

Agnes (Volkenant) Kohnen

Narrator

Rebecca A. Mavencamp

Greenfield Historical Society

Interviewer

July 22, 2013

At the home of Agnes Kohnen

Albertville, Minnesota

This project is for the Greenfield Historical Society courtesy of a grant from the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Program, made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through a vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. The tape and its transcript will be put into an archive for use by researchers and future generations. Thank you for participating in this project.

Note from RM: Please refer to the file, "Agnes Kohnen final transcription with family additions" for additional information added courtesy of Janet Jones, Mrs. Kohnen's daughter

RM: So we are here today--

AK: We're talking Greenfield!

RM: Yep! I'm Rebecca Mavencamp and I'm sitting with Miss Agnes. It's July 22, 2013. Could spell your name for me, please?

AK: My last name is Kohnen. K-O-H-N-E-N. Very simple. It's a German name.

RM: German!

AK: I'm married [laughs].

RM: And what was your maiden name?

AK: Volkenant. That's a long one.

RM: Can you spell that one too?

AK: V-O-L-K-E-N-A-N-T. Vok-en-ant. Just the way it sounds. [Laughter]

RM: And where were you from? Where were you born?

AK: I was born out west in St. Leo, Minnesota and in 1940 I was in the 7th grade and we moved out to Lyndale. Lyndale is beyond Maple Plain. It's the next thing. And my Dad bought a place there and [unclear] they came and hunted on our farm, we had 260 acres there he talked them into buying a place up here, more for your acreage and stuff, and it was all a bunch of baloney [laughs]. My Mom didn't like it where we were, so she never unpacked, she just stayed. She said, "I'm not staying here, I don't like this place, I'm not staying here," so we had to look for a different place. So we got looking and found one in Maple Plain, right by that Lake Independence? One right down there. So we were on the lake a lot down there as kids. So as we grow up, that's where we were. I worked for Sandean in a hotel down there, it met our land, next to us, it was his land.

RM: What was the last name?

AK: It was like...Sandean. He had a hotel and a big room where you see all the people had cottages, so people come up and ate. I worked inside...one time a young guy that worked there, he was mad at me and locked me in the freezer, the walk-in cooler. I was there a half an hour before anyone came and looked for me [laughs].

RM: You must have been very cold

AK: Well, I made him mad. He didn't like me [laughs]

RM: How old were you then?

AK: I was about eighteen...sixteen maybe! Sixteen. Because I could work there waiting on tables and put stuff away in the cooler. That was on Lake Independence. When I got married, my Dad said, "I can't farm without you, my Agnes," he said, "I'll have to quit." See there was nobody else at home anymore and I was glad because he was getting old and we were doing all the work and he was sitting out on the couch telling us how [laughs].

RM: How many kids were there?

AK: There were nine of us but there were some older than me and three younger, so there were only three left out of our family, the others were all gone

RM: What were their names?

AK: The youngest is Marge, and she's here yet, and then it's Donny, he died, and Blanche died, and Bertha died, and I'm next, I'm Agnes, but they jumped over me and

took my sister Tina, and then Dorothy, so then Willy is left yet. Willy is the oldest. He's ninety some years old in Buffalo.

RM: How old are you again?

AK: I'm 87, this year

AK: Lovely dear, don't ever get there you won't like it [both laugh]

RM: So what year did you get married?

AK: I got married in 1946 and we had six children

RM: What are their names?

AK: Gary, Cathy, Mark, Steven, Janet, Payton. They're all married

RM: Where were you living at that point? After you were married?

AK: We lived in Greenfield. I had, well I had three in Greenfield and three at the [unclear] there where we lived. We bought the farm in Greenfield, right down from City Hall. It was a big square house, we saw it there and I said...my husband...was very hilly and up and down like that, and he said, "gonna sell it as soon as I get it paid for." As soon as he was paid for, he went to an auction, he bought this place by Burschville and it was all level land. You could see 120 acres straight back.

RM: That's what you owned?

AK: mmm hmmm.

RM: What was the address of that?

AK: There we were there till ...well ...1999...no 1995 I think

RM: Where exactly was that farm?

AK: That farm was half a mile from Burschville going toward Rockford on number 10 or Woodland Trail, whatever you want to call it. I always called it County Road 10 because it was marked that way

RM: You farmed? You had dairy cows? You farmed?

AK: Yes, we farmed, and then we farmed our neighbors land because he had a...there was a widow there, she kind of depended on us for everything else. And then we had three other farms

RM: Three?

AK: My sons lived on them. My one son lived right next to us, he was Mark. The one over father off, 30...30 and 19, that was Steven. He died. Steven died in 19...no, 2008

RM: I'm sorry to hear that

AK: Heart attack. He was an excavator. Nice looking guy. So then I don't know, we were all down there by Greenfield and one day I didn't say anything to him. I was washing clothes, and I thought, "I'm going to go up and register and run for council." And I didn't even tell him until at night after I'd done it and then I told him. And I won! I had over 300 votes. The first time and I was reelected the second time and the third time, so I was there nine years [laughs].

RM: So now you said you met your husband at Lake Sarah?

AK: yes

RM: Can you tell me about that?

AK: I had been out at Marshall Minnesota. My sister lived out there next to me, she's two and half years older than I am and she was having baby. She said, "Why don't you come out and stay with me for a month?" mmmm...Dad, can I go? Yes. He said, "you can go." So I went and then I came back, was on a Saturday, and I think it was a wedding dance there, at Lake Sarah, but I didn't go, but Sunday, there was always a Sunday night dance, and my girlfriend came over and she said, "let's go to Lake Sarah!" I said, "ok, I'll go" and we went. She was dancing with somebody right away, she knew someone who came in, and I said, "what about the music?" I was looking at the guys on the stage, you know looking, not thinking of anything, and here he came and tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to dance. And that was it! I went with him that night for awhile, had a hamburger and a glass of beer--I wasn't even old enough! But you had to have it. We had a pitcher that was right close to us, a little shack. The Transformer Inn, it was right there on the corner [laughs]. So City Hall was here and that was over there. After that he asked me to go out, and we kept going out.

RM: What kinds of things did you do?

AK: Go dancing. We both loved to dance. He...we'd rather eat...go to dance than eat! Hardly ever went out to eat. We always went dancing [laughs]

RM: What kind of dancing?

AK: Mmm, ballroom dancing...polka hop, polka [laughs]

RM: Where did you learn to dance?

AK: By ourselves, just by friends doing it with us we'd go do it real well. You get warm right away when I jump around, just too exhausted, but I would dance a couple dances with him. When there was a whole gang there, you know [laughs]

RM: Who was “the gang”?

AK: Oh! It was Bechtold’s from Hanover, and Ted Rogers from uh...she was from [unclear] Lake Sarah but he’s from Buffalo or Monticello, one of them, and Tyler and Greg were... so we’d have five, six couples that went and we’d always exchange dances, so it’d be fun

RM: What was the band that night?

AK: Oh, old time bands...Whoopee John, the Fishermen...we’d go to all of em. There’s just so many old bands. Kinda forgot about them all right now

RM: Do you remember any more of the names?

AK: Dahlene? Dahlene was that young kid that plays the Tuba. He had a good band. Six Fat Dutchmen? Willie John, Willie Werfroad...all them were all good--all good. Old time bands. They had to be old time. After Lake Sarah closed, we used to go to Waconia

AK: [unclear] Now they’re no more either. And if that wasn’t good, we’d go to Glencoe, then we’d go way out. We had a polka fest out in oh, where was that? Oh, well, a good ways anyway, we had to drive from beyond Brownton, beyond that [laughs]

RM: Now this was the Lake Sarah dance hall that you’re talking about?

AK: It was the Pavilion that had board windows. You lifted them up, tilted them up for air. Yes...that was a Pavilion. And from our place, at home, before I moved out, if we didn’t go, we could hear it if we sat outside, we could hear the band. Cross fields kind of a ways

RM: How did you get there?

AK: Car.

RM: what kind of car did you drive?

AK: He had a ‘42 Chev at that time. But then we got one more like...I got a ‘99 Cadillac out in the garage, I got that when he died. We had an old Cadillac and I had a Blazer, so I said to the kids, “I’m going to trade them both in and buy myself a nice car.” And I did. And it’s nice [chuckles]

RM: When did you learn to drive?

AK: I was fourteen years old, I think, when I drove the truck or tractor or something. I had to learn. My Dad bought a tractor and we’d learn how to drive it right away. The guy had to show me. Not him. On the farm we had tractors too. We had a Magnum. It was a big one, front wheel assist. Then the last years we worked there we had a little one, it didn’t have a cab on it and that was kind of mine always. And my son died, he said, “you’ve got all these farms and all this money, God dammit, why don’t you but a

different tractor for her?!” he said that to my husband. And so he went out and he bought me a new one. I’d put a sweatshirt on, and a jacket when I’d go out, and when I came home I’d have sleeveless shirt on because it was air-conditioned and had a radio in it, a tape set...I would take the tapes along. One time we bought a tape overnight at a wedding, there was a good band playing, and he bought a tape from the band. He had it in his tractor, so when he was plowing and I was disking, he said, “Stop! Stop! Come here! Come here!” I didn’t know what I was doing wrong, or if I was doing it right, but I walked over by him and he said, “Ride around with me, I’ll show you, we’ll listen to this tape.” I said, “You know what the neighbor sees us, married about 50 years, and they’ll think we’re crazy!” [laughs]

RM: I think it’s wonderful

AK: We always had a good time...always had a good time with him

RM: What was it about him the night you met him at Lake Sarah? What did you like about him?

AK: He was very down to earth, very tall in person, dressed up nice, looked nice, dressed up, always came with a jacket, different jacket, white shirt...he was dressed nice.

RM: How did he introduce himself at the dance hall?

AK: He just told me who he was and asked if I wanted to go out for lunch or not and at intermission, I said, “Sure, I’ll go.” I went. I was just kind of was in shock. I had just been gone a whole month down at my sisters and I was kind of thinking...not the whole boyfriend...I was sitting by the band there listening to their music and looking around and he surprised the hell out of me! [laughs]

RM: What did your friends think of him?

AK: They all liked him, my dad always liked him.

RM: Good. So can you describe the dance hall to me?

AK: It was open, like a pavilion. A pavilion has no windows, it’s got wooden, how should I say it? Lift up windows. They put them up and hook them and the air comes through, all the sides and everything. It was getting old already and Sid and Ben Mitchell and Laura run it, they’re the owners of it.

Talk about Lake Sarah...we...I was on the Council. They were going to close the access on the north...on the south side of Lake Sarah and it was the only one to that lake, so I said to the Council, “Give me a week, I want to talk this over with some of my friends.” So I went to Loren Kohnen, he’s a building inspector, works for Greenfield too. So I said to Loren, “Are we going to let that close or should we go farther?” He said, “How can we go farther?” I said, “I’ll go and talk to the sportsmen in Delano, I know they go fishing there.” Some of them I’d met and knew who they were and they did tell me they go

fishing at Lake Sarah. So. Here I go to their meeting and all the guys are sitting there and know what's going on, so I wait till after the meeting was over and one guy said, "There's somebody here wants to talk to us." Me! [chuckles] So I get up, talk with the guys, and I said, "The City is planning to close that access on the south side of Lake Sarah, and I'm thinking we should keep it open." There should be one way to get into the lake, otherwise it was private, and the people around there owned the lake, kind of. And so I said, "You guys go fishing there, don't you?" Oh yes, all of them raised their hand, they do. So I said, "Would you be interested in helping us open it up and do something towards it?" Yes, they said they would.

So I go back to Loren and said, "Yes, they want to go." Then I said, "Now, I have to call the DNR and see if they'll put a plank down so they can back the boats down." I called the DNR and they agreed to come out and help us. So my son Steve had a Caterpillar and Mark had a big truck, so they went down there and they cleaned the brush all out of there and it was all trees and branches, so they cleaned it all off, cleaned it out, and then they brought red rock in. Well, then the sportsmen came and they put the driveway down. They cemented it, so it looked pretty nice. It's the access down there and they wanted to name it after Marty's Dad, who was Hubert Kohnen. So that's what I asked. "If we do the work and get everything lined up and get this all done, can we name it after Marlin's Dad?" They said they could. So we did. And it's still going strong.

RM: What year was that built?

AK: Jeez, I can't even tell you. I don't remember that, but it must have been one of the last years I was on Council. Must have been in '90 and '91? '92? In there maybe? We were real happy. But I'm not the only one that served on Council in Greenfield. Marlin's Dad worked on it. Hubert worked in the council when he was living there. And Marlin's brother, Earl, was in there. He was a councilman. Marlin was in for a couple of years, until he got voted out [chuckles] somebody else wanted his job, that's what.

RM: Did they go dancing with you around the lake as well?

AK: No...no...Everybody's more independent around there, have a..."do your own thing." And I thought that it's still open and the sign is getting kind of old. So it's over 10 years and I talked to Loren at the Kohnen reunion we just had and he said he's going to get a new sign and put it up. Don't want that first sign there.

RM: How did the use of the lake change over the course of your life?

AK: They don't like it on the lake, I don't think at first because it's quite a few using it. There's only just so much parking room down there, it's kind of down a hill and then a turn, and the ramp was over here [indicates], they backed in there and they could drive ahead with the boat, their pick up, whatever...their trailer, you know. I think it only could get four or five of them in there, and the rest had to park here, on top [indicates]. That land was from somebody, I don't know who it was, and they'd park up there too. But it's kind of limited space down there

RM: How did all the people who were going to the resorts fit in there if space was so limited?

AK: They didn't mind it too bad, but I suppose it was different for them to live there when the boats were on the lake. I have a cabin on Bay Lake and that's a fun lake! They're playing out there all the time. There's sailboats and jet skis and all that out there all the time

RM: I heard they had a lot of boats at the resorts?

AK: yes

RM: Can you tell me about the boats that the resorts would have had along Lake Sarah?

AK: oh, you mean down on Lake Sarah? Ok. That was Sandean and Dad for awhile and then somebody else bought it. But they had cottages. They weren't lined or anything, just, well, a wooden shed with a bed and a lamp and place to wash your hands in. So it wasn't very much to them, but they did come there and stay. I don't know if they went on the lake, they must have gone on the lake, or they just stayed there by the lake.

RM: Which resorts do you remember? The names of them?

AK: That's Sandean's. I would say that was Sandean. Somebody else bought it after. When I worked there it was Sandean.

RM: Do you remember Shady Beach resort?

AK: Shady Beach is another one, yes, that's kind of privately owned too, I think. We used to go over there too. They had bands there, if there was a wedding or something they had down there, they had a bigger room too, for that. But I don't know who owned that. I know different ones around there, they either had a trailer or a cabin. And Joyce Cook had a cabin or a trailer or something down in there because we were invited there once and she had it close to the lake shore. That was kind of where the channel comes through I think, there's kind of a shallower area of water.

RM: Is that what they call "the narrows"?

AK: yes, kind of. There must be, yes, that must be what you're talking about. The narrows, then. The water is not as deep as it is otherwise. They'd fish always up there too. I haven't really been back to check Lake Sarah and I am always thinking about going back, just to watch and see what's going on there. But I haven't had the time! Been busy [laughs]

RM: Did you used to go fishing?

AK: No, I don't fish that much. I never learned how and my husband didn't know either, so we were not fishermen [laughs]. But my girls are when they come up to the lake cabin.

One day the boat was gone and we couldn't find Janet, and here she's out in the lake fishing. She came home and she had two great big fish! [laughs] She can drive the boat that they have.

RM: So you said you got married in the '40s?

AK: '46

RM: Did you continue to go dancing after you were married?

AK: Until we had kids.

RM: And then you had to stay home?

AK: yes! Unless we found a babysitter.

RM: Did many people do that?

AK: yes, lot of them did, lot of them did.

AK: You know Beverly Rose?

RM: I don't.

AK: She was married to a Marshal, I think. She was our babysitter. We hired her, I think for the last ones. When we went to go someplace, she'd come. She's a very good girl, nice girl. Her mother and Dad live by lake...whatever it was, Showers and Hafften Lake. The little lakes in lower back by the hill, there's a lake down low.

RM: How did the War affect the resorts?

AK: I don't think that did. The Dad used to go and then they [the family] went, I suppose, the sons were gone. I don't think it affected it...too much anyway.

RM: So a lot of people came out from the cities to visit this area?

AK: Oh yes, they do, mmm hmmm.

RM: Can you tell me more about that?

AK: Well, I know the family, Marlin's aunts and uncles, lived in the city. They would come out, but they would just come out to the farm. She raked my garden when I had a garden. Strawberries. She liked to do that [laughs]. I never had time to can too much because I always helped him [Marlin] outside and we'd eat most of our meals from the oven. Prepare them in the oven and so we had [food] to eat until the weekend. Everything is going good for my life. I like it here where I am. Moved up here in '95 and he died in 99. And I lived down in the woods over here and we had a big, beautiful house, and after he was gone, I thought, "geez, I can't mow this lawn by myself!" Bag it and take it and haul it away...it's kind of too much. So I came to the store here [Albertville] and I saw

this was for sale, and I liked the lower part of the townhouses, I'm not in the high part. I don't have enough stairs. So I came in and I said, "gee, I like this!" Good enough for me. I said I don't need anything now any more. I don't have anything to have it nice for [laughs].

RM: You have a beautiful home.

AK: So we came back and I told the kids, "You want to see what I'm going to buy? I'm going to sell my house and I'm going to buy a town house." They all came and they liked it, and they said, "Sure, that's nice enough, good enough." I had Edina [Realty] come sell the house and I had it sold before he had the for sale sign on it [laughs].

RM: What kind of homes were around in the '50s, around the lake...what kind of homes were there? Are they different than the ones that are there now?

AK: Yes, they're different now than they were years ago around the lakes. They have them more like their homes, they've got them all fixed real nice. Up in the Bay Lake, anyhow, where we were, I had carpeting and everything in my cabin.

RM: But what about at Lake Sarah? Do you—

AK: Well, that was back farther. I don't think those cottages had changed much.

RM: So more homes were built around the lake?

AK: More permanent homes, yes. Bought lots and built homes.

RM: When did they start getting built?

AK: Oh, they had a lot of them there before we added the access, there was quite a few of them around. On this side, the north side of the lake, it's all privately owned and the other side is privately owned. There's a road going to the access and there's homes on each side coming in.

RM: Were there always roads by the lake? Do you know much about the train depot that was there? That used to come into Lake Sarah? Do you know any stories about that?

AK: No, I don't. I don't know that. That was before my time.

RM: yes. I thought maybe you would know some stories.

AK: Well, the Soo Line went through Loretto and I sent my kids to Loretto parochial school. I hauled them 25 years to school. Eighth grade, when I get one out of eighth grade and another one in [laughs]. But I did it. I went every morning and every night. Took the kids and got them, no matter what I was doing. If I was hauling corn or what I was doing, I shut her off and went to get the kids

RM: And where did they go to school?

AK: To a private school in Loretto. Peg was the last one, and she went to Hanover, went to Buffalo.

RM: How long were you married before you had children?

AK: A year and a half [laughs].

RM: What did you do for fun as a family?

AK: We had meals and get togethers like that and played games. We shake dice in the plate and try to have gifts for them when they they can pick whatever they like. A couple of us would get gifts and throw them in a pile and they would have to shake to get them. They had to get doubles.

But I enjoyed my years in the on the Council, at least, Sipe was Mayor when I was on. At least for the first two, and then Tom Swanson was on later, a second or a third term...

RM: Can you tell me more about bars and the other entertainment that was in Rockford and Greenfield?

AK: Oh, the Transformer Inn was just a little shack--low ceiling, a bar, and then booths on the side [laughs]. We'd go up there sometimes after work We'd go out and have a few beers.

RM: Did they ever have music?

AK: No, they never did. Then after we moved away, I think, or even before, Dick Eberts had it, MaryAnn and Dick. Dick is gone. I think she's still living. And they had bartenders. Different people. The old guys would come there.

RM: Where else did you go?

AK: One winter, my aunt, well, it was my Marlin's aunt, Dorothy Harff, they lived next to us, on the next farm. She liked to drink a little bit and the Red Vest was going out of business. The guy was looking for somebody to run it. So Dorothy said, "If I work in the morning, until three o'clock or four o'clock, would you come and close it?" Yes, I'll do that, I said. I'll make supper early for the kids and they'll eat and then I'll go.

AK: He had to milk by himself. He'd come up and help me close it so I wasn't there alone when I closed, so it was good. We did real good.

RM: Did you work there every day?

AK: Every afternoon, I went at four. I liked to do that kind of job. I'd done that before. That was at the Red Vest...it's still going! [laughs].

RM: When was that?

AK: Oh geez...that was years and years back. I maybe had only two kids then, it was back quite a ways. She would go open it and be there all day and I came to close it. Sometimes we'd be late closing because they didn't want to move out [laughs]. We had hamburgers too, so sometimes I'd ask a guy sitting by the bar, "Will you watch it while I go in the back room to get some more beer out or something?" And he said, "Oh, I'll watch it." They had off sale too, and it was outside, so you had to go out and get the bottles. Then when I had the guys at the bar, there were some regulars there, I said I'd give them a free been when I got back. They were anxious to get the beer! So I did it. I went out and sold the guy the off sale, whatever he wanted and then I came in. It's hard working alone, working there until my husband would come.

RM: What time did he come?

AK: Oh, he'd come...6:30? No, he'd go out to milk early, so he be done about 7:30.

RM: You still had kids at home?

AK: Yes.

RM: Makes for some long days.

AK: Yes. Had to do everything up in the morning and get ready to go, you know. But she [the aunt] took it and I promised to help her, so I had to do it [chuckles].

RM: You were still farming?

AK: Yes, we were still farming. We farmed all our married life, just about, until he died.

RM: How long did you work at the Red Vest?

AK: It was just over the winter, I think. He was trying to sell it to somebody else and it wasn't going very good. She's one that liked coon fry's and stuff like that. I'd have to help her with that, oh man! We had a lot of people came for that.

RM: For the coon fry's?

AK: Yes. We fried it in butter and we put the seasoning with it, and it did taste good!

RM: How did you find them?

AK: They'd get their sons to go hunting for them and she'd get a bunch and put them in a freezer, wrap em up and put em in a freezer, and when she'd get a bunch she'd tear em all out and then start frying. We'd put it in a big roaster and have the roaster plum full. Otherwise, no there's not too much excitement in my life from now on, from after he died it kinda was out to the lake and a shock here, you know, he never lived here. He lived over there [laughs]. I've been getting along good, though. My daughter comes on Thursday and fixes my hair, and I go up to the store, go to church, this is really close for me here, everything is close.

RM: So what else did you do with him, when he was alive, back in the Rockford, Independence, Greenfield area?

AK: After we did that, then one year I, rode in the parade in Delano, in Rockford Days [laughs].

AK: Oh man...I didn't like that [laughs].

RM: Why not?

AK: They wanted one of us to come, me and Storck did, wanted us to come, Storck was a man, they lived over by Rockford.

RM: What was his name?

AK: Richard Storck. Hanover I drove in the parade. Had to wave at everybody you know, it was kinda goofy, but fun [laughs].

RM: Was that for River Days?

AK: No, it was for Rockford Days, something they had. I don't know what they had. Then the next year I didn't do it, I don't know, maybe the Mayor did it, I don't know. Can't keep track of em all

RM: Do you remember any more names of the bars and restaurants that were in the area?

AK: Yes, there was another one on the Main Street, a bar, that did a lot of business, too.

RM: What was the name of that one?

AK: I don't know if they ever named it, but that was a good place to go to.

RM: That was on Main Street in Rockford? Do you know who owned it?

AK: No, I don't. I used to, I suppose. But I don't know now don't think right now. But I'm glad we did that landing. We named a landing after Marlin's Dad, Gordon. As I said, I'm glad I did that. It was one thing I was glad I did when I was on the council. I took it on my own self. I said, "I'm going to go and I'll talk to this person and I'll talk to that. Loren and talked to the DNR and then I got them all together and doggonit, we got it done. It worked good! Course they're still going there I think. The younger ones, there's some young ones that shoot trap and then they all go fishing.

RM: Did you ever go swimming?

AK: We used to go Independence.

RM: But not Lake Sarah?

AK: Never was in Lake Sarah. I don't know too much about Lake Sarah, only that the Pavilion was on the edge of it.

RM: You don't know of the names of any of the other resorts?

AK: I think the one that's there, that's Shady Beach, that's been there for quite awhile. I can't tell you who owns it. I used to go down there by them.

RM: What did you do when you were there?

AK: They had turkey raffles and turkey games. You have to shake dice or play cards or something for it and the winner got it

RM: For a whole turkey?

AK: To win a turkey, yes.

RM: What else did they do down there?

AK: ohhh...drink beer, dance a little bit...drink beer. What else did you do at these places? [laughs]

RM: What kind of beer?

AK: I like Miller's lite [laughs]

RM: Did they always have the same kind of beer?

AK: Yes, they always asked for the same one. They weren't as strong as the others, I don't think [laughs].

RM: Do you remember any of the names of the people who worked there?

AK: Gosh, I can't right now...but we used to go down there. We'd always a gang of people we knew down there.

RM: Did you go to the wedding dances?

AK: Oh yes, we were going to have our wedding dance there and it was too late in the fall because they'd closed up already. So we had it at the hall in Independence. We had a full house [laughs].

RM: Everybody wanted to come see.

AK: I was known quite well around here, you know. My family's big, and my sisters were married to different guys...it was somebody they knew and it all happened that way. We had fun.

RM: So you almost had your reception on Lake Sarah.

AK: We did! We wanted our dance there, but then it was too late in October and they were closed up already and I couldn't get them. I guess we didn't get in the right gear [laughs].

RM: When did they open?

AK: Easter, Easter Sunday. I know one time I was pregnant with Peggy, and my last one, and I had a card party. People would come, five or six couples, and then we'd make lunch and drinks, whatever they wanted, a beer or a glass of wine or a glass of something. So I was pregnant and going to have her in February and one of my friends says, "You can't go to Lake Sarah this year with us, we're going to go without you." And I said, "Oh no!" I got the whole thing planned, I said. It's going to be in February. Dance won't be until Easter! [laughs]

RM: And did you go?

AK: I did! I did go [laughs]. We loved to dance. Marlin loved to dance and I loved to dance, we both liked it.

RM: What did you like about it?

AK: I don't know, it's just refreshing--going out. You get a little exercise with it. We'd rather do that than eat! I would much rather go dancing than eat. I'm not a big "eat out" person.

RM: Is there anything else you can think of about the entertainment that you'd like to tell me?

AK: Lake Sarah was strictly dancing, it was not any other entertainment.

RM: What else did people do for fun besides playing cards and going dancing?

AK: And drinking beer! [laughs] We built on the barn when we lived in [unclear] Greenfield, right by the City Hall. I had about 15 guys to cook for. I had to make dinner and supper for them. That was something! I didn't know what to cook.

One time I made an upside down cake and it looked so darn nice! It had a cherry in the hole and pineapple, brown sugar and butter that made it caramely and it looked so nice. It was laying upside down and I was frying potatoes for his lunch and I looked out the window and oh! What in the heck? Cars were going out to the field. Something happened. Here my husband had tipped over the tractor! The guys were travelling up the road right past us, they must have been down toward Corcoran, and they drove right out into the field, like [unclear] and he rolled out.

RM: When was that?

AK: It was one of the last years we lived there. He was in the hospital overnight and I think I had my son, one son, and I took off to the doctor and I forgot about the son lying on the couch. He was a baby, a month old. I went and took him [Marlin] to Delano to Guilfoil, the Doctor? He said he has to stay overnight. I took him there and I forgot about my kid at home, so I called my sister-in-law, she lived across the field. She came over and took care of him, took him home. He was good, I guess, he slept all the while [laughs]. Such a mother...[laughs]

RM: You were concerned about your husband [chuckles]

AK: Well, I wasn't thinking right...wasn't thinking right. Well anyhow, forgot about him.

RM: Your husband was ok?

AK: Yes, he came home the next morning. It's a really exciting life on a farm. Things happen...different things every day. Keeps it interesting.

RM: Yes, absolutely. Well, thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it.

AK: Well, I hope I told you anything that gave you news [laughs].

RM: Oh, of course. Thank you so much