OTTELIA BADER NOONAN

MEMOIR

Alsatian Customs and Traditions

B3

PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of a tape-recorded interview conducted by the Castroville Public Library Oral History Program Project B in September of 1980. Deanna Hoffman transcribed the tape and Madelyn Boubel was the interviewer and the editor of this transcript. The interview took place in the home of the narrator in Castroville, Texas.

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan was born September 5, 1900 in Castroville, Texas. Her parents were Josef Francis Bader and Catherine Schmitt. Tillie tells in detail, many of the customs of her family and the customs of the Catholic Church in the Castroville Community around 1910. She loves to talk about old times as the lenght of the interview indicates. Tillie is now eighty years old. She keeps her own house and lives alone. Her children, most of them, live in the area and visit with her often.

Tape #B3
3 hours

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan 1900
Tape #B3
Sides 1-2-3-4-5-6

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan 1900 (Cont.)
Tape #B3

Side 2 (cont.)

Side 3

Side 4

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan 1900 (Cont.)
Tape #B3

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan 1900 (Cont.)
Tape #B3

Side 6 (cont.)

Today is September 12, 1980. This is Madelyn Boubel interviewing Ottelia (better known as Tillie) Bader Noonan at her home in Castroville, Texas. I am interviewing for the Castroville Public Library Oral History Project B.

Q Now Mrs. Noonan, did I get your name correct?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Before we get into the things we really want to know, which is family life, customs and traditions, I want to get a little bit of family background. Where were you born and who were your parents?

A I was born here in Castroville on the 5th day of September, 1900. I was a New Year baby. And my parents are Mary Catherine Schmitt. You know, like the Schmitts down here.

Q S-c-h-m-i-t-t.

A Um-hum.

Q All right.

A And my father was Josef Francis Bader.

Q Was he a direct descendant of the Josef Bader who came with Castro?

A Yes, yes, he was. He was a grandson of his.

Q All right. And you lived, you were born here in Castroville and you lived here as a young child?

A Yes, I lived here until I was ten years old and then we just moved to Hondo. My father was elected sheriff of

Medina County and we moved to Hondo. And I was there six years and then I came back to Castroville.

Q Oh, how interesting. Where was your home originally when you lived here in Castroville? The first ten years of your life.

A Well, where I was born is the home next door to the Noonan house up there. Or Courand house.

Q That's over on the river street.

A Yes, it's on the river, uh-huh.

Q Big Victorian house.

A Yes. But I didn't live there. I lived next door. I lived there as a bride, in the big house.

Q Well, we'll get to that later, that beautiful big house. All right. Now, what language did you speak at home?

A Alsatian. Alsatian. All of it was Alsatian. I was 12 years old and going to public school before I really learned how to talk English. And the reason I had to learn is the kids made fun of me because I talked so funny. Like, for instance, the word "shade" and "shadow" is one. It's one word. But of course in English it's not. And they would egg me on, you know, "Oh, look over here, look over here" and I'd say something about a girl's shade and they would just be peals of laughter and I had a wonderful teacher. Her name was Darden, Miss Darden, and she taught me, coached me extra in English

after school. And she was really a wonderful, wonderful person. I don't know how she had that much patience; you know, take a raw Alsatian who didn't know anything at all and start talking English. 'Cause I went to German school, but I have forgotten all of my German. See, I went over here to parochial school my beginning. And then I went to a German teacher, had a German teacher and I still kept on. But when I went into the public school it was like a foreign language to me.

Q Well, were there any guilt feelings or did anyone look down on you because you were a Catholic child and went to a public school?

A Oh, lady. You know, I always sang. And there was a girl in my grade that was very good, had a very nice voice and the teacher was going to have a small -- just before classes. And she wanted us to sing together. This girl came to school and says, "My mother said I couldn't sing with her." And the teacher of course not expecting that kind of an answer, and I was standing right there, "She's German besides she's Catholic."

Q Oh, my. So there was a lot of prejudice.

A Oh, there was. There was. It was horrible.

Q All right. So that shows that the language barrier definitely affected your life.

A Oh, yes, it did. It did. From the very beginning on up. But with Miss Darden's help two years of tutoring or coaching I learned to talk English.

Q (Laughter) Well, your diction is beautiful. You'd never know that you --

A Well, I'll tell you something else now, and you can cut that off if you want to. But my teacher, Miss Darden, had me get the white cigarette paper, I think it was called St. Crux or something like that, white cigarette paper, and she had me paste it on my lips and I would have to look in the mirror and practice which, where, what, when, why, wire, things like those. And as long as the paper would flutter a little bit I was getting it right, but when the paper stopped I had to start over again. I was fussed at so many times for standing in front of the mirror, talking to myself! (Laughter)

Q What fault in speaking English were you trying to eliminate by doing that? What letter or what sound?

A Oh, it's V for W, vhy, and vhere and which, vhich and when.

Q And very?

A Um-hum.

Q Wery instead of very.

A Um-hum.

Q Well, she must have been a fantastic lady.

A Oh, she was. She was an old maid and she was a little bit on the homely side and she was a wonderful teacher and she had so much patience. You know, when you take a group of 30 people at that age it's hard to teach them, because the boys are getting too smart for their britches and the girls are at the giggling age. Well, that passed me by. I never was a giggler. (Laughter)

Q You said your father was sheriff; so was he always a county official or --

A No. In my younger days he built railroads. He had railroad crews, building crews. He had heavy machinery, you know, like Fresnos. Of course, he did have the small, oh, those little scoops with a mule, pulled by a mule; I'll be darned.

Q Take your time.

A (Chuckle) I just can't remember it.

Q Well, it would be some type of earth mover, something like --

A Yes, yes, earth mover.

Q Okay.

A Yes, he built railroads in New Mexico, Arizona, and clear on through into California, but there he came back, from there he came back.

Q And the daily routine in your home, did you have chores before you went to school?

A Oh, yes. Not before I went to school, but when I came home again, you know. There was to gather the chips and bring in the kindling, to feed my 15 cats (laughter), and then I'd have to go to the meat market and get the meat for the next day, and Mr. Franger'd give me a big hunk of liver for my cats. He worked for Ed Hans over there.

Q Now, this was when you were here in Castroville?

A That's when I lived here.

Q Okay. And then what was your mother's role in the home? Was she strictly a homemaker?

A My mother was a semi-invalid.

Q Oh.

A Um-hum. Very sad. Oh, my gosh, I've got to go get a fan in here. It's too hot.

Q Okay. You say your mother was a semi-invalid?

A Yes.

Q Excuse me, go ahead. How did that happen?

A Well, I think when she was first married she would help my father. He had cattle. See, in those days there were no pastures. It was open country. And she helped him, and her horse stepped into a gopher hole and the horse fell and she fell and after that she was never as well as she had been.

Q I should have asked you --

A Of course, having nine children didn't help any.

Q I was just getting to that. How many brothers and sisters?

A There were six girls and three boys. There were four girls, three boys, and two girls.

Q Would you give me their names, please?

A Oh, yes. Well, there's just one of us living, two of us living. It was Alice Bertreaver, Elizabeth Jungman, Josephine Zimmermann, Paula Brown, and James E. Bader from, they call themselves Bader (long "A" pronunciation); I call it Bader (short "A" pronunciation). And Oscar Bader and Alfred Bader. And then Mary Schweers and Tillie Noonan.

Q All right. Were you the youngest?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q You were the youngest. Okay. What about leisure at home? Did you --

A We were great at singing. One of my sisters played the organ and the greatest pleasure we had were to gather around the organ and sing.

Q Was this done frequently?

A Oh, yes, we sang when there weren't too many dishes to wash (laughter). We sang nearly every evening and that's where I learned to sing Latin. I could sing Latin before I could sing English.

Q Is that right? So therefore you had some chores to do but was education something that your parents wanted you to have?

A Yes, up to a certain extent, but then after I got a little bit older and the rest of the children were gone, well, it fell to me to be the homemaker and, you know, I call it flunky. And mama would, at night she couldn't sleep and she'd wake up and she'd ring that little bell and you didn't let her ring it twice. So I guess with having to be confined into the home all that time and everything she was irritable. I can understand that. But she was a housekeeper that wouldn't stop. If there was any dust anywhere she told you about it and she could walk into a room and glance around -- I often think, I wonder what mama would say if she'd come in here sometime.

Q I think we all think that. I think that too sometimes, you know. There's one thing. You said you were born in 1900, right?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. There's one thing that -- or one building, or set of buildings, that are here now that you don't hear very much about, and I'm wondering if you remember. Do you remember the Baetzes having a hotel and that saloon and dance hall?

A Yes, yes, sure.

Q Okay. Would you describe the hotel to me?

A Well, the hotel is where Gene is fixing it up, where the Suehses lived, where -- see, my aunt was running it at that time. It was a little -- I can't remember. Now, the Schmitt Hotel was a two-story building facing the plaza, facing September Square and that was the Schmitt Hotel before they started this over at Baetzes. But it didn't last very long; it was too small a place. Now my aunt, Bernadine Holzhaus Schmitt was then proprietor there and the bedrooms were over in the main building there but the kitchen and the dining room were in a building in the back yard. And there were great big trees between there. It was just a shady, beautiful place, park-like place. Then where Gene Suehs has his place of business now, that was a long building, and there was a porch clear across there, and very often she would have menfolks, you know, when they would come in there, why, they would stay over there. They were small rooms, and that's where they were. Now that was it. Now, Otto Schmitt was running the saloon at that time and that was on the corner, and the building was painted green, and it had an entrance, I always dreamed of someday having a home like that, it just, see, it came out on the side and then you walked inside and there was, the steps were kind of oval shaped. It was very pretty.

Q Do you know, did you ever hear from any of your ancestors, older people in the family, if there was a building on that lot before they put these wooden buildings there, because those are relatively new compared to some of the other buildings.

A No, I don't remember, and I don't remember anybody saying that there was anything else there.

Q Okay.

A A long, long time ago that was a yard for people who came with horse and buggies and they put their horses in there, but I couldn't tell you what year that was. But I believe that the buildings were there already and that was over where the dancehall was built later on. Where Mr. Suehs has his garage and their home, Charles Suehs.

Q Right. Charles W. Suehs. Okay.

A Um-hum.

Q So how many years did you actually go to school, Mrs. Noonan? Don't remember? (Laughter)

A The reason why I wouldn't say I went to school a whole year because when mama'd be sick I'd have to stay at home and take care of her, you know, after the rest of the girls were gone. And I couldn't keep up with my grades and this Miss Darden wanted me to take a correspondence course for high school. I was ready for high school. But I had to

drop out in the middle of the semester so there I was. It was unheard of because the fees were so much a month and so much for each semester and so the subject was dropped.

Q You mentioned that there was a lot of music in your home for your evening activities, your leisure. What about other cultural activities? Did your parents steer you in any other direction culturally, let's say?

A No, uh-uh, uh-uh, no. See, Castroville at that time was just a little bitty flyspeck in the road (laughter) and we had to do our own things. Now, my grandmother was very active, Grandma Holzhaus, she had a beautiful, it wasn't a patio, it was just a yard and she'd sprinkle it down and sweep it and they would dance out there at night, see, in the evening somebody would play an acordian and they would dance, and boy howdy, they'd have a real time. So I wasn't really into going out to parties and things like those.

Q Well, you were too young the first time, and then you moved to Hondo.

A Um-hum.

Q Okay. What about food as a daily routine? Were there any special, any foods you could sort of plan on you were going to have on a certain day or anything?

A Oh, yes. It was kind of a routine thing. On Sunday we had sweet potatoes and pork roast, saurkraut and stuff

like that. And then of course there was always cake or pie and my sister Lizzy was a great person to bake. She'd bake beautiful cakes and cookies and things. See, with that many younger ones behind her, she was the second oldest, that many younger ones behind her she'd bake five gallons of cookies at one sitting. (Laughter) Which was very interesting. We baked our own bread and of course sometimes we'd have biscuits and my daddy loved cornbread which I still despise to this day, and we'd have that, and then she'd fix hotcakes. But then in the wintertime of course it was always pork and sausage and headcheese and liverwurst and all that kind of stuff.

Q So this was a customary food the Alsatian family had in their home usually was the things made out of pork?

A Yes. And the garden, we always had a big vegetable garden, and my oldest sister was very good at canning. She would can things and people'd say, "Oh, I wouldn't eat that," and she'd put that in those jars and she cooked 'em and cooked 'em and set 'em out and we had 'em all our lives and it never did bother us. We didn't get sick from it. (Laughter)

Q She knew what she was doing.

A Yes, she did. When she canned we didn't dare go in the kitchen.

Q I see. All right then. You said you moved back to

Castroville at age 18. Did you come back as a bride or did you come back with your family?

A Oh, no, no. I had a millinery shop and I stayed with that two years and then decided to get married.

Q And who did you marry?

A George Breckenridge Noonan.

Q All right. And what was your wedding date?

A (Laughter) Would you believe it? If it'd be further back I could remember it. No, I got married --

Q What year? That'll be fine.

A In '20.

Q 1920.

A April the 14th, 1920.

Q And how many children did you and Mr. Noonan have?

A We had four. Two boys and two girls.

Q Would you give me their names, please?

A Yes. And then I had an adopted boy.

Q All right.

A My children's names are Jerome Francis Noonan and Elizabeth Catherine Noonan and Dorothy Leona Noonan Highsmith. I forgot, Elizabeth's name is Blasing. And Rodney Ralph, better known as Joe, Noonan.

Q And your adopted son?

A And my adopted son is John Thomas Noonan. And he's in the United States Navy waiting for his retirement.

Q Wonderful!

A Yes.

Q Did you have a big traditional wedding?

A No, we didn't, because just before the wedding someone passed away and, you know, in those days you didn't have big celebrations. Now, I was married in just a brown suit with a matching hat and a blouse.

Q Did you get married on a Tuesday?

A No, I didn't, I didn't get married on a Tuesday. It was on a Thursday, because dad's birthday, he wanted to get married on his birthday but his birthday was on Friday and I said "no way." (Laughter).

Q Not on Friday, huh? Well, I'm sure you heard and know this to be a fact, that a lot of couples did marry on a Tuesday.

A Yes.

Q Do you know a reason for that?

A No, I don't exactly know why it was done but I kind of think it was because they all had big weddings, you know, and had cake-baking and all that kind of stuff, you know, getting ready for the wedding reception, and I think that that was why, 'cause on Monday was washday whether it rained cats or hailed dogs, you still had washday on that day. And I think that that was the reason. Now, my

sisters all married here in St. Louis Church except Mary and I. I married in St. Johns. I did want to get married here at St. Louis; see, I was here. And Father Heckman was here at that time and he says, "Why sure I'll perform that ceremony, be glad to." And then my mother-in-law stepped in. "Oh, she must be married in the church where her family is affiliated now," so that was the first mistake I made. (Laughter)

Q Okay. So you think that it was just a convenient day.

A It was a convenient day to get married, uh-huh. And then usually you know, the little couple would go maybe to San Antonio on a honeymoon or some little place like that and they would be back and go to church the next Sunday and they usually had cutting of the wedding cake on the following Sunday.

Q Oh, they didn't --

A No, the wedding cake was not cut on the -- they had cake all right, but not the wedding cake. The wedding cake was cut on the following Sunday and they'd have, you know, like my sisters had the choir girls and the bridesmaid, 'course then they didn't have 15-20 bridesmaids, they just had the two attendants and -- you know, maybe two bridesmaids or something like that -- maid of honor I guess and a bridesmaid. But other than that no, they didn't have these big elaborate weddings.

Q Well, did they have dances sometimes?

A Yes, sometimes some people did, you know, those that went on a honeymood they didn't have a dance, but lots of times they had dances at night the night of the wedding.

Q Okay. Did they always wear white, the brides?

A As far as I know, yes, the ones that were married here. After, you know, in my time, after 1900, but before that as a rule, the brides wore black?

Q Really?

A My mother was dressed in a black dress, her mother was dressed in a black dress and her sisters were married in black and I don't know why; I imagine though it was because of the scarcity of material and they had to wear those dresses.

Q That's very possible.

A I think that was the reason for it.

Q All right. There was a custom where when the couple came out of church the next thing was to go to the priest's house to register.

A Um-hum.

Q Do you remember the alter boys stopping the couple?

A Yes, to get the collection. (Laughter)

Q This was a tradition for a long time.

A Yes, it was. Even when I got married in 1920 the little alter boys was standing there. (Laughter)

Q They wouldn't let you go through the gate --

A No, they wouldn't let you. They stayed right there.

Q -- 'til they got some money?

A Um-hum. Sometimes it was just a dime or something like that apiece for them. Sometimes some people -- well, of course, those that could do it were very generous.

Q Um-hum. Okay. What about shivarees?

A Well, I had a shivaree, but, you know, they had to take my mother-in-law to San Antonio. She was going to stay here with the children 'til we got back. And she took sick and they had to rush her to San Antonio and so we had to come back. And that night they gave us a shivaree. But that was where a widower or a widow married the second time. That's when they gave those shivarees.

Q The reason being because it was a second marriage. Do you think that it might have been a way of celebration since there hadn't been probably a reception of any kind? Do you think this was the meaning of it?

A Well, it could have been. It could have been.

Q Okay. So, let's see, we can say this, that the custom of the altar boys, I wonder when that stopped?

A I don't know.

Q We think they probably stopped here when they took the fence down around the church, you know.

A (Laughter)

Q We're not sure. (Laughter) So then the wedding attire for the bride changed after the turn of the century to the white dress and the veil and all?

A Yes, uh-huh.

Q Okay, now, the burials I know, the bodies years ago would be at home. Is this correct?

A Yes, uh-huh, it was kept at home until the time of the funeral. And the funeral was usually after dinner.

Q They didn't go to mass in the morning?

A Well, they did have a mass, but the funeral was after dinner, most of them.

Q All right. What about the wakes, I mean staying with the body? Can you describe that to me?

A Oh, yes. It usually consisted of relatives and close friends and they would take turns about, you know, one group would come in now, and then another group would go in later and they stayed there all night or two nights. As a rule they kept them two nights.

Q I wonder, do you have any idea why this was done?

A Because the body wasn't embalmed and, you know, there was no funeral home or anything like that and the coffin was open all this time, and I imagine it was for that reason.

Q Now, what was the period of mourning usually after a funeral?

A Well, it usually lasted a year.

Q All right. Was there any special type of clothing you wore to signify you were in mourning?

A Well, most of them wore black, plain black clothes, because I remember when somebody died and one of the younger girls had a black dress all completely black, but she had little black lace on the sleeves, the sleeves went to here, on the cuff and around a little collar, and somebody said, I'll never forget this, "Di hat awer spitcha am rock!"

Q (Laughter) Now would you translate that for me?

A "She has LACE on her dress!" (Laughter) And the lace was very emphasized.

Q Um-hum. All right. Now, did -- was there any attire of significance concerning the ment that they wore?

A Yes. Usually a black band around the hat, on the crown of the hat.

Q What about an armband? Did any of them wear that?

A Well, they wore those at the funeral and the pallbearers wore them, and then they took them off and put them on the coffin.

Q Okay.

A The pallbearers did.

Q All right now, you mentioned that the period of mourning lasted a year.

A A year, uh-huh. That was a deep mourning. There were no dances or anything like that.

Q No sign of joy at all?

A Um-um. It was all pray for the dead.

Q All right. Suppose that someone in the family decided that this took too long and they went out dancing before the year was up or something, was there criticism?

A I don't know about criticism, but I know that the parents would work them over (Laughter).

Q So it was a very, very strict custom?

A It was a strict custom. The mourning was a strict custom.

Q That you do this for a period of a year.

A A year, um-hum.

Q Okay. Now births and baptisms, the births were usually in the home?

A They were in the home, yes. They were in the home and there was usually an old grandmother or some friend or somebody that was there with the mother, and then the doctor would come in IF there was a doctor. If not, well the midwife would take care of it.

Q Okay. And then the baptisms. Did this occur shortly after the birth?

A Well, yes. The children were very seldom that it was over two, a child was over two weeks old when it was

baptised.

Q Okay. In this day and time the parents don't rush that much to get the child baptised. What do you think is the reason for the difference?

A Well, the difference I think would be this; because in those days there were so many children who died, you know, real young or small. Well, you know, we were taught that they could not enter heaven, they went into a kind of limbo, you know, and they were happy and all but they weren't at the throne of God and that was the reason, because they didn't want to have one child that didn't get there. And that was the reason for that. That's the only reason I can, only thing that I can explain about it.

Q I think that's correct. What about the baptismal ceremony? Was there any particular dress for the infant?

A Oh, yes, for generations they passed 'em down.

Q All right. Would you describe the dress.

A Yes. They were made out of a white material, real soft material, and oh, they had shirring on them and they had lace on them, and usually at the bottom the hem had a great big wide lace on it with ruffles and oh, they were just magnificent. I know that I saw one baptism and the baby had a dress, I guess it was a five-inch crocheted ruffle on the bottom and I went home and asked my sister

if she could make me a dress like that. (Laughter) But my, the dress that I had went to my neice, and then from there well, I imagine it was worn out because see, there was nine of them. See, the boys had those long dresses on too when they were baptised.

Q When you say long, how long do you mean about?

A Oh, see, the godmother held the baby like this and the dress went clear down to the -- some of them went down to the floor. It was more like a blanket than a dress, really.

Q Do you know if your baptismal dress you had in your family had been used the generation before you or was it just for your family?

A It was just for our family.

Q What about godparents? Was there any traditional way --

A They were mostly relatives, close relatives. Now, 'course they relatives played out before I cam along (laughter) but my mother's cousin, Kate Schmitt, was my godmother and my uncle, Arthur Holzhaus, see, he was mama's stepbrother, he was my godfather, and he was 16 years old. And they walked from that house over there where Clifton lives.

Q Clifton Nelson?

A Yes. From there they walked to church and he had the umbrella and Kate had the baby and he was coming up and

down and he was picking her hair (laughter).

Q Was there any prejudice as far as religion of the godparents? Was there anything there special you can tell me? Did they have to be a Catholic?

A Yes, they had to be Catholic. They had to be Catholic. They had to be a practicing Catholic.

Q Practicing Catholic. Okay. What about birthday parties? Did you all have birthday parties in your family?

A Oh, yes, we had birthday parties and of course in those days we didn't have big cakes and things like those, but we had lemonade to drink and maybe some crackers with butter on it or, you know, maybe a little like icing for a cake, they'd put that on crackers and that consisted of our birthday party.

Q Was that just a family party?

A No, the kids from around the neighborhood would come.

Q I imagine you had a lot of relatives. Did you and your relatives have a good relationship? A lot of visiting back and forth; that type of thing?

A No, no we didn't. We were always friendly but we didn't visit. We didn't go visiting.

Q Okay. Now, you told me that you married and you told me the names of your children. Now where did you and your husband live?

A We lived in the, what is the Courand house. That's where we lived when we were married. He lived there with his wife before. See, Grandma Noonan bought that place from Mr. Courand and she bought it for George and Helen, and of course they were living there and I moved in.

Q So that -- I just love that house. I can't wait for them to finish restoring it.

A But you know, when the Noonans sold that thing I could just die. Rod wanted to buy it back when Mr. Bauml wanted to sell it, so he says, "Mama, let's go up and look at it." Well, we drove up behind that house and you know Mr. August Schott said, "Oh, they're putting in a glassed-in sleeping porch, that back porch is going to be just beautiful." Do you know what they had? These overhead garage doors with those little bitty windows way up high and they pulled the bathroom away, the bathroom was over there in connection with the two bedrooms, but it did come to the porch. And he put two bathrooms in that beautiful dining room. That dining room was as long as from here to the front door.

Q You'd say about 25-30 feet long?

A Yes, ma'am. And I guess it was 15 feet wide, every bit of it. Because I had the two china closets and the big great big, the sideboard was much bigger than this one, that was in there, and I had a great big long table. I guess

it would seat 15 or 20 people at one sitting. And when I saw that, I'm telling you, I got sick at my stomach. Then there was a butler's pantry right off of the kitchen and you went around a kind of a little stair thing there and the stairway that went into the cellar was a spiral. And they knocked all of that out and they knocked that butler's pantry out and when it rained I don't know where the water went because there wasn't any lid on the entrance to the basement.

Q Well, I think that the Belchers are going to do as good a job as can be done of bringing it back.

A I think so. Mrs. Belcher asked us, see the girls knew them. They went up there one day to look and see what was going on. They were in two pickups (laughter), so they said, "Oh, you're the people we're glad to see. They said, "Why?" "Well, we have to take this stuff away from here. It's getting so piled we can't get in and out," so the girls backed up and of course it's only they can tear things up, you know, they loaded up those two trucks and took the stuff to the dump ground and they came back and loaded up some more. And then I met, I was with the girls at the restaurant and they came over and talked to us. So the kids introduced me and she said, "Well there's one thing. Your girls don't have to be told what to do. They know where to catch on. (Laughter)

Q Well, okay. I know it's going to make you feel good to see it restored. It's a beautiful house.

A Oh, yes. I hope they get through with it before my time is up (laughter).

Q Oh, they will, they will. Well, your father was evidently then a politician. Did he get into any really --

A Really big things? No. The only thing, he was ever sheriff. He was sheriff. Mr. Nye, Joe Nye, was in the office two years younger than my dad. But he was out a year and then he went back in. But my dad was in the whole year from '10 to '32.

Q So there was no what you would describe as a hot political race to win the --

A No. No, no, no.

Q Okay. All right.

A But he had a lot of political friends. (Laughter) Now I'll have to tell you this and cut this off, it don't concern that.

Q What about dances, did you attend dances when you were a young girl?

A Oh, yes, I've danced, I've waltzed a billion miles (laughter). And if my legs was to stand up to it I'd still waltz.

Q Well, where did you do all this waltzing?

A Well, we didn't have dances then like every Saturday like they have now on Friday and Saturday nights. We had the

Christmas dance, we had a New Years dance, Easter dance and Pentecost and Fourth of July and the 25th of August. And then of course right shortly after that it was Lent and we didn't -- and Advent -- and we didn't go.

Q So you had about five or six special times.

A Special, yes. And then we'd go to D'Hanis to the Fourth of August, you know, it's St. Dominic's Day.

Q Okay. Where were these dances held that you attended, usually?

A Upstairs, the best dance floor that I have ever danced to was the upstairs what is now known as -- oh, no, they don't have it that way anymore.

Q Was it the --

A Upstairs above the Phillip Wernette Saloon.

Q Which, we would say presently, was the L. M. Tondre Store?

A Right, um-hum, um-hum.

Q Okay. How long did those dances last?

A Oh, they lasted from about 7:00 o'clock until midnight, maybe 'til 1:00 o'clock.

Q You didn't ever dance 'til morning?

A No, huh-uh. It was over with -- oh, maybe some of the other people did but we had to go home.

Q Go home around 1:00, okay. But that was something you looked forward to, right?

A Oh, yes. My goodness, Sunday dresses didn't bother us a bit but we sure wanted a dress to go to the dance. And the funny thing was, you know, it was a kind of a -- it wasn't voile but it was on that order -- it was soft material and you could get that material in any color you wanted to. I'll never forget one time I had a lavender one, oh, I was so pretty in it, but my daddy saw me and it was kind of drop-shoulders, and he said, "Hey, hey, hey, you go in there and put on a coat, you're not going out like --" (laughter) so when I went in, well, the girls pulled it up, you know, and pulled this little string tight, and it was all right. It wasn't cut low, you know, but it drooped away, on the side. He was funny.

Q So, in other words, you had special dresses just for the dances?

A For the dance, uh-huh. Of course, we wore them over and over and over. We didn't discard them after the first dance.

Q What about quilting parties? Was that popular?

A It was among the older people.

Q That was the older people?

A Uh-huh, the older people. But the young ones didn't -- we did handwork like Hardanger and embroidery. I learned how to embroider when I was a little bitty kid over here

at the nuns. See, on Friday afternoon the boys had like field day or something and the girls had embroidery or art work of some kind.

Q They were learning the finer things.

A Um-hum, um-hum.

Q Okay. Horseraces and rodeos, what about those?

A Well, they had a lot of horseraces when they'd have, you know, kind of congregated someplace maybe, like down at Zimmermann's Groce or up on the river, but I don't know whose place that was. But they'd have these little quarterhorses, you know, and they'd just bet a dollar or two and they'd get, or there, they'd run them.

Q It was sort of like a community thing, one fellow had a horse and someone else had --

A Yes, uh-huh. And my horse is better than yours.

Q Right. (Laughter) I understand that baseball was very popular.

A Oh, yes, uh-huh. Now, my uncles played baseball and their diamond was in front of the church.

Q Oh, on Houston Square?

A Yes, uh-huh. Houston Square was the, that was the baseball diamond, and Aunt Addie's little cottage hotel that she had later on, well she didn't keep boarders or roomers, she just served meals, and the balls would come on her porch and she says, "You guys are gonna either

move or put your batter's cage up there by the church or someplace, but not here anymore," so then they put this great big background there and oh, it was something. We'd sit on the porch over there and watch them play ball.

Q Was there a lot of rivalry between the baseball teams?

A No, it -- well, sometimes, you know, they'd get on the umpire and he'd get out there, you know, (laughter) they'd make him hush or either they'd throw him out.

Q Throw him out of the ballgame?

A Um-hum.

Q Well, was this --

A That was on a Sunday afternoon.

Q That was your recreation?

A Uh-huh. But really our recreation during the summer was swimming.

Q Did you swim in the Medina River?

A Oh, yes, yes. The Medina River was running wide then, you know, it was like say from the -- you know where that rock wall is over there right by Miss Lawler's house?

Q Yes.

A Well, it was from there 'til on the other side where that gravel pit is. Oh, yes. The water was clear, crystal clear and where it would run over those rocks it would make a foam; very pretty.

Q Do you think that the event of putting up the Medina Dam probably is the reason that it's not clear anymore?

A No, people had outdoor privys.

Q Oh. Pollution?

A Um-hum. It was pollution.

Q That's too bad. I've heard it described before as having been such a beautiful stream.

A Oh, it was. It was beautiful. And then, I guess it was a block from the crossing there where Miss Lawler lives, down over that way, they called that Mark's hole, water hole, and oh, those big cypress trees, we'd get up in there and dive out and, of course, the water was deep there, and then after so many people came down there, you know, they had picnics along there. And, of course, they were "fremdi" (laughter), so we moved down below Schmitt's, and those Schmitt boys had these big chains up in those trees. Well, I never could reach 'em, but they had a hook, you know, and the chain'd be way out halfway across the river, and they'd hook it with that hook and bring it back and then they'd stand on a stump and hold us little ones. And they'd hold us up and we'd grab ahold of them and they'd say "drop", we'd drop (laughter).

Q You've brought in an Alsacian word, "fremdi". Would you translate the meaning of that? Literally.

A Strangers.

Q Strangers? So you moved from your favorite swimming hole to another one because strangers came.

A Yes. Too many strangers came there, um-hum.

Q So were the Castroville people as a whole sort of suspicious of strangers?

A They were, very suspicious of strangers.

Q Do you have any idea why?

A I have no idea. But I think that when they first came here -- you see, when the settlers first came here, when my great-grandparents and grandparents came here, the Indians were friendly with them. And in time of shortages they would bring them half a deer or some turkey or ducks or something like that. But then after awhile, you know, they got to pushing them a little bit and they became hostile and I don't blame them. 'Cause there was enough room around here for both of 'em. And I think that that's the reason the natives were scared of strangers. Well, and coming to a place where there wasn't anything, see, they had to -- some of 'em had caves dug, like they call it Muehlebergla, up here going to the cemetery there was a kind of a little sand hill there, and they dug caves in there and some of them lived in those, and then some of them just had brush like --

Q Now are you speaking of the Indians living there?

A No, no, the Alsacians, the first Alsacians that came here.

See, they had nothing to build with.

Q That's true.

A And then finally they got a sawmill -- I don't know who had the sawmill. Now, the Polaka had the sawmill up at Bandera.

Q We're gonna get to him in a little bit. So they were very suspicious then of --

A Of anybody that was strange. And in those days, I don't know why, but lots of times, see, this was on a main road to Mexico, and lots of times convoys of gypsies would come through here, and Lord help us, we couldn't go out the gate at all, no, no, they're gonna take you, they're gonna steal you, they had a reputation of stealing children. Why, I don't know. Lord knows they had enough of their own. But that was the thing. I know that I went to the meat market one evening with my gallon bucket to get the meat and all of a sudden my brother came running and he says, "We have to hurry, we have to hurry", and Mr. Franger says, "Well why, what's the matter?" And he says, "Oh, the gypsies, they're right on the other side of the river. And he had to escort me home. And Lord, he wasn't as big as I was, I don't think, not very much bigger.

Q What about St. Louis Day? That has always been a big day here.

A St. Louis Day was here when I got here. Now, we celebrated the picnic at different places. St. Louis Hall was a rock

building where the optometrist has his office now.

Q Bill Burgess?

A Yeah. And they had a long bowling alley adjacent to the street there that passed in front of Courand's store and the menfolks would play -- would bowl. And the ladies would be on the inside there and of course they had tables out under the trees and served meals. But it was more like a family, not just a congregation, it wasn't strangers. And then Mrs. Wernette opened her garden. Now her garden was a place of beauty. That was the grandmother to Wilford Wernette. She had flowerbeds all around those trees and she had a well and had the little house over it, you know, and had running roses there and everything. It was just out of this world. And then they began to have picnics there and more people would come, you know. See, Castroville is the hub of Medina County. And people from Hondo, people from Devine, people from D'Hanis, they would all congregate there and that's where St. Louis Day started to spread. But it was a privately-owned place.

Q So that's the reason for calling it Wernette's garden is because it --

A It was a beautiful garden. And she would come down there and the kids would start running and she says, "Uh-uh-uh", and she talked a kind of a broken Alsacian. And she'd always point to the boys to go down towards the river to

play 'cause they played rough and she didn't want 'em tumbling in her flower beds.

Q Well, what kind of food then did you take to these early celebrations that you remember before so many people congregated?

A Well, traditional dishes like we had at home.

Q But your family took your own food?

A Yes, and then they had soda water there or lemonade. And I'll never forget the first time I saw pink lemondade. I thought that was the best stuff in the world (laughter).

Q When do you think they started selling meals? Do you have any recollection of that?

A No, I can't remember that. I just can't remember when it was.

Q Well now, was this always on a Sunday?

A No. At first it was on St. Louis Day. Come hail or shine it was on St. Louis Day. It came to be the closest to St. Louis Day on a Sunday, the Sunday closest to St. Louis Day later on when they had, when it began to be state-wide.

Q Did you have any out-of-town visitors that came especially for that day?

A Well, there were uncles and aunts and things that came that lived at Hondo and Devine and around in that way, they came, but not from far off. And the Bradens were related, I don't know how they were related, but they came from San

Antonio and they used to stay at our house. But in those days there weren't that many people and people could take houses here. You know, they'd come in early in the morning or maybe Saturday night and then after Vespers, why you'd see them take off to go to their homes. They were little, it was like a big room and then a little kitchen in the back. That was a Sunday house. And they would open those for people who came, you know.

Q What about the religious celebration on that day? Was that special?

A Oh, yes it was. It was a High Mass, and in the afternoon it was Vespers and Veneration of the Holy Relics of St. Louis. And just a few years ago somebody said, "Oh, we found the prettiest little monstrance over there,it's a little bitty thing, and oh, it was so full of dust and dirt and inside it had dust in it." They threw it away.

Q Oh, no.

A But they kept the monstrance. I don't know what they did with it. I don't know where it is. When I heard about it I didn't say anything to 'em. It just shocked me so I couldn't say that was what that was. And no long ago -- Oh, Marie Christilles and I, see, she's my cousin too, but her father and my father were step-brothers. And she would call and say, "Oh, it's nothing like it was." And I said, "Well, I tell you Marie, I don't go to church 'cause when

Christ appointed the apostles he had lots of wonderful saintly women. If he would have wanted a woman in there, he would have appointed some of 'em. But he didn't want them there." And I said, "I just can't go along with it." And even in 1914 and '15 my sister had charge of the church at Hondo because she knew, you know, what they needed at certain times, what color vestments and everything, and she could not open the tabernacle although the key was there, but she'd have to wait 'til Father Meyer came and opened the tabernacle and took the things out and then he would take the cloth off, you know, the linens off, and she would put the fresh ones on. But she did not dare let her finger come anywhere near there. And now, anybody goes up there just (indicating).

Q So you preferred the old traditional way.

A I certainly do, and I also prefer, like the children going to Sunday School and then going over to church for a rosary or either start the rosary at school and walk that block to church, and you didn't see any rowdyism or anything. It was a solemn, very solemn thing.

Q What about the St. Louis Society? What part did they play on St. Louis Day?

A Well, I think that they were the overseers of the whole thing, you know, to see that everybody, you know, like somebody, I know the Schmitt girls were good at baking

cake, I know they always had to bring a cake. And different ones brought different things. But I think that was strictly St. Louis.

Q Was there any visiting clergy on that day?

A Oh yes, oh yes. And usually it was someone who was stationed here at one time.

Q And they came back for the day?

A Um-hum, they came here for the day.

Q What about -- were there any banners or anything that were carried?

A Well, it was, there were only two, see, it was only the St. Louis Society and the Alter Society, St. Ann's Society. And they had small banners, you know, they were just about this big (indicating).

Q What about dances on St. Louis Day? Did they -- oh, you mentioned that earlier. I'm sorry, you told me. I forgot.

A Yeah, they had a big dance St. Louis Day.

Q Do you remember the 75th anniversary of the church in 1919?

A I can't tell you much about it, but I remember the clergy being there. I can't remember.

Q That's fine. What about your individual participation in St. Louis Day? Did you have any special thing you did?

A Oh, yes, I was always seller of the raffle tickets (laughter). You know, there's a fellow named Hoog was married to a Haass girl and he'd come from San Antonio every St. Louis Day, and

he'd always say, "Now, where is she? Where is she?" And of course most of the ladies knew who he meant. "Oh, she's around here somewhere. She's got her little box and her books." "Well, I gotta see that girl. I love to hear her talk. And you know, I think she could sell a quarter off a dead nigger's eye." (Laughter) And his wife would say, "He looks forward to this the whole year around. You know, I'm getting a little bit jealous." And I said, "Well, don't get jealous on my account." (Laughter) "My job is to sell chances."

Q Well, when do you think they started the raffle?

A I just don't know. It seems like, you know, the nuns would work on a big tablecloth or something. And then the young ladies, most of the Sodality, not Sodality but the choir girls, would fix embroidery and things. They did real beautiful work. Of course they were always under the supervision of one of the nuns. And they would have that handwork, you know. And that was all. When they started with livestock and stuff like that I really don't know. But that livestock business started with the firemen association, you know. That's when they started doing that.

Q So you really don't know just exactly when they decided to change St. Louis Day from a family-type picnic to a money-making picnic, you know, with selling everything?

A I don't know. I don't know when that started. I just couldn't tell you.

Q Did they serve beef when you remember it as a young child, or was it chicken possibly?

A No, no, no, it was beef, meat. Beef barbecue.

Q What about Fourth of July? Was that anything special?

A Oh, yes. It was my mother's birthday and her sister's birthday was on the 2nd of July and the Fourth of July, oh, the banners were waving and they put the bunting out along the stores and stuff like that, and then in the evening they would -- I don't know what it was in English, but in German they shot the "Ambost", you know, the anvil.

Q Oh. You remember seeing that?

A Yes, yes, see, we lived just a block from there. See, they'd shoot 'em there in front of the, where the bank building is now, that's where Ed Tschirhart, Blackie's father, had his blacksmith shop, and he'd let 'em use his anvils.

Q Well, do you know how they did that? Do you have any idea?

A They filled, see, the anvil has a kind of a square hole in the top, just about that size (indicating).

Q Say about two by two inches?

A Yes, something like that.

Q Square?

A And they'd fill that full of black powder and then they had the other one ready to lift on there and they had a little fuse that went through there. And they'd lift that on there

and get it set just right and then they'd light that fuse and everybody'd take off (laughter). Sometimes it'd just blow that little one, oh, 15 feet up in the air.

Q Was it a loud explosion?

A Oh, yes, yes, it was very loud. And we'd all run up there to the corner; we'd stand there by Courand's store and watch 'em. It was a lot of fun. Of course, I was among the first ones there, 'cause I just lived a block. And another diversion we had when we were kids; when it would rain the plaza would be full of water. We had a very little drainage. And the street running down in front of our house was always, you know, curb-to-curb water. And Joe Tondre, Herbert's brother, would fix us boats, you know, they were really little boats, you know, we'd go way up there as far as we could go and then put them there and then we'd run behind them (laughter).

Q Follow the running water from the rain?

A Uh-huh, with the little boats going down. It was a lot of fun. Then Mr. Tondre put a stop to it. He said, "Joe, this place needs to be dusted. That's better than to be making paper boats here." And that fellow was a funny kind of a fellow. And it was the funniest thing, when I was little I was more or less scared of him, and after I got grown if I would have had any sense at all I would have just taken a tablet down there and wrote down some of the things that he

said and it would be so nice. But, well, I had other things to think about.

Q Well, I think we all let things like that pass us by, you know? Do you think the people in the community were really patriotic? Fourth of July meant something special?

A Oh, yes. It meant something. It was a special day and everybody was enthused about it. The little boys were all dressed up in their short pants and suspenders and little round hats (laughter). It was really something. And in the envening, sometimes in the evening they'd ring the church bells, but that was the evening before, on the 3rd is when they would do that. And I know that mama's sister cried because they would shoot the "ambost" (laughter), the anvils. And they didn't do that on hers, and then she said, "Well, but you see, they shoot two of them, one's for you and one's for me."

Q Did they only do this one time?

A Yes, just the one -- well, sometimes, I'll tell you, when -- oh, I do know when the first Archbishop came.

Q Oh, when was this?

A They shot them. See, they had to stay all night because they came, you know, they didn't have cars, big cars, in those days, and he had to stay all night and in the evening they shot two of those things off in honor of the Archbishop.

Q That's sort of a local tradition, local thing?

A I don't know whether that's, comes from the old country or what. I couldn't tell you that. I don't know.

Q I don't know either. I've just, we've heard about it from time to time, but haven't really been able to establish it with anything over there. There's quite a few things we have been able to affiliate, you know. Okay now, you were a Catholic, correct?

A Yes, I was born and raised a Catholic, and my grandparents, great-grandparents and grandparents on down, we were raised Catholic.

Q And you went to the St. Louis School?

A Um-hum.

Q All right, and then to --

A And then I went to public school.

Q Okay. Were you ever a member of the clubs or societies in church?

A No, because, see, they didn't have the Children of Mary when I was here. I would have been too young to go anyway. See, I made my First Communion when I was 10 years old because there was no parochial school at Hondo and Father Meyer would come twice a month and have Mass and then quick as he was through with Mass he'd go on back 'cause he had to drive back to D'Hanis, and so there just wasn't anything at that time.

Q Well now, the St. Ann's Society, you belonged to that?

A Uh-huh, yes, I belonged to that. After I married I belonged to that, joined that.

Q How many years have you been a member?

A Well, let's say from '39. I didn't join right away. I was too busy, had too many babies (laughter).

Q Did you ever have an office in --

A Oh, child! If I wasn't the president I was the secretary. And that went on and on and on, and then the last time, why, they wanted to elect me president again and I said, "Please, I can't. I've got too much work to do." And then, I can't remember who the old ladies were. They jumped up and said, "No, we don't want her for president. We want her for that other thing. We can understand her when she reads the minutes (laughter). With my booming voice you know, it'd go out to the plaza and turn around and hit them from the back.

Q Being an officer in St. Ann's Society so many times, what kind of role did you play then in the St. Louis Day when it became more of a public thing?

A Well, mostly I had charge of the raffle. Selling tickets. I did that 'til the last day I could go, you know, could maneuver around to go. But when I couldn't see, couldn't recognize people, it was bad for me to be there because lots of people thought I was putting on an act and I didn't want

to know them. It's bad enough when you have to ask people what their name is, and then have them say, "Oh, you don't know me anymore, huh?"

Q What about the Angeles Bell? Can you tell me about that?

A Oh, yes. They were so beautiful. Three times a day they rang. They rang at 5:00 o'clock in the morning, they rang at 12:00 noon, and they rang at 6:00 o'clock in the evening, and you could set your watch by them. And then the most beautiful bells in the world were the St. Louis Bells. We had -- of course, I don't know what went on ahead, but then when I was growing up it was Julius Tondre, Adolph Mangold and Harry Steinle, and I want you to know that those three boys could make those bells sing. And on Saturday evening they rang for an hour. That was family rosary time, you know, you were supposed to pray the rosary at home. And it was (laughter), it was real funny, you know, to keep the drunks from getting hurt on Saturday night.

Q How did they do that, what --

A You know, you prayed at home. You prayed at home.

Q I see.

A You prayed at home. Oh, yes, mama would make us kneel around the bed there and pray and then my brothers would get kind of way back on their heels, and she'd just point at them and they'd come up again (laughter).

Q This was every Saturday evening?

A Every Saturday evening, yes. And oh, it was so pretty, and mama couldn't harldy wait until they'd start the bells. And then they took the bells and electrified them. More modern, and they sound like washtubs. Do you know, that in the witnertime I could hear the bells just as plain as though they were down in the field below the house on a clear day in the witnertime. Oh, they were so pretty. We had an old Mexican out there that, he'd come up to the house to listen to the bells.

Q This was during the time you lived on the ranch which is about how many miles west of Castroville?

A It's supposed to be five miles west, but the way we have the entrance, you know, it's seven miles.

Q But you could hear the bells that far?

A Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Q So the purpose then of the Angeles Bell was --

A Time of prayer.

Q Time of prayer. Do you remember Rogation Days?

A Oh, yes, I remember those. They were praying for rain and we'd go up to the Cross Hill in procession. The little alter boys would be first and then the little girls would come up and then, you know, the older people, and there's quite a little story to that. You know, Devine was a Protestant town, and there was an old man came through here from San Antonio and he went home and he said, "Watch

for rain. We're going to have a big rain." "How do you know? Since when are you the Lord's bookkeeper," or something, and he says, "The people from Castroville were in a long stream going up the hill praying for rain." In two days they had a rain. And he said, "Now you see what the people of Castroville can do?" (Laughter) You know, people were more, well, they didn't have as many places to go, and they didn't have the way to get around. But, you know, on Rogation Days people came and it was regular church day.

Q How many days does this take place?

A Three days each season, you know, like spring, summer, fall and witner. 'Course in the wintertime they just went around the church lot there.

Q And they prayed the rosary?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay.

A The rosary was a very big thing among the Catholics. I'll tell you, it was one of their standbys. Well, I imagine, well, when they, the children inherited the rosaries from the older people but lots of people made their own rosaries. It was a kind of a berry, well it's a tree, and it has long things like mesquite beans, but the berry inside is like an onyx color and they'd drill little holes before it got real ripe and dry 'em and then they'd string 'em. They made their own rosaries.

Q That's the first time I heard that.

A Yeah, they did, uh-huh. Oh, my grandmother had one for years. They called it, oh, it would be St. Joseph's bread. "Josef Brot". That's what they called the tree that had these beads on there.

Q All right. Bells then were rung for the Angeles. What about on the eve of Holy Days?

A We had that hour of bell ringing.

Q Again for prayer?

A Uh-huh.

Q In the event of a death were the bells rung?

A Yes, the little bell was rung for babies, the little Angeles Bell, and then for a grown person they tolled, usually the number of years the person was old. But it was a bigger bell; it was the big one that was in connection with the Angeles Bell. It wasn't the bell that calls you to mass. It was a different tone, you know.

Q Was there a different tone for a man or a woman, or was the difference only between the child and the adult?

A Yes, between the child and the adult.

Q Tell me about Corpus Christi Day.

A Wh, that was one of my faorite days was Corpus Christi Day. That was when the Polish people would come with their decorated mules and wagons and things. And they had, in the evening before, the men and boys would go out and get

branches and they would put them all around, you know, like a carpet where we went to these different alters. Well the little girls were dressed in white and they had their little baskets; not all of them, you know, just the bigger ones, and two girls carried the big baskets full of petals and then these that were, that would distribute the flowers in front of the Holy Eucherist, why then they'd fall to the back and fill their little baskets and get in line again. It was so pretty. They had an alter at, the first one was over at Castro's, this little house behind the church here. It's been renovated and it's --

Q Where Mike Hodge renovated the house?

A Yes, yes, uh-huh.

Q Where the Fuentes family I believe lived for a long time?

A Yes, right. Well, that was the Castro home. That man's name was Herrera, it wasn't Castro, but he was the only Mexican here and so they called him Castro. And then over at the convent they always had the Sacred Heart; it was so pretty. See, they had the upstairs and they could hang drapes down there, and these drapes were covered with blossoms, or mostly artificial flowers, you know. But then they had this big statue of the Sacred Heart on there, and then the gates were opened and the alter boys and the priest would walk in and the choir was on the outside and all the people were kneeling out in the street for benediction. Then we went to the

Jungman house, where Grandma Jungman lives now.

Q You're speaking of Rosalie Jungman?

A Yeah, uh-huh. They had one there, had an alter there. Then we'd go down to St. Louis Hall and they had one there. Then we'd come around there -- sometimes Fitzsimons would have theirs, but sometimes they didn't. They didn't have it every year. And then we'd go around and -- Zuerchers, I can't remember what that man's name was but his wife was Johanna Conrad, she was an aunt to Tina Rihn, Tina Schroeder.

Q Is this the Shearers or Zuerchers? What are you saying? The last name I didn't quite --

A Zuercher.

Q Zuercher.

A Uh-huh. But they call it Zuercher now.

Q Yes, uh-huh.

A See, she had a hat shop for years and years. She was a great big fat woman. Oh, she was immense. And he was such a skinny little flllow (laughter). It'd look so funny when they'd come to church together.

Q Where was this house at, her hat shop?

A The hat shop was where the clinic is now. But they lived across the street where the drugstore is in a rock house, a beautiful rock house.

Q I remember it.

A Well, that's where they lived, that was their home, but

the hat shop was over where the clinic is, and they had one there, and then, of course, we went back to the church and then there was a benediction in general, for all of them then. But oh, it was so pretty. People came from everywhere to come to Corpus Christi.

Q Well, did the Bishop ever come for Corpus Christi?

A Oh yes, lots of times he was there, and you know, St. Louis Society carried the canopy. Four men would carry it, one on each corner and then, of course, they'd set them down and then four others would go up there and they'd carry it to the next station.

Q Was this an honor to carry this canopy?

A Oh, yes, it was. Oh, boy. (Laughter)

Q Was there any special ceremony when the Bishop came into town? Would you describe that to me?

A Yes. Everybody came. And at one time, you know, Castroville had a band. It was a real real nice band; Castroville's always been known for musical entertainment here; singing and dancing and all that. And they would go out to Tondre's home; you know, where LaCoste Road comes into Highway 90?

Q Yes.

A Well, there's where the boys on horseback would go, and the band would be there. Of course, the band would march back, but the boys were on horseback, and the Bishop would come, and he was all smiles and everybody, the little girls were there,

we had to be honor guards, I guess is what you'd call 'em, for the -- Children of Mary. See, they had the grown girls in the Children of Mary, and we little ones were the honor guards. We were all dressed in white and we were marching -- and I'll never forget, Faustine's mother --

Q Faustine Sharp?

A Uh-huh, her mother was the carrier of the banner for their organization, and the -- "Anna Ferhein" (Verrein) was in there all in their sunday best, bib and tucker they were (laughter), all fixed up. And it was really a big occasion, you know, when the Bishop came. Now he comes in his big limousine, he hops out and walks into the church. If you're in there you get your blessing and if you're not in there, well it's just a little hard luck.

Q So they actually met him out there where the LaCoste Road --

A Yes, where the LoaCoste Road turns off.

Q And then the whole procession --

A Came back. And we stopped on the bridge, you know, the girls, Sodality, stopped on the bridge and then, of course, the rest of them were behind us there. And then as they went on why we just fell in line. Oh we were trained. We were regular little soldiers. (Laughter).

Q Was this the time when the Polish people came with their wagons?

A Yes, they would come then. They were always there for the

Corpus Christi, Feast of Corpus Christi. They were always there for that. And then they came one day, but it wasn't necessarily Sunday, and I never did find out what day it was, but they would come in their wagons and it wouldn't be anything for the town, it was just these people. And I think it must have been our Lady of Justahova, you know, she's the patron of Poland. And think that that was her feast day and then the priest would have a mass for them and they'd all go to communion.

Q Do you know where these people lived?

A No, I don't. I have no idea. Well, I had to find out from Netta this morning what their name was. I thought, well, it was two of them. Either it was Polish or it was Bohemian. And still the Polish sounded the best to me and then when she says, "Oh, das sin Polaka" -- (laughter)

Q These are Polish --

A Yeah, they're Polish people. See, they had a village up there. They had a sawmill, they had a gristmill, and they made furniture, so I don't know whatever happened to them, whether -- well, the Indians were so bad up in that country. They were really bad up there. There was a massacre every so often and I guess they just decided to leave. Now, whether they were among the first ones that stopped at, oh, where is that, the Black Madona's Church, it's close to

Roundrock, somewhere in there. And I don't know whether they were there already and these people just went there or if they went there about the same time. I wouldn't know. But you know, one time a long time ago Father Lenzen loaned me a book about the history of the church and of course I just would glance at it and read a little bit and then go do something else and come back and read a little bit more, and in that book, you know, it said all about the little chapels that were stuck around in this part of the country. And I'm sure that they were among them because they came over here all the time for the big ceremonies, the big times. And it was real funny, they had their little babies to be baptised, but the Bishop baptised them. Yes, ma'am. They'd march up there and hold their babies and the Bishop would baptise them.

Q Well was, vespers and benediction then was a traditional thing on Sunday?

A Oh, that was on Sunday. Every Sunday at 2:00 o'clock there was benediction.

Q So really Sunday was mostly devoted to church.

A It was, it was church day. It was a church day. And then after vespers, you'd see the little farmers take off and go home and feed their chickens (laughter), milk the cows.

Q What about your solemn communion? Will you tell me about your solemn communion?

A Oh, yes. That was a whole year of religion. Religious education. And, of course, you'd get away from those things. But if they'd come to a vote about what books they should have I would vote for the old-fashioned catechism that we had, the yellow book. I learned more out of that than I did with all the going to church and going to religious instruction and all of that because each question had an answer, and then it gave you a choice, you know, you could either do it this way or you could do it the other way. And that I thought was so much better. You know, I had an awful time with my little granddaughter. See, she stayed with me mostly when she, before she went to school after her mother went to work. And she came home one day and she said, "Oh, Grandma, there are three Jesuses. A black one and a yellow one and a white one." And I said, "No, baby, there're not. It meant that Jesus was for all people." And she said, "No, I can show you, his picture's in my book." And she ran and got her book and sure enough, there was a Jesus there and he was one black and one yellow and one white. And it took me forever to get that through her head, and I said "Where the three come in, it's the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." "Well, I never heard of them before." So it just shows you that they can't grasp it just going once a week.

Q So you went every day to religious instructions? Who was the teacher?

A The nuns were, and Father came over twice a week and he reviewed the lessons that the teachers had given us. His was a review of what we had learned.

Q Then --

A Then the week before communion that was the week that was prayer, visits to the Cross Hill and things like those. And there were three days of silence. It was Thursday, Friday and Saturday that we weren't to talk to anyone, just meditate on Holy Communion. Of course, we were older than the children are now. But I think it stayed with us a little longer, too. And it just, I don't know, the way they, I can't understand the way they try to explain things to children. They were explained in a much different way; of course not as modern as now. But nevertheless, there's such a difference. And then we had our little communion dresses made and oh, that was a day. And then we all congregated at school, you know, we were all dressed up with our little veils and wreaths and then we had candlesticks and our candle was put in there and we carried that to church. We took it up to the alter at offertory. At communion we had to leave them in the bench, you know, where we were sitting. We were all in the aisle, had our chairs in there and then the people that were next to us there, if it wasn't the relatives, why, whoever was there they'd see that our candle would be lighted when it was

time to go, and it was really something.

Q Very solemn. Describe your dress.

A It was silk mulle. Do you know what that would be?

Q I have an idea, but --

A Kind of a soft, soft --

Q Sheer?

A Uh-huh, yes. And, of course, they had long sleeves and they had to have the collars on them. It wasn't no low-neck or short-sleeve or anything like that. And it had, oh, my granddaughter came this morning to bring me some of my groceries, and she had on a dress made like that. Of course, hers is a sundress but the skirt has three teers, and that was the way mine was. And then we had the white shoes and stockings and well, of course, I had curly hair and I wore my hair in curls, so there wasn't anything there. Some mothers at the last minute tried to get (laughter) plaits real tight, you know, it was fuzzed up, it looked so silly.

Q What about -- did you fast?

A Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We weren't allowed to have a drink of water from midnight on or eat anything at all. We had to fast before we went to communion, and even during school on First Friday we couldn't eat or drink anything and then we could go home and eat breakfast or either bring something along and eat it, you know, at school, before we went to the school building.

Q What happened if you forgot and drank water or ate?

A We didn't get to go to communion. I know Lizzie Weiss was in my class, and they were there in their little Sunday house, and she had this little baby, I don't know who it belonged to, on her arm, and somebody said, Oh, give her a drink of water." And she gave the baby a drink of water and drank a swallow of water, and that poor girl cried and cried and cried, and then somebody went down and told the priest and said she didn't do it intentionally, it was just an accident. He says, "Well, that's all right. She can go to communion in the morning."

Q Bless her heart. All right. After the ceremony was over in church, was there a celebration at home?

A At home, yes. Yes, First Communion Day was a very honored day in the home. Your godparents were there, and your aunts and uncles and brothers and sisters and, well, there was such a big crowd of First Communicans they had to divide them around. (laughter)

Q How many were there in your class?

A Sixty. Sixty children. And the year before when my sister made her communion there were sixty-two.

Q That is a large class.

A Well, see, they came from Rio Medina and way up around Yellow Banks and just as far as you could shoot a gun, why, they'd come over here just to go to instruction. But they had to be here a year to go to instruction, to go to

parochial school.

Q Well, did they live here for that year or what was the --

A No, they stayed here, you know, different people would take the children in. They all had relatives, they were all inter-related.

Q So the relative would keep the child. What was the traditional age?

A Fourteen for the boys and twelve for the girls.

Q And was it called First Communion or Solemn Communion?

A First Communion, First Solemn Communion. It was just one, one thing.

Q It wasn't done, there was not two ceremonies, in other words?

A Hum-um, it was First Solemn Communion, and then the next celebration was Confirmation.

Q Tell me about Confirmation.

A Well, that was a wonderful day, too, you see, then there would be two classes. See, sixty-two and sixty would be quite a bunch of them. And then there were so many grown people, well, time went by and they moved on these farms and ranches and they didn't get to go, so then they would have a month's instruction for those, and then they'd come in and go to be confirmed. It was always a big crowd, the church was always crowded to the steeple (laughter), people'd come.

Q Was there any special ceremony on that day for the Bishop's arrival, or was this only --

A It was the same ceremony of his arrival as it was for any other celebration when he came.

Q So this was traditional? Anytime the Bishop came --

A The Bishop came, everybody came.

Q You had the banners, the band, and the flower girls, and all of this?

A Um-hum.

Q And he was a very honored man?

A Yes, he was. He knew that he was the Bishop (laughter).

Q And so did everyone else.

A Yes, yes, we did.

Q Did you get any gifts for your Solemn Communion?

A Oh, yes, see, the godparents traditionally gave the child the prayerbook and the rosary. One of 'em would give the prayerbook and one the rosary. The girls usually got the prayerbook from the godmother and the boys got the rosary from their godfather. That's the way that worked.

Q How did you choose a saint's name when you went for your confirmation? Was there any special significance to that for you?

A Yes. My, mine was Catherine, St. Catherine of Sienna was my patron for confirmation. And my grandmother would always talk about, let's see, how did they say Sienna, "Sanna", and

so that name stuck with me, and then some of them took the name of the nuns or, you know, their teachers.

Q Some favorite person?

A A favorite person, um-hum.

Q Okay. How about Christmas? I'm sure Christmas was always a special time. Tell me, tell me the preparation that your family went into for Christmas.

A Well, we had the traditional Christmas tree and we sang the traditional hymns at Christmas, you know, like "Come All Ye Faithful" and all of that, all of those were sung. And then there was always a nice dinner. There wasn't always turkey. Sometimes it was goose or something like that. My grandmother raised geese up there on the river and sometimes we'd have a nice roast goose or something like that for Christmas. But it wasn't the traditional turkey until I was quite, I guess I must have been about fifteen years old when they started having turkeys for Christmas. We had turkey at Thanksgiving, but my daddy would go out and shoot one, you know, they were still wild, you know, in those days.

Q So was this served on Christmas Day, this big dinner?

A Uh-huh.

Q The family dinner?

A Um-hum. And Christmas Eve, that was when the Christmas tree was decorated and we'd go in and see our presents and

the big ones would go to midnight mass, but we little ones didn't get to go.

The Christmas hymns, of course, they were the same ones over and over. Every year they would sing the same ones, and when I started to sing in the choir, that was in Hondo. And there were several people from Castroville living there then, and also from D'Hanis. And we got to where we didn't have an organist, you know, they just played, whoever got there, you know, would kind of pick out. They all played the piano but they couldn't -- the organ is an entirely different tone, different count. And so we got to where we harmonized those Christmas hymns and there was a Methodist man lived across the street, Mr. Short, and he says, "Lord, come over to my house. Those people are practicing Christmas songs." (laughter)

Q Loved to listen to it.

A Uh-huh. And, well, it was real pretty, because there was a Mr. Nic Koch, he had a lovely bass voice, and then Mrs. John Finger and I sang tenor; I was just ten or eleven years old, and then the others sang soprano and Mrs. John Mechler and my sister, Mary and -- no, Mary Rihn was soprano -- well, anyway, we divided up like that, and we really had a beautiful choir. And then the Bishop came out there to dedicate the church of course, we had that extra mass. Of course, then Mary Kempf had gone to San Antonio. She took --

well, she was educated at Our Lady of the Lake, and then she went back and tried to learn the organ. Well, she was doing real well, but once in awhile she'd get off to that pounding, and one day I said, "Mary, do you know how to count to play an organ? And she said, "Count? It's just like a piano." I said, "No, it isn't. You say One AND two AND three AND four, and you hold that key down until you finish saying the AND (laughter).

Q That's right.

A It was quite funny 'cause I was just a snot-lickin' kid and she was a young lady (laughter).

Q So the choir, the church choir, played a great part --

A Oh, yes.

Q -- in many of the ceremonies?

A Um-hum. In all of the ceremonies.

Q You mentioned that on Christmas Eve you helped decorate. Now, at what age were you allowed to do this? Was this always or --

A No, I guess it was always because at first, I remember, at first we could just pick up the little tinsels and hand them to somebody, you know, to put into the tree. So I must have been real little; I must have been, oh, maybe seven, maybe six. Six or seven years old.

Q So it wasn't always necessarily customary that Santa Claus brought the tree?

A No, huh-uh, not, not at our house. It could have been

somewhere else, but it wasn't at our house. We decorated the tree and then Santa Claus came and brought the presents.

Q And did you receive your gifts on Christmas Eve?

A Uh-uh. Christmas morning.

Q Christmas morning.

A Um-hum.

Q Did you -- you said your family usually went to midnight mass?

A Yes, all the grown ones. Even, well, two of the boys would go, but then the youngest boy and Mary and I didn't get to go, 'cause we didn't get to go out that late at night. Well, I'd of probably gone to sleep and they'd of had to carry me home (laughter). They wouldn't of had much trouble with me, but Mary was a FAT somebody (laughter).

Q I know that Lent was much different say 60 years ago, for instance.

A Oh, yes.

Q Tell me some of the differences that you can think of.

A Well, you et (sic) meat only once a day, but on Wednesday and Friday you did not eat meat. Those were days of fast and, really, fast and abstinence, but most of the people, you know, were farmers around here and so the family et (sic) with them. But there was no meat allowed on those two days. And for breakfast, it was just a light breakfast, like maybe a cup of chocolate -- it had more milk than chocolate

(laughter), it was cocoa, and toast. Or those that worked in the field would have one egg but no meat, 'cause meat was only once a day. And the housewives, of course, their work wasn't quite as strenuous so they could easily do without it. But the afternoon lunches were out. The 3:00 o'clock lunches were out.

Q And this was for six weeks?

A Um-hum. It was a form of penance, or repentance, rather.

Q Okay. So then what about Holy Week? That was really --

A That was really something. I'm telling you, we kids, our knees would nearly be worn out (laughter). You wouldn't believe it.

Q In other words, we don't know what church really is like.

A No, you don't; no, you don't. When I see these people come to church and see somebody over there and they wave at 'em and wave at this 'un over here, I feel like getting up and -- and then another thing about making the sign of the cross. Here lately I have noticed priests come in, dip their fingers, and (indicating) look like they're chasing gnats. That's what it looks like to me. And when the little girl had to go over here to take her examination for communion, well, there was a little boy in there and they were both so darned scared they didn't know what to do. That little girl could hardly talk. And then Father said something about making the sign of the cross and of course the little boy,

he got through awful quick, and I looked at the little girl and I said, "Make the sign of the cross like you're supposed to." And of course she bit her lips and I said, I just did like this (indicating) and then she knew what I meant. The people will come in and they'll make the sign of the cross with either one finger or two fingers. You're supposed to make the sign of the cross with three fingers with your thumb turned to the inside. And finally she made it, and then Father says, "Oh, who taught you how to make that?" She says, "Grandma." See, their mother was baptised a Catholic, but her grandfather wouldn't let her grandmother send her to school or to religion. He was bad against it. He wouldn't let his wife go to church or anything, so this girl, when she moved to Texas, her godfather lived in the Valley and she went down there and she told him that she was going with a Catholic boy and she didn't know how to go about it, and so he says, "You stay down here and we have a very good priest here. And I'll explain to him what happened to you," so she had instructions down there for about four weeks, well, that's just like a drop of water in a bucket. And then when she came, she lived in San Antonio and that priest helped her some and then he gave her some books, and he told her to read, to study up on that. And she did real well in it.

Q What was the ceremony on Good Friday?

A Well, it was the stations of the cross and then there was the adoration of the cross. When, like, at the station where they took the body of Christ down, well, that crucifix was taken down and the purple veil was taken away from it and laid at the steps where you went into the sanctuary. And the people went up there and they venerated the cross, or the body of Christ there. And that was what that was. It was really impressive. Once you have seen it you will never forget it.

Q Did they kiss the wounds?

A Yes, they kissed the wounds. And the children, it took too long for all the school children. So we kissed the side, the wound, heart wound.

Q And how long did this take, this ceremony take?

A It was all afternoon, because see, there was the stations of the cross, and there were readings and then there were songs that they sang, you know, the -- I never could get into the tune of it because it was just a grind, grind, grind with all in one tone.

Q Don't you think it was sort of a monotone in the form of mourning?

A Yes, yes. And then they had the stations and, of course, between each station they sang the stanza that went with that.

Q Then Good Friday was really a day of mourning? All right.

Now, when did Lent end?

A At Saturday at dinnertime. Saturday at noon. Because in the morning it was really, Saturday is the Mass of the Resurrection. And then they distribute Holy Communion. And then the Sunday mass is the Mass of Celebration.

Q Did you take Holy Communion on Good Friday?

A No. No, they didn't. The tabernacle was unlocked and the Host were moved over into the side alter of Our Lady, Blessed Virgin, and it was, the door was locked. And it was not opened until the next mass, when the chalice was moved back to the main alter.

Q This was the only day of the year that you did not take Holy Communion?

A Take Holy Communion, no, ma'am.

Q What about Easter Sunday? Was that a special day?

A Well, the specialty of it was the chanting of the prayers, and of course we always had several visiting priests, you know, and in those days we had Asperagus Mea, and Father came down with the Holy Water?

Q Blessed?

A Yeah, and he blessed the people. And all these other priests followed in, too, and of course they gave the blessing by the hand, with the hand. And it was really, oh, it was an uplift, it was a glorious mass, glorious time. And of course the choir was singing and it was really something.

It's not like now. Well, they have nine hundred masses. They have one of them -- over here once in awhile they have one at 10:00 o'clock and then the next time it's five minutes after 12:00, and then it's at 3:00 in the afternoon the bells ring, I wonder what in the world is going on (laughter).

Q You used to know, huh, when the bells rang you knew.

A Yes, I knew when it was. We had a mass at 8:00 o'clock and a high mass at 10:00 o'clock. And the school term, all during school year there was a mass at 8:00 o'clock. If you didn't make it, well that was just too bad.

Q Did the Lenten regulations pose a hardship on you in any way? The strictness of them?

A No, there weren't any dances or you didn't play cards or anything like that during -- 'course I never played cards so it didn't bother me a bit.

Q When do you think the traditions changed as far as the fasting and the eating of meat?

A I really don't know, I really don't know. I lost track of it 'cause I was still fasting a long time. I wouldn't go to communion unless I could go to confession and then go to communion. I wouldn't go if I couldn't do it. But now they have 30 minute communion, confession on Saturday afternoon, it's 30 minutes and I don't know how in the world those people all get in there, 'cause quck as the tabernacle's

open here they go, like a bunch of cattle. I had a fight with my little girl, you know, they have a way of saying they go up to receive bread. That is a Host, and it's consecrated. It's no bread. It's not a bread traditional, because it's an unleveled yeast, you know, unleveled bread. And it's a host; it's blessed, it's a sacred thing. And she said, "Oh, we went up there and got some bread." (laughter) I got on her and she nearly cried. And she says, "Daddy, everytime I say something Grandma fights with me." And he says, "Well, say it right. She's right. Say it the way she tells you."

Q What was the, I know that there was a Lutheran religion in Castroville also. Now, how did the Lutheran people and the Catholic people get along? Was there any --

A Fine, no friction. No, because when -- we had a hotel when I was a little girl, and the priest here didn't have a -- well, we didn't have a priest for some reason. I don't know whether he was off on vacation or what, but anyway, the priest from the convent came over to our house for dinner. He came every day, and the Lutheran minister came over there and they et dinner at the same table, and so many people would say, "Don't they ever quarrel?" And we said, "Why would they want to quarrel?" You know, the Lutheran, see, the Lutheran is the first church that was established after the Catholic church. Because Martin Luther was a Catholic priest, but

they didn't elect him the Pope so he started his own (laughter). But their prayers, now; I'll tell you something else. Episcopalian people have everything like the Catholics except confession. They don't go to confession, but they go to communion. And I was quite surprised, you know, when Rod died they had the ceremonies like the mass and everything there at St. Mary's University and Bob and three or four other people that I know were Episcopalians, they went up to receive communion. And Sister Ann was a great friend of Rod's and, well, he looked at her to be like a mama. And she would come out here all the time when they'd have parties, you know, he'd have school kids out here, well, she'd come out as a chaparone for the girls. And she looked up and she looked at Bob so funny, and he kind of bowed to her and grinned (laughter).

But a Catholic priest is not allowed to refuse anybody communion. If they request Holy Communion he has to give it to them.

Q Were you allowed to go into a church of another religion as a Catholic?

A Um-um. Um-um. (No)

Q What do you think the reason for this was?

A I don't know, but -- oh, when they had the Lutheran Christmas tree on Christmas Eve we always'd go over there, we went in there. And lots of times, you know, like some of the ladies,

you know, like Mrs. Fous and Mrs. Walter Kralick, she'd fix little, little tiny things, you know, and we'd always get a little package over there.

Q And this is at the Lutheran church?

A Uh-huh. See, there wasn't any other church here at that time. But the children went to school and they went to instruction just like we did. But then before they, well, they always had their communion there, whatever they called it, confirmation, they had that in the summer and then they would go two weeks to the instruction over there.

Q So as far as you can see, there wasn't really a lot of prejudice between the Catholics and the Lutherans?

A No, no, uh-uh.

Q What about if a Catholic girl married a Lutheran boy?

A Well, as far as I know it never happened around here.

Q So there was influence then from the priests in that respect?

A Uh-huh. And, you see, the trouble of it is, they have to sign a paper, an agreement, that any children would be brought up as Catholic, and lots of the Lutheran people didn't want to sign that, and then that was it. They just didn't get married.

Q What about, let's just talk about All Souls and All Saints Day. Which of the two days did you go to the cemetery?

A On All Souls Day.

Q And what did you do when you got there?

A They had, they recited the rosary all the way up there. See, they didn't go in cars or things, they walked. And they were in groups, like I said, the sodalities all had their groups. And they recited the rosary, and then up there Father blessed the graves. He, we stood down along the fence there and Father and the acolytes went around and he blessed the graves and then all of them followed to the head of the cemetery, to the top end, and then there he would kind of give a little discourse on the people that are buried there and the tradition of the burial and everything, and he would stress that Protestants were not buried on that ground, 'cause it was a consecrated ground. Now, they have a different -- the grave is consecrated, but the Protestant partner can be buried right next to it, but his grave is not consecrated.

Q So if there were a pair of, a couple, let's say, and one was Catholic and one was Lutheran up until a certain time when they died the Catholic would be buried on a Catholic cemetery and a Lutheran on the Lutheran. They could not be buried side by side?

A Um-hum. See, because the whole thing was consecrated ground over there. Now, I don't know how it was in other places, but that's the way it was here and that was the reason for it.

Q Did you decorate the graves?

A Yes. We always had flowers in the yard and we took, like

roses and whatever was blooming, and decorated our graves. But we didn't put banners and things like those on there. And lots of people had these big artificial flowers, you know, and the wind would blow and they'd flutter around and pieces would fly from here to Omaha (laughter), and it was, well, most of the time it was just kind of -- and the Mexicans were not buried on the Catholic cemetery. The only ones that were buried there were the Castros, and of course the original Mrs. Castro was buried there. But no one ever put any flowers on her grave or anything. I don't know why, but nobody ever did.

Q Why do you think the Mexicans couldn't be buried on that cemetery? Because Mexicans were traditionally Catholic.

A Well, I think it was because -- you know, for a long time the Mexicans just stayed on one side over there where I usually kneel. The reason I kneel there is because I put my head like this (indicating) and the sound goes to the wall and bounces into my ear. But they stayed there and it was just, it was later on now, when I went to school, too, this Virginia, they called her Virginia Castro, her name was Virginia Herrera, and her sister Victoria, and the boy's name was Joe, and see, they were three orphan kids and the Castros took them. The Castros, the old couple, were their grandparents, and they came to school over there

but they never knelt with us. When they'd come into the church they'd walk over there, but they'd go down the side aisle from the center and kneel by their grandparents or their aunts or whoever was there.

Q Now, tell me where all the Mexican people in the St. Louis Church in Castroville knelt.

A Well, that was a whole lot later on, you know, when more Mexicans came in here. I think that was just started after the Second World War.

Q Were they integrated and knelt anywhere?

A Uh-uh, no, mam'am. They knelt over here, like I say, over here on the side, by St. Joseph's alter, the little side benches.

Q On the right side?

A There weren't very many.

Q But they felt uncomfortable, or they knew their place, where to kneel.

A Yes. And then too, in their prayers, they add a lot of, like a few words of litany onto their Our Father, and then they had a habit of making the sign of the cross with their thumb and then they'd kiss the thumb. And the white people, you know, would (indicating), especially at Castroville. And they felt like they were out of place. And it's just, I guess it's the last twenty years that they integrated into other places. I know one time this, oh, she has a sister

named Marcella, I don't know what their name is. Anyway, she said, "How come you kneel over there with the Mexicans? Why don't you kneel over here where the rest of the people kneel?" And I said, "Well, I don't know whether there's a Mexican there or not, I don't look to see who's next to me."

Q Well, I think I asked you this while ago, but I don't know if we established an answer. You said that the cemetery, they were buried in a separate plat. Well, they were Catholics.

A They were Catholics, and the priest buried them. But they didn't want to be buried in the white cemetery.

Q Oh, THEY didn't?

A THEY didn't, uh-uh.

Q It wasn't that the Alsacians --

A No, no, it had nothing to do with religion. They had their own cemetery.

Q I see. I've always wondered about that.

A And then something else, you know, the Mexicans, the relatives would go and dig the grave. Well here, we had a gravedigger. And they didn't want that. The relatives would go and dig the grave and the relatives would let the coffin down into the grave and then they would cover it.

Q That was probably some of their tradition.

A That was their tradition, yes. And that was what it was. No, it wasn't prejudice, uh-uh.

Q Then on All Saint's Day what was the difference in the ceremonies of the two days?

A Well, Saints Day was the celebration of all the saints, you know, and they had the litany of the saints. I guess you've heard of that, that's one about this (indicating) long. And I've got to tell you this (laughter). My cousin, Adolph Christilles and General Frey, I don't know what the general's name was, but they called him General.

Q Are you speaking of Rosie Boubel's dad, Joe?

A Um-um, no, it was her uncle.

Q Oh, all right.

A They called him General. And he and my cousin, Adolph Christilles, had these two girlfriends, and whenever they'd go down there on Saturday night they couldn't leave until they prayed the rosary, so the old lady had a real course voice (laughter), and so she gave the German prayerbook to Adolph. Well, Adolph had no idea what it was but he knew that it was the litany of the Saints and so he remember, you know, ones that he knew and he'd say that, you know. He got to one, he was all right with Bartholemew, he was just fine with that and Matthew, too, but he got to one he didn't have any idea, he says, "Hilica Heist ay wi ar will." And this old lady hollered "Bett fir uns", and General all but rolled on the floor (laughter).

Q Now, what did they say, what was he trying to say?

A He was trying to say the saint's name, but he said "Be your name what it is", and she didn't hear it, you know, she was so busy saying "Bett fir uns", and that "Bett fir uns", that's "Pray for us" (laughter).

Q "Bett fir uns", okay, "Bett fir uns" means "Pray for us".

A Yes, uh-huh.

Q Okay.

A Well, that's where my children had so much trouble, you know, in going to a, going to the ceremonies, 'cause they learned their prayers in English and poor little hounds, they'd listen and then they'd say "Bett fir uns, Bett fir uns," well, then they got going real good and all of a sudden it turned into something else and they had to wait until they could get the tone again (laughter).

Q It was like a chant, wasn't it?

A Yes, it was.

Q Saint Nicholas Day, how was that celebrated in your home?

A It was the hanging of the stocking in the evening, that was all it consisted of. Of course the boys would play tricks on us. They'd get our stockings and fill them full of rocks and put coals in them and all kind of -- switches and oh, but when the sun went down our stockings were up. (Laughter) And then of course the next morning we'd all jump up and go empty our stockings, usually on mama's bed.

Q Do you think that that is a custom that might have come from

Alsace?

A It came from the Old Country. It came from the Old Country, yeah. And then too, you know, they used to, people would dress up, some men would dress up, you know, like Saint Nicholas, and they'd have switches and stuff. And, you know, they'd come by the house to see whether the kids were good and they said well, that was the forerunner of Christmas. They had to come by so Santa Claus would know which ones were good and which ones were bad.

Q Oh, I see. So it was probably in honor of Saint Nicholas.

A You know, Saint Nicholas was a saint -- he gave all of his kingdom -- you know, he was a rich man. And he gave everything to the poor, made gifts of it, you know, to the poor. He was elected or proclaimed Friend of the Poor.

Q So it was his giving that started the tradition?

A Um-hum.

Q What happened if you failed to make what they called your Easter duty. In other words, go to communion at least once a year and before the Easter season was over. What happened? Say you died and you hadn't done that?

A Well, that was, it was just after the season closed and you didn't, you hadn't received it. But most of the time -- see in a place like this why the priest was called in before a patient got to where he didn't know what it was all about. As quick as somebody was real sick they called in the priest.

Q Well suppose he didn't make it and you died without having had this blessing.

A No, that was the desire. That was the desire of wanting to receive communion. Because that'd be the one thing they'd ask, "Did this man or woman or child want to receive the sacrament?" And of course if the answer was yes, why -- It was inner desire to go to communion. ....(Section omitted)

Q Did you ever know of any instance when this actually happened, to where a person was not buried on a Catholic cemetery because of not having done this?

A Yes. My grandfather. My father's father wasn't buried on a Catholic cemetery. He was a staunch church member. Well, in fact, two of his sisters were nuns, Sister Mary Rose and the other one, I don't know what her name was, I think Scholastica or something like that. She died of typhoid fever in Fredericksburg. She was teaching up there and she died up there. And, all of them were Catholic. But he and a Mr. Vollmer got into an argument about the priest and some nuns, and he said "A man like you hasn't got a right to live," and he got on his horse and went home. Well Vollmer thought that, see, all the Baders were very short-tempered people, and somebody said, "Watch it, he's gonna kill ya, he's going after his gun," and then Vollmer got his gun and got on a horse and went down there, and shot him as he was walking into the house, shot him in the back. And then they called

the priest, you know, they knew he wasn't going to live, but he refused to forgive him, he says, "No, I can't forgive him. Here I have my wife with a little baby and expecting a baby in two months. I can't forgive him." So he was buried, well, the Lutheran cemetary, little Lutheran cemetery there where the new one is now, he was buried right outside that wall.

Q So then it did happen that occasionally if a person failed to have the sacrament of communion at this, at least once during the year or during the Easter season that the law was so strict they were --

A They were excommunicated.

Q The word was excommunicated. I imagine this was hard on the family.

A Oh, it was, it was terrible on 'em. I know, my grandmother didn't get over it for years and years and years. She wouldn't go, like All Saints Day, she wouldn't go to the cemetery because her husband was outside there.

Q He was buried on the outside?

A Um-hum. He was buried right by the Lutheran, not in the Lutheran cemetery, but right by that little fence. See, there was a little stone wall there too.

Q When did the blessing of the Holy Water take place?

A On Holy Saturday. And then the baptismal water is blessed on the eve before Pentecost. See there are two; there's one called Holy Water and one called Baptismal Water.

Q Okay. The Holy Water, was this distributed to the parishioners?

A Um-hum, um-hum.

Q And what did you do with the Holy Water when you took it home? What was the --

A Well, the thing was this. You know, in the Catholic home it was traditional to have the Holy Water font in the door, in the back door and in the front door, and you blessed yourself by dipping your fingers in the Holy Water and make the sign of the cross and ask the blessing of the Lord for your undertaking at that day or time or whatever.

Q Was it used for anything else, any other reason?

A Well, if there was a sick person, you know, and the priest had to be called in, why they used that to bless them with.

Q What was the preparation that was made when you called a priest for a sick person, to come visit a sick person?

A Traditionally you have a crucifix. First you have a white cloth on your table and you have a crucifix. And you usually have two candles. If you have a special candleholder -- now mine is a crucifix and it has a little, little wells for the candles in there. And then there's a little bottle with Holy Water, and there's a little plate with little balls of cotton where, you know, where they anoint them with the Holy Oil and then they wipe that off, so it doesn't get -- and that is burnt, the cotton with the Holy Oil is burnt in a vessel. And that's just about all there is. Then, of

course, if a person is going to confession, well, everybody leaves the room but the priest and the patient. Then if the priest needs assistance at any time he calls in either a son or a daughter or whatever. And other than that, why, you're all called back in for the prayers for the dying.

Q So the Holy Water then was used daily to bless yourself and also --

A And to bless your homes.

Q And on the occasion the priest came in the event of an illness -- at this day and time does the priest still expect you to have all of these things prepared when he comes to your home?

A I don't know. At the hospital we always prepared them, and when Did Noonan was sick, you know, I always had everything prepared, but I don't know whether -- now I think, I know that Father Leopold had one of those little crucifixes like mine, you know, with the little candles and stuff in there, and I know that he took that along because he had it in, you know, a little kind of a case.

Q So the priest most likely would bring these things.

A 'Cause some places, you know, people just don't have those things, they don't have them in the homes.

Q And do you think that the family traditionally now thinks as much of taking Holy Water home and having it in the home as they did, say, fifty years ago?

A Um-um (no).

Q You don't think so?

A No, I know so. 'Cause you can go into a home and there's -- well, I shouldn't talk. I don't have a font here, but I do have Holy Water here. But my niece made a beautiful one for Buddas, it's a great big, like a seashell, you know. And I asked him once, "What are you gonna do with that? Just leave it hanging there and catching dust?" And he says, "No, once in awhile," the girl that cleaned house for him, "once in awhile she takes it down and dusts it."

Q Oh, dear. And who is this now you were talking about?

A Buddas, my son.

Q Rodney? Rodney, okay. So there's another tradition we've seen change considerably, and another thing I think that has caused that to change, is that people now go to the hospital when they're ill, where they used to die at home most of the time.

A Yes, uh-huh. Well, the hospital is equipped with three or four of the sick-call boxes we call 'em. But at home I don't know. (Section Omitted)

Q Okay now, we're going to go back to, I'm going to sum up here, and I'm going to ask some questions that I failed to on some of the subjects we were on. Someone told me that some of the school children stayed at the convent here, which is now the Moye campus --

A They had several. They had my two cousins, Sister Alma is one of them. You know, she was a music teacher in Our Lady of the Lake, and Josephine. She joined but she came out. And somebody said, "How come you left?" and she said, "I couldn't put up with the things that they -- they think that as long as they drive you like a slave then that's gonna make a saint out of you. Well,it won't make a saint out of me and I'm not going." So she left all the things that she took in there, she left them to Sister Alma.

Q Now these are girls that you knew that went to the convent when it was still here in Castroville?

A Yeah. See, their mother was my daddy's half-sister and when the mother died why these two little girls, and they had a brother, but the brother went with their daddy and the girls didn't have much use for their dad and I don't think anybody else did either. But anyway, when he married again, and he wanted the girls to come back and go with them and so, well, Mary was already an apostlate (sic) then, but Josie hadn't started. She was a stenographer. Her job was a stenographer.

Q And whose children were these?

A They were, their name was Kooner, but Mary, oh, she was always kind of half shot - I looked at her to be. I shouldn't say it but absolutely, she acted so darned silly, and then she, this Mr. Marty, he was some bigshot in the Catholic, oh, you know that thing that they pay in --

Q Catholic Life Insurance?

A Something like that, uh-huh, and so she kept on and she wanted them to adopt her. They had only that one boy. So they finally did and so she became Sister Mary Alma Marty. And I said, "Well, didn't her mother mean anything to her?" Her mother fed 'em and clothed 'em when they were little up until they were 12, 13 years old. But see then afterwards that was one thing that Aunt Tillie said, don't separate my children. Keep them together. Well, there wasn't anybody that could take three of them, you know, because everybody had families, but Papa would have taken Mary and boy howdy, I don't know whether they'd ever got along one day or not. Now, Josie was entirely different. She was more, you know, she'd fit herself in and she'd say, "You have just as much right as I have." That's the kind of a person she was.

Q Well, when you went to school over here at the Moye campus were there any children that boarded there that came from out of town, maybe had lost a parent or something and boarded there?

A Well, these two children boarded there before she --

Q Before they went into the religious order?

A Yes, before they went in. They boarded there. And at the same time there were the Nye girls, Joe Ny's daughters, you know, they were all crippled, they don't have bones, it's

kind of a jelly-like thing in there, in their system.

Q Deficiency?

A They were there, and then there were two girls and two little boys. Just right now I can't think of their names. It's not a common name. Well, anyway, those four were there and then when the little boys, see the boys were babies, and this one nun kept them, and then when they got a little bit bigger they took them over and put them in the St. Joseph's orphanage.

Q So the sisters, these children stayed with the sisters to attend school?

A Yeah, uh-huh, they did, and they came over to the little rock school, 'cause I think that the one that the boarders went to were really equivalent to a high school.

Q Uh-huh. Let's go back to the weddings. Traditionally when you were a young woman, young girl, the weddings were held during the week? What days were they never held?

A Never on a Friday and never on a Sunday. I never heard of anybody getting married on a Sunday or a Friday.

Q When do you think this changed, and what caused the change?

A I have no idea. They changed things so many -- you know, sometimes I go to church one Sunday and the next day there's something entirely different. So I don't know when they change it --

Q Well you know, there are marriages on Sunday now frequently.

A Um-hum, and Saturday night.

Q Why do you think, why do you think that the weddings are on Saturdays a lot now? Do you see any reason for that?

A Well, they have a dance on Saturday.

Q (Laughter)

A I'll tell you what one says, he wanted his bride to be rested up because I think somewhere in the deal, I don't know, I didn't know until I heard this man say it, he said, "The groom dances with the bride and every boy that comes," like you tap them, like a tap dance, "everytime they'd tap your bride they'd have to give you a dollar for the --" well, I didn't know that, and I looked at him like I was crazy or he was crazy, and he says, "That's the truth and I'm gonna collect on it. This has been a lot of expense."

Q Pay a dollar, yes, pay something to dance with the bride.

A And the groom's the same way, if the girls want to tap him, why, she had to have a dollar.

Q Do you think it might be economic, do you think the fact that people, most people work at a job during the week?

A Um-hum. And their groomsmen and bridesmaids can't get off unless they lose time and maybe thereby lose a job, and I think that that's, that is the reason. Only reason that I can see.

Q So basically it's the change in the economy from a farming

society to a working society at a job that changed the weekday wedding to a weekend wedding?

A Um-hum, um-hum. I'm sure it is, because I've heard, oh, when Sidney Scott, friend of ours, got married, she wanted to have an afternoon wedding, or you know, right at noon, and so the boy that was gonna be best man says, "You better change that 'cause I ain't gonna be there. I can't get off. That's all there is to it." And from that I judge that that's why.

Q Weddings weren't held in the evening either, were they?

A Um-um. Most in the morning.

Q Mostly in the morning. And with a mass?

A Had a mass and a blessing of the marriage and then they had a dinner and -- Iknow, I was four years old when my sister got married, and her husband's aunt was there. And she talked German. She talked so funny. And they asked her if she wanted more coffee and she'd alwasy say, "Noch a halp dasla", and I was sitting across the table from her and every time the coffee girl'd go around with the coffee pot I'd say, "Noch a halp dasla".

Q "Noch a halp dasla"? "Give me another half a cup?"

A "I'll take another half a cup" is what she said. But every time the girl'd come by she was ready, she'd take another half a cup. And I know that my sister, the one that raised us kids, Lizzy, she reached down and she'd pinch me, and I'd say it anyhow. (laughter)

Q I'd like to know this also; did any of your ancestors come from Alsace-Lorraine? Your grandparents or great-grandparents?

A Yes, but some came under the French flag and some came under the German flag. And I don't know which was who.

Q Do you know where Josef Bader the First came from?

A I ran into that book this morning, and I never have read it because there's so confounded many mistakes in it. You know that I don't know?

Q You don't know where? Well, that's no problem, Mrs. Noonan.

A I could ask Martin Noonan, but he is so busy. See, he's doing all Medina County and he's busy from morning 'til night, and sometimes he says people phone him wanting to look it up right quick. And he says, "Do you know how many papers I'd have to go through to look that up right quick?"

Q It's not that important. I thought that possibly you would know. We've established a lot of differences in traditions. They remain, in a sense, but they don't remain, a lot of them don't remain as we remember them, or I say YOU remember them, say, 50 years ago. Do you have any ideas as to why this happened? What caused the changes?

A I'll tell you, when the young people stopped going to church they made it so it'd be more interesting to the young people, and the more they catered, the more they wanted.

Q Now, do you think that religion, when you were a younger person, had a lot to do with the things that, the home life

and just life in general? You do think so?

A Yes, I do.

Q So you think that religion had a lot of influence?

A Yes, it did. It was all religious influence. Our whole life from the day we were born until the day we went to our grave. Only thing, hardheaded ones like me, we'd drop back, 'cause absolutely, sometimes when they, oh, I forget what kind of a song they had in there, every time they'd sing that thing I felt like getting up and running out. And they'd sing it every other Sunday, and had 99 verses and they sang every one of them.

Q Do you think that this, the church having this stronghold on family life was a good thing?

A Yes, I did, 'cause it kept the families together and if something went wrong your whole congregation was behind you and offering to help and they did help. Now a person can be laying dead here on the side of the street, and they won't even come in and tell you about it. In fact, you have neighbors that have no idea who you are. They don't know what your name is.

Q There isn't any closeness anymore?

A No more closeness. There's no more unity in the --

Q Unity? In the community as a whole?

A Um-hum.

Q Now, is there any thoughts that you have that you would

like to add, possibly something that you thought about that I forgot to ask?

A No, I think we -- the only time I would think about it would be about 2:00 o'clock in the morning. (laughter) And I'm sure you wouldn't be interested at that time.

. . . . (Section omitted.) . . .

Q Tell me about hog killing, Mrs. Noonan. Was that a big event?

A Yes, it was. See, in those days people killed big hogs. They weighed right around 500 pounds. And we had a big tree there, and they'd kill 'em, and then they'd scrape 'em, and then they'd hang 'em up in the tree and take the insides out, and somebody would clean the intestines. They were soaked in vinegar water, and then they were scraped with the back of a knife and then they were turned and scraped on the other side, and that was taking care of the casing. Then they were salted and put in a jar or something for the next day.

Q And they were used for what?

A They were sausage casings, to put the sausage in. And the same way with the stomach, but I think they call that head cheese, they fixed the stomach, stuffed it with parts of the head, the hog's head, and some of the hide and some choice pieces of meat that went in there, and then that was cooked, it was boiled, and it was put in between two boards and weighted down and it made it a flat thing and it was ready

to slice, you know, after it was smoked.

Q Sliced like we would slice lunch meat today?

A That's right.

Q But it was a delicacy?

A Uh-huh. And then the feet were cleaned and they were boiled and sometimes they would just put them down in salt or brine but most of the time they would pickle them, you know, fix vinegar and stuff like that. It was very good. That was jellied pigfeet. And then, of course, the hams and the bacon would be cut out and the other meat like the neck meat and the shoulders, that was ground into sausage. Now, we always fixed the sausage with beef because it would get too greasy if we didn't, and then that was put in this stuffer. We had to press to push the meat through into there, and oh, it was very exciting.

Q Did your family do this alone or did you have outside help?

A No, usually my daddy's stepbrothers would come and help, and sometimes mama's brothers would come and help. You know, it was a big job, that was a big animal. See, they'd have to cut it in quarters to handle it after it was on the tree all night to get cooled out.

Q So that was another reason for the family to get together?

A Uh-huh, oh, yea. And when Grandma would kill, Grandma always had a hog killing too, and they'd all go up there and of course they'd take some pieces of meat and they'd

make chile con carne and they had beans and everything; it was just a celebration.

Q Is parisa a delicacy or a food that you know anything about from way back, or is that recent?

A No, I don't know, I never tasted parisa until after I was married, and we were invited to a little party one time and they had this parisa, and when (laughter), I'm a funny kind of person about eating. And I said, "That looks like it's raw meat in there." And this woman started laughing and she says, "Well, of course, what'd you think it was? It's raw meat and lemon juice and onions and salt and pepper" and I don't know what all, and I said, "Well, I just don't care for it thank you." "You've got to taste it," and I said, "I don't want it. I've been eating other things and I'm not going to spill it all out now just because you want me to eat raw meat."

Q So that tells us, even though it's very popular now --

A I know, I know. Lots of Alsacians use it and I know sometimes they'd have a keg of beer, you know, like Saturday evening, that always had to be something with it. But I never did eat it.

Q But you don't really remember it in your home way back?

A No, no, we never had it in our home.

Q It's sort of a more a party food?

A Um-hum, um-hum. I would judge it to be a filler-in.

Q Dried blood sausage to me, I'm sure that that is something that isn't made any other place but right here in this area. Would you tell me where the blood came from and what the ingredients were and what you had to do to make it?

A Well, that is, the blood is taken from the slaughtered pig immediately after it falls, and they cut the jugular vein or whatever it is, and catch the blood, but it has to be continually stirred, you know, to keep it from --

Q Curdling?

A Yeah, uh-huh. Or congealing. And then as you prepared the other things why you still continue stirring this. Every once in awhile you go back and stir it. And then you take all of that out. In other words, you strain it, just strain it through a collander, and you take your dry bread and soak it in sweet milk and you take your onions and parsley and things. Now you cut up what is commonly known as meltz, and that's taken from the inside of the pig, and I think it has to do, I think it is a covering either for the liver or for the intestine.

Q I believe it's for the intestines. It's sort of a fatty --

A Fatty. It looks like a lace curtain when you hold it up. And that's chopped up and that's fried, and then you add your onions, small green onion, not too much, and your dry onions sliced in thin slices, and your parsley and your coriander, not too much; just a small amount, and

your salt and pepper. And you add that and let it cook. Then you pur that into your bread, like a bread pudding, like you'd fix a dressing, and add it into your blood. Add the blood to that and keep stirring. And then it can be baked in a pan, in a dish, but they clean the big intestine and, you know, clean it inside and outside and wash it good and soaked it in vinegar water, and then you boil it, you have your boiling water. Not too rapidly boiling, but as it comes to a boil, and you slowly dip your sausage in there to keep it from bursting, and when you prick it with a needle and no oozing, it's done.

Q So you put this blood mixture into these large intestines.

A Um-hum. That's called koodla (sp), but don't ask me how it's spelled, 'cause I don't know. Unless it could be k-u-d-l-a (spelling).

Q Well, we'll have to do it phonetically because that's the only way we can write these Alsacian words, anyway, is the way they sound.

And then when did you eat this?

A Well, it could have been a supper dish or it could have stayed over 'til the next day. You know, because the next day was really the day when you made your sausage and cut up your bacon and your lard and things. So this was a prepared meal.

Q I see. Well, that's interesting. I know that there's,

I'm sure that there's no place else that makes that.

A I don't either, but I have never heard anybody say anything.

Q You know, my parents made a type of blood sausage too, but they didn't do it the way you just described it. They would use cooked meat and put, mix some of this blood, and then the rest of the process was the same, but they had the meat. They didn't use the milk and the bread and all the things that you -- I think that was more German, because Dad was German.

I'm going to pick up on a few things that we talked about earlier and ask a few more questions. You mentioned that you and your husband had a shivaree because it was the second marriage for him. Describe what happened; what the people did and what took place at a shivaree.

A Well, our shivaree was cut short because his mother was very sick, but it was just about bedtime, and there was the most horrible racket out in the yard you ever heard tell of. They were beating on washtubs, ringing bells and oh, you wouldn't believe it. And they were hollering and cheering and going on, and of course we went to the door and after about five minutes of this noise why my husband apologized to them for not asking them to come in because of the sudden illness of his mother. And she was really sick. I think she was aggravated because she didn't like me (laughter).

Q Aw now, she couldn't of had a nicer daughter-in-law.

A Ah, let me tell you something, you can't please some people. And so then later on, oh, I guess it was about a week, well my husband met -- they were mostly men that were out there. And they had a kind of a, he got 'em some beer and whatever they et, I guess, cheese and crackers or something like that; I wasn't concerned with that, and so they had refreshments then. It was about a week later.

Q But in other words, if you wouldn't have had the illness in the family then you would have asked them in, and have like a little party?

A Oh, yes, because we would have been prepared for it, see, because we had planned to be gone about a week. And, of course, we were cut short, we --

Q You say your honeymoon was cut short, Mrs. Noonan. Where had you planned to go on your honeymoon?

A Well, Mrs. Noonan had some very good friends at Rockport, and they had asked him to bring me down there. They wanted to meet me and, you know, become acquainted with me. I think they wanted to look me over (laughter).

Q The economic situation in Castroville say 1910, 1920, in that area, as a whole were the people in Castroville poor, rich, middle-class, or how well-off were they economically?

A Well, everybody owned their own home. There were very few people that was renting a house or anything like that, and

everybody had their garden. They had a milch cow, they had chickens and raised a pig or two, and I'd, of course, I don't remember anybody being real poor.

Q And there were a lot of businesses also, right?

A Well, mostly saloons (laughter). There were one, two, three four. (laughter)

Q Four saloons for about a thousand people?

A And there were three stores. There was Haller-Mangold, which was a small store, and there was L. M. Tondre, no, Tondre and Keller, which was one of the big stores, and Courand's store, was the biggest one of them.

Q You always hear about the saloons in Castroville, regardless of who you talk to. The men, was -- I mean, were they known as a drinking group?

A No, no, we had a few, just like there are now. There were a few that couldn't hold their drinks. And, of course, they would get loud, but they never were arrested or anything like that. They were just told to go home.

Q You know, women, a lot of women, work these days to help make a living. Was that true at all, when you were a younger person?

A Well, when there were, you know, like if there was a, say for instance, a cotton crop or something like that and there were storms brewing, everybody went out and helped. And if there was sickness in the family everybody went and

helped, and it was just a kind of a community affair, like brothers and sisters more than anything else. But some of the girls would go and help out in homes and worked that way. But, Lord, the wages were so ridiculous I don't see how they could pay for their shoes to get there and back (laughter).

Q What were the wages?

A Well, I think that the top wages were $6 a month.

Q Did they live in the home when they'd, worked out like that?

A Um-hum, um-hum.

Q So it was housework.

A Yes, it was housework, um-hum.

Q Do you remember the first automobiles?

A Oh, yes. It was a great big Tally Ho. It was about, I guess they had six or eight series of benches, you know, they looked like the old-fashioned flower stands that everybody had on their porch. And then the last one was way up high, and you sat up there, and it was operated by chains on the wheels, kind of like the bicycle today, but it was running on motor oil, on petrol, they called it.

Q Who was fortunate enough to have one of these?

A Oh, it wasn't, there wasn't anyone here. It wasn't locally. It came out from San Antonio. Two men came out, and you had to have a dime to ride on it, and you got to ride around, and brother, did I get to ride (laughter).

Q That was very exciting?

A Oh, it was. And then later on a great big long car came through; it was -- I can't remember the name of it. Later on, a car called Pierce-Arrow that looked very much like that. But what the first one's name was I don't know. I was too young to remember it.

Q Well, do you know who had the first automobile here in Castroville?

A No, I don't, but I think that -- I just don't know.

Q I think maybe the Courands, since they seemed to have been very well-to-do people.

A Well, they were, but I don't think they had the first car here.

Q Mrs. Rosie Boubel said she thought that Mr. L. W. Burell probably was one of the first ones in the community to have an automobile.

A I imagine he was. I imagine he was, but I wouldn't swear to it because I don't know. But I think he was. I know that it wasn't Courand.

Q We also talked about your first, your Solemn Communion, your First Solemn Communion, at length. And you mentioned that you went to school that morning first. All right. Then what happened? How did you get to church? Tell me what happened.

A We were lined up like we knelt in church. See, we had chairs down the center aisle. And we walked according

to size, you know, and we walked from the school. We were there, assembled in the school yard at the rock school. And the boys were over on this side and the girls were over here. So the boys came out first and got out on the street and the girls followed. And the congregation was there to meet us, and then they fell in and marched behind us, and that's the way it was. But it was an impressive and a beautiful sight to see that many children walking with their, holding their little candles and, of course, they were dressed up, and it was very pretty. It was very impressive. And of course then we knelt in the benches, it was usually a relative who sat next to the child, you know, to watch to see that their candles were lighted and were put out at the right time, and everything like that.

Q I suppose there were more than just people from Castroville here?

A Oh yes, uh-huh. Yes, because see, godfathers and uncles and aunts, why, it was a great day in a child's life. It was really a great day.

Q Something you never forgot.

A That's right.

Q You also mentioned that at Confirmation there were two classes. Does this mean that -- two communion classes -- does this mean that you, that the Bishop came every other year, usually?

A Usually every other year. Sometimes it would go two or three years, according to how big the class was.

Q You also mentioned gypsies that came through town occasionally. Could you describe what they looked like and what kind of vehicle they had?

A Well, at first they had heavy wagons, heavy wheels and things. But the wagon box was kinda like on ropes or something because they would swing as the team walked. And the men were kind of short to the best of my memory, they were kind of short people. And the ladies had these great big shawls over their heads and kinda like the Mexicans from Mexico wore those mantillas, down to the ground. That's the way they were dressed.

Q Were they dark-skinned people?

A Dark, very dark. Black hair and dark eyes and dark skin.

Q Were they usually clean or --

A Well, you know, in traveling in wagons and the dust, see, there were no paved roads or anything, and the dust and then the rain'd catch 'em and all of that. And one thing that was impressive about 'em, they'd go to the river and wash their clothes.

Q You said that they, there was always such a fear of taking children. Did you know of that ever happening?

A No. No, we had no newspapers or anything, any outside information or anything like that. The newspaper that I

remember was my grandfather had, and it was printed in Ohio. And of course by the time it got to Castroville, (laughter) it was last year's news.

Q What about medicine shows? Did any --

A Oh, yes, they would come down. 'Course that was a little bit later. They came more after 1912 when the medicine shows came through. And oh, they sold medicine like hotcakes. It cured anything from a snakebite to rheumatism. (laughter) 'Course it was mostly brown water with a little alcohol in it.

Q Tasted good, huh? Did they have a show with this, the medicine --

A Most of the time they did. They would have a little, just maybe a little talk show, maybe they had somebody play music and something like that. I remember one show they had a violinist; he was very good, and I don't think he belonged to any medicine show. I think he was dodging something (laughter). Because he could make his violin talk and you could understand it. Like he would play the Our Father on there. And it would be an Alsacian or a German sound.

Q Is that right?

A Yes, ma'am. And it was just beautiful. And of course they didn't charge for this little entertainment at the gate or anything, but they sold the medicine.

Q What, when you went to communion, who was the priest that you made your communion under?

A Father Hechman, Alfonse Hechman.

Q Were you in his first communion class?

A No, I was in the second class. My sister was in the first class, and I was in his second class.

Q Did you know Father Kirch?

A Oh, yes, he used to board at our house.

Q Really?

A Um-hum.

Q We had found or heard that he, that there was a petition that asked him to leave Castroville. Is this true?

A Yes, there was. It was a terrible misunderstanding on the people of Castroville. Something came up; I think there was an illegitimate child somewhere. And, of course, a priest cannot even under pain of death, cannot reveal what goes on in the confessional. And they wanted to know who this was, and he refused to answer. And then they, I think, I think they figured out it was his (laughter). They didn't have sense enough to know what the laws were, and they were so worked up they couldn't leave their hands out. So they took up a petition for that. And I know that when they went around and they came by and Mr. Haner, who was a Lutheran man, and I don't know what his given name was, he was a crippled man, and my father was standing on the corner and my father said, "Look, I don't know anything about it; I don't want to hear anything about it. You are talking about

an ordained priest." And that was that; they didn't bother him anymore.

Q But he actually had to leave because of this incident, right?

A Well, there was such an uproar. People didn't go to church and they wouldn't go to the Sacrament, and they wouldn't do this, and so he finally had to leave.

Q You mentioned also your party dresses that you used to wear to the dances and how you had to have one for the dances even if you didn't have a new one for church. I was interested in what length did you wear at that time. Was it to the floor or --

A No, it was above the ankles. I was quite young then. But it was above the ankles. The young ladies wore floor-length dresses. And most of them had a little, oh, it was a kind of like a little tape across and they would stick their hand through it and that kept the skirt from interferring with their steps. You know, like you hold your dress when you --

Q They held it up a little bit off the floor. Did they have a dance book where they wrote the names down of their sets they were --

A Oh, yes, uh-huh. Oh, yes. You bet you. When you went in there, why somebody'd grab your book and it'd go from one to the other and then all of a sudden here'd be somebody and he'd say, "Well, this is my dance," and "Who are you?" (laughter) By the time the book got back to you.

Q You said that you'd go every day to the meat market with your little bucket to buy meat. Tell me, how much a day

did you spend to buy the meat, about, do you remember that?

A Oh, it was according to the day. It was a very little amount that we spent, because you could get stew meat. Usually they gave you a soup bone. Now it's $1.37 for one little slice of bone and about (indicating) so big a piece of meat on it.

Q About three inches in height and --

A That was it.

Q -- in those days they gave you that --

A They gave you the soup bones.

Q Do you think it was like 25 cents or 10 cents, something in that neighborhood?

A Oh, yea, 10 cent soup bone was a heck of a big bone. You made soup and for supper you had hash out of that soup meat. You know, you put peppers and onions and all that kind of stuff and made a gravy to go with it.

Q You know, that was delicious. I remember mother making it, too, and it's something you don't make anymore.

A You don't have time. (Laughter) Like Charles Suehs said, you get a sandwich. ..... (Section Omitted) ...

Q You talked about some of the farmers having Sunday houses. Is there a house left in Castroville that had been a Sunday house? Do you remember?

A Yes, Bella Kilhorn lived in one up here close to my grandmother's. There was three in a row. And then later

one of them was called the Simone house, and the other two were, you know, were Sunday houses. Then there was one, my great-grandmother lived in that house where Oscar Suehs lives now. And there was one on this side (indicating) of that house. Whether it was on her lot I don't know. But I think it was. And I think it was, because the Mehrs and the Hutzlers and different ones stayed in there on a Sunday.

Q They came from Dunlay?

A From Bader Settlement.

Q Bader Settlement. Are there, today are there any left? I mean, still standing?

A Not that I know of, you know, the one that was the Simone house, that was renovated, and the one where Bella lived was added onto and it changed the contour of the house.

Q I'm trying to remember where Bella Kilhorn's house was.

A You know where Mary Biry lived, Francis Biry's mother? All right, just immediately across there there was a big rock house. It was at one time a store or something, and then it was later, Tony Kilhorn has his blacksmith shop in there, but it had already began to fall down, you know. But a Mexican family named -- I can't remember; it wouldn't make any difference -- lived in there and I remember that the lady had an open sore on her leg, and they would go to my grandmother's house to get the equivalent of what is now penicillin, but, you know, it was kind of a growth on the

top of her preserves that was stored in five-gallon crocks. And she would peel a piece off and put it on a little piece of material and they would take it home and put it on her leg. Now what it did for her I don't know, but it evidently helped her because they kept coming back every other day and then I was there when my grandmother said, "They'll have to wait now until some more grows because they had used it all up."

Q But you don't know if it actually healed --

A No, they moved away. But it evidently helped her because they wouldn't have kept coming back.

Q Right. You talked about the decorated wagons that the Polish people would ride in when they came to Castroville. How were they decorated? Would you describe that to me?

A Well, mostly the animals wore the decorations. They had a few of those big flowers on the wheels but you know with the dust -- there were ruts that deep (indicating) -- and dust, why these flowers would get all tangled up and messed up. But mostly they had 'em on the harness of the horses.

Q And what were they made out of?

A Paper.

Q Paper flowers. Were there many wagons like that?

A Mostly there were three or four, and then the next time maybe it'd be four or five, but different people would come in, would be in 'em.

Q You also mentioned there was a real good band in Castroville. Do you remember who played in that band?

A Oh, yes, some of them I remember. There was the Biedigers, Willie Biediger, Arthur Holzhaus, Joe Holzhaus, and Joe Holzhaus's son and Willie Biediger's son, there were two little boys, little bitty boys, and they played in there. Well, Walter went on and had a band of his own, a big band, with world travel. And he also played in the Navy band, and he couldn't read a note of music, but he had a wonderful ear and Mr. Sousa had a new piece, you know, band piece. And he asked, the man in charge, says, "Let me have your best player. I want him to play this." So they called on Walter and they handed him the sheet and he looked at 'em, and he says, "I can't play it. Somebody else has to play it first." And he says, "Well, why?" And he said, "Well, I don't know what this means."

Q This was Walter who?

A Walter Holzhaus. Yes, Joe Holzhaus's son. And his mother was a Biediger, was, what was her given name? Well, I'll be darned. Well, after 75 years you don't remember.

Q Did they play for dances here sometimes?

A No, not that I know of. But whenever there was, like on the Fourth of July when they had their little parades and get-togethers and things, they'd play. They'd practice twice a week. Some of the Naegelins, Otto Naegelin I know

was one of them, and oh, they had a number of them. Mr. -- hey, Rosie Frey's uncle, Mr. Charlie Maurer, was in that band.

Q Charlie -- yes. I didn't even know they had a band, you know, until you told me, 'cause I could have asked --

A Oh, they had a suit and everything. Boy, they were really up to snuff. And when they had, you know, a little something at Hondo or someplace like that, they'd go out there and play.

Q Who played for the dances here? Do you remember?

A Mostly it was Gene Arts.

Q He must have been very popular.

A He was. He had good music and his people who played with him, you never heard them make a bad remark; you never saw them take a drink or anything. They sat on the stage from the time they got there 'til they left. (Laughter)

Q You mentioned 3:00 o'clock lunches that you didn't eat the 3:00 o'clock lunch during Lent. Was this customary to have lunch every day?

A Yes, because see, your breakfast was early because people worked their fields with teams, and they had to be out there early in the morning and then they'd come in and unhitch their teams and let them drink water and roll in the dust and eat, and the menfolks went in the house and et (sic), so the dinner was usually at 11:00 o'clock. And then at 3:00 o'clock, why you were pooped, so you had -- I don't

know whether the men came in or whether they took a piece of bread or something along. I can't remember that. But I know that we kids would go in and get a piece of bread or some cookies or something and the ladies had coffee.

Q Then what time was your evening meal?

A 5:00 o'clock or 5:30.

Q That early?

A We were usually through by the time the 6:00 o'clock bell rang for prayer. That was in my home.

Q Yes, yes, I understand. I think it was custom, pretty typical.

A Yes, it was, uh-huh. See, at that time the home was such a close proximity to the church that you could hardly open the door when you wasn't stepping from one into the other, which was a very good thing.

Q There's something I wonder if you could clear up for me. What was the difference between a Low Mass and a High Mass?

A Well, basically the prayers are the same, but a Low Mass is just the prayers recited. A High Mass, they were sung, and then there was a -- in the Low Mass there wasn't any sermon, you know, preached, per se. There was some announcements made, but not a big sermon. But in a High Mass there was a sermon. The Gospel was read, the Epistle -- no, the Epistle was read at the alter, and the Gospel. But then there was a resume' of them, of both of them. And the

priest would tell you what the parts, what the main parts of the Gospel and the Epistle were.

Q And the meaning of them?

A Um-hum.

Q Well, I believe now that I have covered everything that I can possibly think of, really. And unless you can think of something you might want to add.

A Well, I was going to call you about the procession. Oh yes, and they also took us back to the school in the communion procession.

Q The whole congregation took you back?

A Um-hum. We didn't go into the yard, we just went to the school and then, of course, our sponsors, whoever, my sister had to take all of her brothers and sisters. I don't know how she ever did it. She was such a gentle soul.

Q Which sister was this?

A That was Elizabeth.

Q Was she the oldest sister?

A Uh-uh. She was the second oldest. Alice was the oldest.

Q But she took over for your mother?

A Oh, yes, she took over for mama. Um-hum. I know, we'd want something or need something, we'd never go to mama, we'd go to Elizabeth.

Q Well, I believe I covered everything, Mrs. Noonan, in depth, and I do appreciate it; I appreciate your time and being

able to come into your home and we're going to give you a copy of the tape for letting us interview you. Thank you very much.

INDEX

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan
Tape #B3
Sides 1-2-3-4-5-6

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan
Tape #B3
Index (cont.)

Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan
Tape #B3
Index (cont.)

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I, Ottelia (Tillie) Bader Noonan, volunteerly
interviewee's full name - last first

give Castroville Public Library the full use of the information recorded on tape on the 11th day of Sept., 1980, in return for which I will receive a tape of the interview.

Tillie B. Noonan
Interviewee's signature

I, Madelyn Boubel, the interviewer of Ottelia B. Noonan hereby release all rights, title, literary or copyright interest in the interview conducted on 11th day(s) of Sept., 1980, to the Castroville Public Library Oral History Collection.

Madelyn Boubel
Interviewer's signature