards I felt when my daughter from Rocky Ford comes and my kids
from Nebraska (laughter) then I'll be kind of glad. (Laughter)

TJK See-that is going to be nice. You wait and see. (Laughter) What
would you say uh, okay you're going to be 90 years old.

Everybody always asks someone who reaches 90, you know, what's the secret? (Laughter) How does a person, you know, get to be 90 years old? What's the secret? (Laughter) Or isn't there any secret?

MS There isn't any, I don't think.

TJK There isn't any. Humm. There's no secret to a long life, then?

MS No, I don't think so. You know, well let's see, I have a sister-in-law (pause) she married my husband's brother, she's in the home there too, in the rest home, with Margaret Meyer, and the Grunermayer, she's two years younger than I am. But she hasn't been good for a long, long time. She was always ailing and she had arthritis so bad, she still has that, and then she can't see very good, and, and nothing. I don't know, I always say I don't and I had ten children. She only had three.

TJK See, and you worked hard all your life, haven't you?

MS And I worked hard all my life. Even at home, when I was a kid, boy I worked out in the field. I could harness four horses and put them on the disk and work out in the field. We had to herd cattle, and...

TJK Even today, now, you're still awfully active, aren't you? I mean you're...

MS I still do my housework.

TJK You do? You do all the cooking, yet?

MS Oh, yes. I cook, I bake bread and everything. (pause)

you know

TJK Hum. Well, that's probably the secret, then you know. That you work hard and you stay active.

MS Yeah, I do, I don't do anything outside anymore. The boys won't let me, nothing outside. Now, they won't even let me gather the eggs. Cause they say if it's a bad day they don't want me to go outside, you know. Loren says you just stay in the house. He just makes that a habit and he's gonna gather the eggs. If I would go and gather them sometimes we would forget, you know. So I don't do nothing outside, you know, but the last couple of years, it's only been about 4 years, you know, that I raised chickens. I had a bunch of chickens, always got me about two hundred and raised them and butchered the roosters and but now I don't, and I milk, but we don't milk now at all anymore. The boys don't....

TJK Yeah, what about the turkeys. Do you use those for uh, baking and...

MS Oh, yeah.

TJK Oh, do you?

MS Um hum. Yeah. We butcher them. If there's any left, now none of us care too much for turkey meat--but we did, when uh, and I always fix a big dinner for my kids when they come home on a Sunday. Every Sunday they come home.

TJK They do? Why , that's nice.

MS Buddy and Frieda, uh Frieda works at the Hoof and Horn. She lives in town. She was married to a Schaal but he died, well they were

divorced already before he died, but he died. Rudy, Rudolph is his name and they called him Rudy in town, and Buddy was his name at home. (Laughter)

TJK My. So then you make these big dinners yet, and uh...

MS I make big dinners yet.

TJK Do you get out quite often, do you go to church yet?

MS Yes, I go to church in the morning and I fix that dinner and have it all ready when they come back from church, why I have dinner.

TJK Hmmm. Well, that's great. All of your children must be awfully proud of you then. They really should.

MS (Laughter) I guess that's why they--and Pete usually come out practically every Sunday afternoon and they're here for supper. But they always help. They help put it on, and now my two boys, they wash the dishes. Every time. Every meal--clear the table and wash the dishes and George sets the table. That helps me a lot, so, I used to always have to do that by myself and that was kinda hard.

TJK Sure. (Laughter) Well, then see, you've not...

MS To do all of that. (Laughter)

TJK ...only had a good life, but you've had a good family, too. You really do.

MS And uh, I go to, I don't go very much--go to church Sunday, and go to town, Tuesday is our town day. That's sale day, and the boys like to go to that sale, and they take cattle there and sell

them and they buy cattle sometimes, and whatever they have there, you know, and so that's our sale, uh town day. I do my trading. I do [inaudible] my trading yet--by myself.

TJK Do you? (Laughter) Hmm. How many cattle are the boys running now?

MS I guess they got about 30 head now.

TJK 30 head now.

MS I think with calves and all.

TJK And how much land now, does the farm include?

MS Well, we've got 360 acres.

TJK Um hum. Is any of that irrigated?

MS No, we don't irrigate.

TJK You don't irrigate? No sprinklers?

MS No, no.

TJK And no sugar beets? (Laughter)

MS No, my boys don't like anything like that. (pause) They don't even like our neighbor down here, you know, and that pasture, this is our pasture and that was a pasture, and was a nice pasture, you know. The boys they're afraid that's going to be a blow-out. And it's gonna hurt our pasture. They don't like that. And that's the way it is. People do what they want to do. (Laughter)

END OF INTERVIEW