HELEN (LENA) JUNGMAN - 1900

MEMOIR

Alsatian Customs and Traditions

B20

HELEN (LENA) JUNGMAN - 1900

PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of a tape-recorded interview conducted by the Castroville Public Library Oral History Program Project B on November 22, 1980. Joyce Ewert transcribed the tape and Faustina Sharp was the interviewer and editor of this transcript. The interview took place in Mrs. Jungman's home.

Helen Marie, or Lena, as she is known in Castroville, was born and raised in the Devine area and had many family ties with the Castroville area. She recalls, with much pleasure, her childhood and family life. Lena married Curly Jungman. For several years they operated a cafe in Castroville, so Lena has always been known for her culinary skills. Lena's family was Alsatian and in this interview she tells about the typical foods they enjoyed at home.

The Castroville Public Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the taped memoir, nor for the views expressed therein; these are for the listener to judge.

Tape # B20
30 minutes
transcribed

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Helen Schneider Jungman
Tape # B20
Sides 1-2

Side 2 Page

Q Why did you get the name of Lena when your name is Helen?

A I just don't know. I just don't know where it came from but I was called that from child on and then when I put in for my social security they said is that your real name and I said no my name is Helen Mary Elizabeth Schneider because they said I had to go by real name. But where they got that name Lena I'll never know.

Q Tell me a little about your parents.

A Oh, I had the greatest. I just loved my parents dearly. When my sister and I, every morning Daddy would come in from the cow pen we'd make him let each one of us climb up on his shoulders by holding our hands and he'd put us up on his shoulders. We loved him. We just loved our parents.

Q Can you tell me a little about your grandparents. They lived in Castroville.

A Yes. Grandma Slayton and Grandma Schneider both lived here in Castroville and we loved them very much and we'd come up to Castroville about once or twice a month papa would have to come up and tend to 'em and help 'em out because Uncle Louie had drowned in 1902 and on August the 23rd. He had gone out into the field to cut corn fodder in those days but now they don't know what that is. But they came home from the field, and he says, "Let's jump in this water and wash." Him and Adolph jumped off in there and down he went and he never did come up until they drug the river and found him. So there was Aunt Mary with

five small children. No way to make a living hardly and Papa would come up and help her out.

Q When you came to your grandmother's, what are some of the things you remember eating. What did you have that was special?

A Well, just almost anything that's ordinary food because those days they didn't have very much money and Grandma Slayton, she would go to the store, she'd have to walk, there was no way, she didn't have no way to go but she would go to the store in those days and they would give candy for pelon and she had a half-gallon jar and we'd run for that jar as soon as we'd get there. We'd eat that half-gallon of candy while we were staying there. And she always had it ready for us and when we'd go to that well and draw that water out of that well. That's the only place she had to put her food was down in that well. She'd tie it in little buckets like her butter and her milk and eggs and everything she'd hang them down in that well. Well and we just looked forward to eating that good preserves and all kind of stuff she had. You know as little as they had those days, they just didn't have much, but we just dearly loved Grandma Slayton. And then in later years she came and stayed with us at Devine. She stayed with us the biggest part of her old age. And Grandma Schneider, she was in bed, she never was up very much. She was real old and she laid right in that front window. We always could look for that and we'd jump out of that

hack and we'd get there and man, did we run down that hill there. We thought that was the greatest thing. All five of Aunt Mary's kids and Dory and I, we'd have more fun running up and down that hill.

Q A bunch of cousins.

A And then run over to Eddy Lamon's. We went over there and there was old Gussie and what's her name up here?

Q Florence?

A Florence, and we just practically lived there and one day we went over there and the peaches were hanging on the trees so good and I swiped me one and that thing said, "Helen stole a peach."

Q Was it a good stone peach?

A Oh, it was a good one.

Q They had an orchard, didn't they?

A Yeah, sure did. And we were such close friends.

Q Did they share their orchard with you?

A Not much.

Q Not much.

A Not much but I swiped that one and the old parrot told on me.

Q What did your grandmother do with her milk?

A Which grandma?

Q Your Grandma Slayton. What did she do with her milk?

A Well, she used it in her coffee and just cooked a little with it. She never did get much on hand.

Q Oh, she didn't have much left?

A No, she was just all alone and very little income.

Q Did she make cheese?

A No, not that one so much but Grandma Schneider lived with Aunt Mary and Aunt Mary was a Mangold. That was Uncle Louie's wife. And they had a pretty hard way to make a living, I'll tell you.

Q Uh-huh. When you were, when you were little at home did you, did you have any cows?

A Oh, yeah, papa had cows, hogs, chickens.

Q What did your mom do with the milk then?

A Well, what they didn't use, she always had clabber and cottage cheese and the cooked cheese and we just enjoyed that very much.

Q Tell me how you made the cooked cheese.

A Well, you take it and crumble it real fine and put salt in it and then you hide it on to under something and just let it get good and rotten.

Q It really stinks, doesn't it?

A Oh, Mrs. Jungman used to put it under the bed all the time. (Laughs). I'll tell you, how we lived.

Q My grandmother put it behind the stove.

A Yeah. Yeah, when it was real cold you had to keep it because it just would freeze, but we'd have to, when we got up a little size, why we had to help papa. I'd go out and feed his hogs and horses and help him milk the cows, feed all that.

Q Did you like when you made cooked cheese, how did you do it?

A We put butter in the skillet and let it melt real slow and just keep stirring it until all the lumps were out of it and it was really good. Real good.

Q Did you eat the crust?

A The bottom of the pan? It was surely good.

Q Wasn't it good?

A Ah, great.

Q Did you put any seeds or anything in it?

A Yeah, that caraway seed, is that what they call it?

Q Caraway seed, uh-huh.

A Yeah, we put a little of that in it and Curly's mother was a great cheese maker. She always had it.

Q How did you serve your cottage cheese? Did you do anything else with it besides just serve it with cream?

A Well, you could make pie out of it. We made pie and then you'd serve it like that and well, there's so many ways you can use cottage cheese.

Q Tell me how you made pie. Cottage cheese pie.

A Well, you take about three eggs and a cup of sugar and let's see, you don't have to put much flour in that, it thickens itself and then a little flavoring. Did I say salt and butter? And then put it in your crust and bake it real slow.

Q And it sets?

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you ever make it with onions, like a quiche?

A You mean to eat?

Q Uh-huh.

A Yeah, mama always had onions in the garden, those green onions and she'd always bring in a bunch of those and then we would eat cottage cheese and home cured bacon and cornbread.

Q You're making me hungry.

A Well, I'll tell you right now, we ate good. To think how poor they had to live though you just can't believe it.

Q Tell me what you had for breakfast.

A Well, for breakfast we always had bacon or ham and eggs and cornbread. Butter, homemade butter.

Q Did your daddy --

A Jelly.

Q Did your daddy ever go out and kill any --

A Oh, yes, squirrels and rabbits, he'd bring them in and mama would make "Hausenpfaffer" and make a dish of that good old brown gravy. It was so good.

Q Tell me how she made "Hausenpfaffer"?

A You put salt and pepper, onions, vinegar. You'd leave it overnight and the next morning you'd take it out of that vinegar and onion and stuff and cook it just like you do any other stew.

Q Sounds good.

A Oh, it was good, I tell you we enjoyed it every time. And he always knew what kind of rabbits, you know the rabbits sometime would have knots on 'em and he would always be sure they didn't have no knots on 'em. And the little squirrels, oh, they were so good.

Q How did you fix the squirrels?

A Just like you do the rabbits. You just make a "Hausenpfaffer" all night. And then you cook it like you did the rabbit.

Q Did your father ever kill any deer?

A Very few. Those days there was no deer around our place. We was four miles East of Devine and I never did know anything about deer hunting until we got older, cause in those days nobody ever done much of that hunting like they do now.

Q Or birds, you didn't --

A Oh, yeah, we loved those quail and doves. We always had a bunch of those.

Q How did you fix your quail?

A Well, you'd either fry 'em just like your chicken or either make a stew out of 'em. Of course that gravy was always so good, you had to sop that.

Q With homemade bread?

A Yeah. Oh, mama had homemade bread all the time.

Q How did you fix your birds, doves?

A Well, you put salt and pepper and dip 'em in flour, fry 'em slow, so they cooked through and put the gravy on 'em.

Q Now, Lena, I know you're famous for dumplings.

A I've made so many of those things. Well, the way I do mine is put salt in it and mix 'em up with eggs, the more eggs, the better they are and roll 'em real thin and let 'em dry a little, and put your chicken on, in butter and let it fry and then after it's fried a little, then you get that juice out of the birds or chicken or quail, whatever it is. Then you put water on it and just let it boil and boil, then have your dumplings cut up into little squares, drop 'em in there and just before you take 'em off, I put a stick of margarine if it's a big batch and a can of small milk.

Q It's kind of fricasse.

A Oh, it's so good, they turn out so good.

Q When you went to school, when you walked to school did you take a lunch pail?

A Yeah, we always had our little pail and carried our lunch. Walked a mile and a half to school, no shoes.

Q Got tough, didn't you?

A Yeah, yeah, I tell you we sure did. We just had a hard time.

Q What did you take in your pail?

A Well, she always managed to have some kind of little something in the meat line and then some cookies and an apple and an orange and we had a little bucket we carried it in.

Q Now, when you were at home you killed hogs.

A Oh, yes, seven and eight hogs a year papa would kill. And he'd save everything. He never wasted a thing. And he'd call some of the neighbors to come over and help him. When they'd get through he'd give 'em a big old hunk of meat for helping. In those days you didn't have to pay 'em for everything.

Q Start from the beginning and tell me what you did with the hog.

A Well, we'd heat that water in those big old pots you know. And papa would have some boards on the ground and then they'd have a barrel and they'd have that boiling water in that barrel and slip it in that barrel and you know let it soak in there. Scald, then they'd pull it out on this board and they'd scrape it and mama would come arunning with a bucket to catch that blood for blood sausage and well, just went on until we got it hanging up and then let it hang overnight maybe so it'd be good and cold and the next morning we'd have some of the neighbors come over and help us butcher. And we had the best neighbors in the world I'll tell you. Those days people loved each other and they'd help each other but now you can't get nobody to do nothing. Can't pay 'em enough.

Q Did you have a party then or did you have a nice dinner?

A Oh, yeah. Yeah, mama would take some of the hog, the neck meat or somewhere and fry it real good or the ribs or the backbone, oh, that was the best stuff. That backbone

and the ribs, she'd put it in the stove and bake it and then we'd always have a good dinner. She always cooked a good dinner because those neighbor men would come and help.

Q They got hungry.

A Yeah, oh they were the best people.

Q Do you remember what she served with it?

A Well, just vegetables out of the garden and this meat. She always had something good to eat, don't ever think they didn't, they always ate good.

Q Tell me how they made the blood sausage. What did you put in it?

A Oh, golly. You took that, what do you called that net, the thing you cut that up real fine, onions and you soaked bread in milk and put that in there and then your seasoning and you'd take that little funnel that you made the sausage with and you'd have to stuff it like that and oh, they were so good.

Q You put 'em in a casing.

A Uh-huh.

Q Where did you get your casing?

A We'd clean 'em from the hog.

Q Tell me what it is.

A Tell what?

Q Tell me what a casing is.

A It's the entrails of the hog, you'd have to strip 'em out, they were just about that big?

Q About two inches?

A Not the big ones, but the little ones. Man I've cleaned a many a yard of those things, I'll tell you.

Q Do you turn 'em inside out to clean 'em?

A Yeah. Clean 'em on the outside and then turn 'em over and clean 'em again. When they come out of there, they're as clean as clean can be.

Q And that's what you used to stuff --

A Stuff the sausage. We stuffed the blood sausage and then we'd get down to the sausage. And cut up the bacon and everything. Just really, really wonderful how papa and mama worked.

Q How did you keep your bacon?

A Well, papa would salt it, lay it flat on the skin, you know, till the next day. And the next morning he'd turn it over and salt it on the other side. And he'd put coleander and salt and pepper and oh, whatever they put on that bacon and then he'd just keep turning it a day or two and then put it down in the brine and it cured just beautiful. And we had bacon and ham the year round.

Q I bet it's good.

A It sure was I tell you.

Q Did you raise your own coleander in the garden?

A Yes. Mama raised all that.

Q What else did you have in your garden.

A Oh, we had onions, radishes, turnips, cabbage, any vegetable

you can name, mama had 'em.

Q Okay. Tell me how you made the liver sausage.

A Well, you'd take kinda all the scraps and put it together and your liver and put liver and the melt or whatever you call it, you know and let's see, just almost anything that's left over you know after you make the other sausage then you put --

Q Do you put heart in it or not?

A Yeah. You put heart, melt, ain't that what you call it, melt and then season it up. It's very good. It sure is and then we'd hand it up and smoke it.

Q You put that in a casing also?

A Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah and then we'd hang it up and then when we wanted liver sausage we'd just go out and get a piece and slice it up. See, that's good --

Q Did you make a liver sandwich for lunch for school?

A Oh, yeah, I guess we ate just almost anything, whatever mama had.

Q What did you do with the rest of the hog? We've made blood sausage and sausages --

A Bacon and ham.

Q How did you render your lard?

A Oh, we had that big old wash pot and we'd have to stand over that and after we got that, to clean the pot then we'd always put on a batch of homemade soap to clean the grease out of the pot again.

Q How did you make that?

A Well, we just put about three cans of lye and let's see, three cans of lye and well, so much water and so much cracklings but now, I've learned how to make it without the cracklings and it's sure good soap. This that I used the whole time I was in the cafe you make it with three cans of lye and 15 pounds of strained grease, old grease and five gallons of water and walk by it quite often, you have to stir it a lot and then you put clorox in to purify it. It makes the best soap, it lathers, you never made anything as good as that was, I'll tell you.

Q Would you give us your recipe?

A Well, it's like I say --

Q Not now but we'll write it down because that sounds like a good soap.

A The whole time you know if I'd have used the powdered like they do now they'd broke me because people just don't know how to save. So I learned how to make that from the Garden Club, Devine where my sister was. We learned how to make it and it's just perfect. It turns out so pretty and white. It's just beautiful.

Q H'mm. Did you ever make Pastata?

A Oh, yes, I did. I love that stuff. Yes, that's something else you put in parsley and salt and peper and what else, and soak it overnight.

Q Green onions.

A Green onions, just anything like that to make it good and then soak it overnight. Alma over here does it about three nights but I don't like it soaked that long.

Q You don't like it soaked that long?

A Huh-uh. So I just generally let it soak overnight and then I make my crust.

Q What else do you put on it besides, don't you put vinegar or water or something --

A Yeah, vinegar sure. Sure, we have to soak it in vinegar.

Q What part of the pig do you use for that? Do you use any special meat?

A Not hardly, generally just the sausage meat. Alma cuts up her meat over here but that's an extra job. I just ground sausage.

Q And do you make any special kind of a crust or just a plain --

A No, I use ordinary pie crust.

Q You make a bottom crust and a top crust?

A Yeah. That's right.

Q What do you serve with Pastata?

A It's just a regular pie, we generally eat just pie. Slice it up like you do a pie.

Q Okay. Did you ever save your cracklings for anything?

A Oh, yeah. You can just make almost anything out of cracklings, they're so good. But of course I can't eat much of it now begings I'm grunting all the time, but they were always so pretty. You know when they're fresh strained

out of that grease and everything. There's so many things you can make out of 'em.

Q Did you put 'em in cornbread?

A Yeah, they're very good in cornbread. Generally you take the top off and get the crumbly ones in the bottom and then put that in your cornbread and it's so good.

Q Did you eat the cornbread with milk or did you use it --

A Well, we generally had homemade preserves and butter. That good old homemade butter, we generally had that.

Q What kind of preserves did you make?

A Oh, just everything. Every kind you can think of. Mama had every kind in the world and I did up until the last few years because my kids don't like fig, they like peaches but there's no such thing as peaches no more.

Q Did you have these trees in the yard. Did you have an orchard?

A Papa had an orchard always.

Q Uh-huh. What kind of trees did he have?

A Well, he had peaches, apple, plum, just any kind of fruit you can name.

Q Even apples?

A Yeah. And when they'd die down he'd just go buy a new one and put it in and just kept an orchard going. He had a big orchard behind the house.

Q So you really had a lot of good food at home. You had your pigs and your --

A Well, we had everything.

Q -- eggs and chickens.

A One day an old hog got ahold of a chicken and papa says, "Run outside and hit them together" And I went out and took the batch --

Q What did you eat on Fridays?

A We'd have beans and noodles, sour gravy and dried fruit.

Q How did you make the sour gravy?

A Well, you take the thick part, you pour your noodles off of and you put in on and have a little potato cooked and a lot of fine chopped onion and let that all cook and then before you take it off, you put your vinegar and put it on your noodles it's soppin' good.

Q How much vinegar do you put?

A Oh, it's according to how sour you want it. Some people like it real sour and some people don't.

Q I mean like a tablespoon or two or --

A Might take a little more than that. You'd have to taste it.

Q You probably just pour --

A Yeah, that's right.

Q I've never known how to make sour gravy.

A You ought to have been at that Naegelin reunion the other day. I had some of the best I've ever made in my life. Took two big old platters full of noodles. Charlie Suehs said, "Lena, you bring the noodles and I'll cook the beans."

Q Do you make homemade noodles?

A I make 'em all the time.

Q Do you ever make g'nephla?

A Uh-huh, make them too. I can make any of them things. Mama taught us. When Mary Schneider got through showing you, you'd be a good cook.

Q I bet.

A And sew, I said if I had a dime for all the shirt collars I had to rip off when I'd get 'em on crooked. She'd make me rip it out every time.

Q You'd rather cook than sew?

A Oh, yes, mama was so hard to please. It was really hard.

Q So you ate noodles and beans for Fridays.

A And then for supper if there was noodles left we'd always take them and fry 'em real crisp and they are so good. They're really good.

Q Could you keep your noodles if you had some --

A Got 'em in the box now.

Q Do you? Dry 'em good? What did you do at Christmas time?

A Oh, that's the time of our lives. Dora and I, mama would always hide all the stuff on top of the wardrobe and when she, the apples and oranges and stuff, we could smell it and we'd go around the house sniffing until we'd find it. And then on Christmas Eve that was our pride and joy. Just all the neighbors would go together and go up to Grandma Bipperts. Oh, she was a great old soul. Everybody liked

Grandma Bippert but I don't remember her name. And all the neighbors would take their eats and good things and take our gifts and everything, we'd go up there on Christmas Eve and did we have a time. And that old Santy Claus, he was in that closet, of course we were so dumb in those days we didn't know what Santy Claus was. We'd all run into that big old room of hers and Alfred Naegelin was Santy Claus every year and he would just scare the heck out of us and so one night Mamie Carter said, "Lena don't you know who Santy Claus is?" I said, "No, I'm too dumb to know anything." She says, "Well, I'm going to tell you." Your parents are your Santy Claus. So I said, "Well, and he says (Alsace). I went and crawled under the bed and old Alfred Naegelin had that old long switch in his hand and he reached under that bed and he tried to hit me and oh, I just had a fit and I went back to papa and I said, "Papa, please don't let me get so scared." So we just always had the biggest time up there at Grandma Bippert's.

Q Did she have a big Christmas tree?

A Yeah, great big old Christmas tree. Everybody'd take their gifts and their food. That's where we spent, always spent our Christmas Eve.

Q What did she decorate the tree with?

A Candles, you know like they used to have candles and they'd make cookies with candy on 'em, things like that.

Q Did they have any fruit on the tree?

A Yeah, they tied the apples by that little old stem and tie strings on them. We didn't have nothing bought because -- but we always went up there and enjoyed it so much.

Q What are some of the foods you had?

A Oh, gosh, everybody took cottage cheese and all kinds of food. Just every kind you can think of. I just couldn't even name all of them. So, --

Q What kind of a meat did you serve, did they serve?

A Well, pork, sausage and different things like that and salads just like you do now. We all just didn't know how to fix 'em like you do now.

Q Everybody took what they had.

A Yeah.

Q It sounds like a great feast.

A Oh, it was the greatest thing how we loved that old lady. Then now start telling about when we'd load up beer and got to enjoying life more. Then after we got, after we got a little bigger why we started having these house dances. We'd jerk everything out of a room and man, we'd dance till all hours of the night and Walter Bippert and Willie Ziegenbalg was our muiscian and we would dance nearly all night. We just had the biggest time in the world. Next morning, why we'd have to get up and mop those floors on our knees. Mama never would allow us to use a

mop to clean the floor with. Get on our knees to clean it. So one time Curly was going to come by and I promised him I'd go with him by myself cause mama always made me take my sisters. So he came by and mama said, "Lena, go in there and clean the floor." And I said, "I'm not going to do it," and boy she hit me, I'll never forget. She whipped me hard so I run off and got out there and waited for Curly and I was just mad at the world. But we'd have more fun at those dances.

Q Did you have something to eat then?

A Yeah, and when we got big enough we'd come up here to this -- you know in those days they had the 24th and 25th Celebration and we'd always come to stay all night up here. I'd stay with Grandma Slayton and Curly would stay with Grandma Jungman and Dora, and all of us would stay all night because we had come in the buggy. And we always looked forward to those two days because man, man, man did we have fun.

Q What did they do on the 25th in those days?

A Well those days they had the Tondre Store building. Who was it run it there that --

Q Wernette's?

A I guess so. Somebody there. And we just had the biggest time and at 12 o'clock at night they'd shut down the music and we'd go downstairs and eat the best old sausage suppers, sauerkraut. Every kind of good thing in the

world for 50 cents.

Q Who served that? Did the people --

A Aunt Rosa, it was Aunt Rosa's sister I believe. Aunt Rosa Jungman's sister. I believe it was Wernette.

Q Wernette.

A Wernette and she tells about it all the time by how they served there and oh, it was so good, homemade sauerkraut and sausage. Just anything, fruit cake, anything you wanted to name for 50 cents a plate.

Q Was it served family style?

A Yeah.

Q What about Easter? What did you have at Easter?

A Oh, golly, you know how we used to fast for Easter. We'd have not go, couldn't dance before Easter and we just couldn't go to no parties or anything and we just had to pray a lot. We always had to pray a lot. I tell you we just had to really be good for Easter.

Q And you didn't eat very much.

A No. No.

Q What are the things you served then during Lent?

A Well, just about the same things we served but just didn't eat much of it. It wasn't allowed to eat much of it. And we'd have to be doing so much for penance. See in those days we had to do so much for penance.

Q Did you give up sweets?

A Well, yes, some of us did. But I never was a sweet eater

myself. So, it never did bother me.

Q What did you have for Easter Sunday?

A Well, just about an ordinary dinner, just a good dinner of sausage and turkey, everything like that, just like we do now.

Q Did you raise your turkeys?

A Yes. Mama always raised the turkeys and chickens. Mama was always taking a case or two eggs to town every -- on a Saturday to buy our flour, sugar and coffee. And she'd take two cases of eggs for five and ten cents a dozen. I never could understand how she could do it but a dollar would go so far and now where it just don't go nowhere. But mama and daddy were just good managers, that's all. They were just dear people.

Q Did you dye Easter eggs?

A Oh, yes. But we wasn't allowed to because we wasn't supposed to know what Easter eggs was. The fooled us and make us think -- you know they could hide things, those old people could where they don't now no more, they tell kids everything before they're born. But we'd have a nest full of eggs and we just thought that was the greatest thing we ever had was those pretty eggs and they were just beautiful.

Q Did they use homemade dyes?

A Yeah. They'd make some kind of dye but I forgot, you know, what kind it was.

Q Now when you and Curly had the cafe did you use a lot of these old recipes?

A Yeah, just like I did when I had this one here, you know I had one in Pearsall about three years. And we just had an old, regular old home cooked place like we did here. And Curly was so dissatisfied he said, "I'm not going to stay in this thing any more because I don't want to work that hard," and I said, "Well, what are we going to do then?" He says, "I'll sell this and buy you a better one." But he never did. So then I picked up nursing at Pearsall. And I said to Ida Smith, I said, "Ida, I think I'm going to take up nursing." And she says, "Well Helen, do you know enough about it?" I said, "No, I don't have the education, but I've sure got the backbone to try it." So I got about six doctors together and I said, "I want to take up nursing." Well, they were happy to get me, in '42 that was when nurses were so short. And I said to my boys when they left for the navy, I said, "Are ya'll going to send me an allotment?" And Claudy said, "Mama, no, there's too many of these government suckers now, said you're still young enough, I was only 42. He said, "Mother you take up nursing. You're smart enough to do that." So I went down to see them six doctors and they just were so sweet to me. And they all just took me in. Dr. _____ just died the other day. He said, "Helen, I'm going to take you and send you to the Santa Rosa for six months

and he said you're doing just great," and he says, "I believe you can do greater if you'll just try." But then the draft came up and they drafted him and he had to go so I just had to go on my own but I never was at home after that. I just always had a bunch of baby cases and old people, because I loved old people and I loved babies. That's where I made my start.

Q Did you ever make New Year's bread?

A Yes, yes, I still once in awhile make it now.

Q Can you tell me about making New Year's bread?

A Well, it's made a whole lot on the order of --

Q Coffee cake?

A Yeah. And doughnuts, it's about the same dough. You just make it up and let it rise.

Q Do you remember your grandmother or your mother making it?

A Oh, yes.

Q Both of them?

A Yes.

Q Did you take it to the neighbors or did you serve it at home?

A We served it at home. People would go from house to house you know like we'd go to one house or that one, you know visit around all the time. We always visited in those days. But now television has took that away.

Q When you'd go to visit your neighbors, did they serve anything?

A Oh, yeah. We had to have coffee. One time we went to Mrs. Blatz's, Mrs. Andrew Blatz and she served us home cooked cheese and had this caraway seed in it, isn't that what you call it?

Q Uh-huh.

A And I said, "Mama, look at the mouse dirt."

Q Gosh.

A And she said, "Jesus God, child, this is not mouse dirt, This is caraway seed."

Q Oh, Lena, you were something else.

A And then I worked for her one time and she made me wash all the ceilings of her house and she was such a mean old lady and after I did it she says you go back up there and do that over and I said, "Mama, I'm not going back, she's too mean to me." Well, go and do that and then you can quit. So I went and washed that ceiling --

Q You had to finish it though.

A I had to go back. She sure was mean to me.

Q Did you ever cook for anybody else?

A Oh, yes, helped people out. I was always trying to do something for somebody else.

Q Tell me about your good pies.

A Well --

Q What is your favorite?

A Well, my family I think like the coconut the best. Of course I make every kind you can think of. I'm going to

make some this weekend. I'm going to try to get a bunch of them made. I made six the other day. But I can make any kind.

Q You're making your Thanksgiving pies --

A Yeah, pumpkin pie and coconut and banana, apple. I bought some good apples and I'm going to try to make a good fresh apple pie.

Q It sounds great.

A Yeah, oh, those kids, I've got 'em rotten. Duh come over Sunday to get and took me over to Joyce and this table was laying full of noodles and I said to Linda, "Linda, he didn't even say nothing about those noodles on the table." He says, "Yeah, but big mama I'm going to take you back."

Q Uh-huh, to get some noodles?

A So he left here with a pie and homemade noodles.

Q So, you do all the fancy cooking for the family?

A Oh, yeah. Yeah, I told Joyce if she had to give dinner, I'd furnish all the pies.

Q Are you going to make homemade bread?

A Yes. I take all night long to do that. I make up my yeast about ten. Then I make 'em up and let 'em rise and about five o'clock I get up and put 'em in the pan. About seven or eight I'm baking 'em.

Q How many loaves do you make at a time?

A I generally make four loaves and two big pans of hot rolls.

Q How many cups of flour do you have to use for that?

A I use five pounds of flour and that makes --

Q In one batch?

A Uh-huh. Two yeast cakes, a little sugar and a little salt. You know I never measure nothing.

Q I know you don't.

A So they all look forward to that stuff. I generally stay up nearly all night to do it but I love my children.

Q Did your mother make homemade yeast cake?

A Yeah. Yeah, mama made 'em all the time. She'd take about two yeast cakes and soak 'em and let 'em rise and then she would put a boiled potato in, you know, after it got cold. And then her corn meal and whatever goes in, it's been so long. I hadn't made any in years but it sure does rise good. You don't let your stuff run out you always have to make --

Q And how do you shape 'em, how do you fix 'em?

A You generally let 'em rise and then slice 'em in slices.

Q About two inch slices?

A Uh-huh.

Q Then you have to dry 'em?

A Yeah and then let 'em get good and dry and then you can just pack 'em in a jar.

Q Uh-huh. And when you get low you start out with two more of those?

A Yeah, Yeah.

Q You start the whole process again.

A Yeah.

Q Did you really like that kind of yeast?

A Well, we didn't know nothing else in those days. We didn't have this bought stuff in those days you know. A lot of things you couldn't buy then that you can buy now.

Q That's true. Did you ever stay all summer with your grandparents?

A No. In those days you just visited when papa and mama would come up here. We'd get up at four o'clock in the morning and come up here and make it to Mass here at ten. And papa'd go and help Aunt Mary whatever he had to do, that was Uncle Louie's wife. And then we'd go to vespers in the evening and then we'd start home. Go back to Devine.

Q Do you remember any ice cream parties?

A Oh, we had ice cream every Saturday. Papa would bring ice and mama would put a lot of that good old separated cream. Always had it separated. And Grandma, I can just still see her, I've got a lot of pictures of here where she's standing there with a glass of ice cream. She just loved that homemade ice cream.

Q How did you fix that? Tell me what all --

A Well, mama would put quite a few eggs because we had the eggs you know and then sugar and that separated cream, and I believe she put a little bit of flour in it or something.

Q Did she boil her custard?

A Yes. She always boiled her custard. It was always so delicious.

Q And then did she fold her cream in the custard?

A Oh, yeah. She'd always put a lot of cream, it was always so good and rich.

Q How much did you make at one time?

A Oh, sometimes we had two gallons at a time and sometimes we had a five gallon freezer. One time Uncle Joe Hoag's children came, that was papa's only sister's children and as soon as school was out here they come to Aunt Mary and Uncle Frank. So then Annie and Alfred Bohl was announced that, you know, to get married. Well we made up our mind when mama and daddy leaves we're going to go in there and make some ice cream. So we went in there and we made a three gallon bucket of ice cream. Oh we were just going to have the best time but some way or another we got salt in it and we couldn't eat it. So Paul said, "Helen, I never knew hogs could eat ice cream." (Laughing)

Q You fed it to the hogs?

A Oh, I tell you I never will forget there was, let's see, August, Frank, Charlie, George, Paul and Helen. And those were all papa's nieces and nephews from the Hoag. And they'd always spend the summer with us and we just loved 'em. We weren't like cousins, we were like brothers and sisters and like this bunch here from Castroville, when those watermelons would get ripe here they'd come. They'd

always come to Uncle Frank's and get a load of watermelons.

Q Did you have a regular ice cream freezer or --

A Yeah. The kind you turn.

Q The kind you turn.

A Uh-huh.

Q Now, what did you do with some of the things out of your garden to preserve 'em for the winter?

A Well, mama always canned a lot of stuff, always. Whatever she'd make that turnip kraut.

Q Tell me about turnip kraut. Did you make it in a crock?

A We made it in a crock those days, we made turnip kraut and we made cabbage kraut. But I never did like the cabbage kraut as much as I did the turnip. And you'd shred that up fine, you have to have a regular shredder for it and then you put two teaspoons of salt and one of sugar and have your water boiling and pour it over it and then seal it up and in about six weeks you got some very delicious sauerkraut.

Q Where did you get your little grater that you made the turnips with?

A Well, since I'm up here I use old lady Sharp's.

Q I know you do now, but in the olden days before you knew me what did you use?

A Well, We had this old grater, and we showed it to August Hutzler, that worked for Zinsmeyer and told him, "Make me one," and he did. And we asked him how much -- $1.25.

And I had that thing for years so here awhile back I, Randy Schott's wife found out that her grandpa made that grater for me and she said, "Helen, if you're going to give that away, give it to me," so I did.

Q So you did.

A Uh-huh.

Q Can you describe that? Is it a whole lot like --

A Oh, it's just like a little, oh, it shreds it real fine just like a little --

Q It has little teeth in between --

A Yeah, it's really a fancy thing, but it's so slow but these new modern things they got now is fast.

Q Yeah.

A And she said, "Helena if you give it to anybody, give it to me," so I did.

Q And did she make a lot of preserves?

A Oh, we made preserves, we made just anything that was to eat, Mama did it and I did up until just a few years ago.

Q You made your preserves the hard way too, didn't you?

A Yeah, we sure did. We sure did.

Q Boiled it and boiled it?

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you have figs?

A Oh, not at Devine we never did have many but when we come up here and they was ripe we always got some here.

Q What are some of the kinds, peach and fig and what else?

A Peach, fig, plum, just anything you could make preserves out of. Oh, we'd go out in the pastures and get albacocas, I don't guess you know what that is. That's wild plum and when they'd get ripe mama'd say . . . And we'd have to go out there and get those albacocas. I know you don't know what that is.

Q No, I never heard of 'em.

A It's a little wild plum and we'd have to go out there and pick those.

Q Are they real tart?

A Yeah. And you know something else, those berries that come on pear, you know what I mean. We'd pick them when they were ripe. Yeah.

Q Did you make agarita?

A Yeah, not very much though because they were scarce around our place. And hickory nuts is what we had down there. We always had to shell those. Gosh, there was a lot of work to shelling. Mama never did buy a pecan because they were always expensive. But mama'd make those fruit cakes and every kind of nut they'd call for she'd put 'em in there. Very expensive. But we had good, good fruit cake with them.

Q Sounds delicious. Did you ever make any candy? Is there anything --

A Yeah, I never was a candy maker much. I used to make it a little but not very much. Dora, my sister, she used to

make a lot of it.

Q Did you ever have candy pulls?

A Yeah, we used to do that and have more fun. A bunch of us kids would get together. What do you call it?

Q Divinity or taffy? Taffy pulls?

A Whatever it was we pulled, I don't remember.

Q That was fun wasn't it?

A Oh, it was a lot of fun. We'd sling it around and hit each other --

Q Did your family ever dry any fruit?

A Well, not so much us but August Wurzbach's up there, that's mama's aunt, and we went up there and they've got an upstairs in their house and they'd have squares about as big as this kitchen and they'd have a pile of apples and a pile of peaches and a pile of just different kinds of fruit you could think of was upstairs in that house. I can remember, you know Aunt Adeline weighed about 300 pounds, biggest person you ever saw in your life and but she was the boss I tell you. When she said something it was that way and poor little ole oh, what's Mrs. Weiblen's name?

Q Adeline?

A Yes, I mean she had to wait on her and Aunt Adeline, she was really rough on her. But I'll never forget how much fruit those people had in that upstairs drying. Just every kind you could think of.

Q Was it just laid out on pallets?

A Uh-huh, they had just boards you know around each space like that and there it was laying and every so often we'd stir it and move it around but we just looked forward to come up here and go up San Geronimo. There's where all our kinfolks lived and mama she always had to go see 'em. She always talked to her kinfolks and papa would go see his and that's the way it was.

Q Yeah, kinfolks were real important in those days.

A Oh those days, I tell you. They're nothing like they are now, the kids don't even want to know their kinfolks. You know it kind of worries me. I love mine. I always loved everyone of 'em.

Q Did you daddy ever make any wine?

A Oh, yes. Every year he made a big old barrel of wine.

Q How did you go about doing that?

A Well, he had a barrel and he'd put the grapes in and he made a little thing about this big out of a two by four and a handle and he'd stomp those grapes and then they would set so many days and then they'd drain that juice off and then I forgot how much sugar but so much sugar and then let it ferment.

Q Did you put it back in the barrel then?

A Yeah. And it was so good.

Q What did you do with all the leftover stuff?

A My papa'd feed it to the hogs.

Q Did the hogs get stewed then?

A (Laughs) They really did eat it, I'll tell you, they ate that grapes like it was good.

Q Well, your hogs should have been in pretty good shape with grapes and ice cream.

A Yeah, yep, we had a lot of grapes. Papa raised a lot of these black Spanish grapes. He always had a lot of those. And then the wild Mustang. Was mostly what he made the wine out of.

Q Did you save your wine for special occasions then like Christmas?

A Well, Christmas and New Years and when the neighbors would come. Oh, yeah, we always had a lot of good wine.

Q Did you have any special food or a blow-out whenever you had a baptism or anything like that?

A Not much. In those days we didn't celebrate like you do now. No, people did it a whole lot different then.

Q It was too hard to get together.

A Well, people just didn't have the money. They were more careful how they spend that money then. They didn't have any to spend.

Q Did your parents ever make potato salad or your grandmother?

A Oh, yeah, they always made it and put eggs in it.

Q What do you mean by put eggs in it? Start from the beginning.

A Well, you just boiled your potatoes and peel 'em and then you put in it whatever you want to put in it but you always

had to put in, we always called it the old style potato salad. It always was very, very good.

Q Did you put one of these hard-boiled eggs in it?

A Yeah, the hard-boiled eggs and then you peel an onion and you put those boiled eggs and whatever seasoning you put in, just about like you do now but not mayonnaise cause we didn't know what mayonnaise was in those days. We had to use just vinegar.

Q Vinegar, did you use any kind of oil or anything or just vinegar.

A Didn't have any. Sugar, salt, pepper.

Q Did you serve it hot or cold?

A Cold.

Q Cold?

A Uh-huh.

Q Did you take that when you went to dinners and --

A Yeah, we always, we never went anywhere that we didn't take something along and helped out in the meal.

Q Was that customary in those days to take food along when you were invited?

A Yeah and what was I going to say. We always had company or either we went to somebody's house like Jake Kempfs and Rote (Red) Kempf, they lived out here and the Zuerchers, all those people. Mary Sueh's says, "Helen, I'll never forget as long as I live when we went to your mama's house one day she had chicken and dumplings. I can still taste

those good dumplings." She said, "I think about that so often." And we went there one time and poor old darn Mrs. Zuercher had a carbuncle on the back of her neck and she suffered and suffered and I just never could forget that how that poor darling suffered so bad. Mary is such a darling, I just love her so much. Mary Suehs.

Q Oh, yes, --

A She told me the other day she loved me and she said, "Helen, I'm so afraid I'm not going to live long." She's got something wrong with one of her eyes and she's suffering something terrible.

Q That's too bad. Did you ever make biscuits?

A Oh, yes. Biscuits and cornbread.

Q Did the old people make biscuits?

A Not as much as they did the cornbread. Mama just raised us on cornbread.

Q Where did they get their cornmeal. Did they have it ground?

A Oh, they had it ground. You didn't know what it was to go to the store and buy cornmeal because we just took, papa and me shucked corn and shelled it and then take it to town and get it ground.

Q Where would you take it, to the grocery store?

A No, to the mill. Had a mill there and we'd grind that corn.

Q How much would get at a time?

A Oh, about ten or fifteen pounds.

Q So you used that instead of flour?

A Well, you pt a little flour in your cornbread.

Q Uh-huh. Did you make molasses?

A Oh, every year. Every year. We'd have to strip that cane down and then lay it in piles and then we'd haul it down to Albert Brieden and dad would work two or three days making molasses. He'd run it through a mill where it squeezed the juice out and then he would put it in a big long pan and you had to stand over that hot fire and let that boil for so long. We had always our homemade molasses.

Q How long did you have to boil it to make molasses?

A Well, it's just according to how quick it thickens but we had to strip that cane and cut it, load it on the wagon. We didn't hire nobody because we had to do all the work ourselves.

Q How did you squeeze the juice out?

A It was a big round thing that went around and you hitched the horse and made it go round and round and when it'd run into that pan then you'd take that pan and pour it in that long pan and put your fire on.

Q Did you use mesquite wood or what did you use?

A Yes, any kind of wood we had.

Q And then when it was thick how did you get it out of this pan?

A Oh, well, we had certain things to fill, cans and then we put it in five gallon cans.

Q What did you use the molasses for, mainly?

A Oh, with that good old homemade butter and cornbread, we loved it very much.

Q Did you ever eat it on cottage cheese?

A Oh, yes, oh, yeah, sure.

Q And I know you make good molasses cookies.

A Oh, Lord, we had molasses cookies all the time. Yeah, mama had 'em. She always made a little sugar cookie. She kept those all the time. She'd keep them on hand for us kids all the time.

Q What were the main kind of cookies they had?

A Oh, just every kind. Mama was just a good cook. Like I say when she got through teaching us we knew how to cook. My husband used to say oh, "I had to teach you how to cook." I said, "Don't you say that." (laughing)

Q That was an instant fight, wasn't it?

A God, I said, "Don't you say that about Mary Schneider, because when she got through you knew how to do it all."

Q Were there any other sweets that your mother made that were -- did she ever, did your mother or grandmother ever make pies?

A Oh, yeah, but not like we do now. They just wasn't able to buy the stuff to make 'em. Course at Christmas and New Years and things like that they'd always have a good batch of everything but through the year we never did cook too many, not as many as I make now.

Q Uh-huh. You couldn't buy coconut or anything like that?

A No, no.

Q Were you able to buy like raisins in those days?

A Oh, yeah, yeah for Christmas mama always managed to buy every kind of nut, fruit and everything that goes into fruit cake.

Q And you still make fruit cakes?

A Yeah, I sure do.

Q Do you use her recipe?

A No, now there's one in that Castroville cook book, I bought it right after we came here and old Ella Tondre, she was my cook and I bought one of those books and I still today use that same recipe. You mix all your nuts and fruit and everything, you get in there and I really mix it, then put two cans of condensed milk or whatever amount I'm making.

Q Uh-huh and that's your sweetener?

A That turns out real -- it's so good. It's very good. My oldest son's wife always says, "Big Mama, we don't want nothing but a good fruit cake." And that's all I can afford to give 'em because they're very expensive.

Q You bet by the time you buy --

A Oh, yeah, I had a lady to bring my stuff yesterday and I didn't have any idea it was going to run that high.

Q Do you think that some of these recipes were brought over from the old Country?

A I imagine they did because gosh, we just copied everything from mama.

Q And your mother copied it from her mother?

A Yeah, uh-huh. Mrs. Jungman was always such a good cook, Curly's mama. She was such a good cook.

Q What was her specialty?

A That homemade cheese. And you know she had bad legs, she never could stand on her legs very much. She'd kneel on a chair, I always felt so sorry for her.

Q She'd kneel on a chair?

A And do that work. I just never could figure how the darling-- I used to just love to kiss her because her skin was so soft and pretty. I always loved to kiss her just to feel a little of that soft skin.

Q And she made extra good cooked cheese?

A Oh, yes. She was an expert.

Q When you went to her home to visit her or anything, did she serve a lunch in the afternoon?

A Oh, yes.

Q What they call lunch.

A Every evening, that was a habit that the old people all had. I don't care how many times you go see somebody, they'd have that coffee and whatever they had, cheese and butter and preserves, homemade bread.

Q What time did they usually serve that?

A Three o'clock.

Q About three o'clock in the afternoon.

A And if you'd go in them about half of the morning, about the middle of the morning they'd have coffee and stuff.

Q When your daddy worked in the field did he come home for lunch?

A Oh, yes. We'd go out with him, when he'd go, we'd work with him.

Q Did your mother bring your lunch to you?

A Sometimes she'd bring it to the field.

Q What would she bring?

A She'd bring butter bread or cookies or whatever she had and coffee. Papa was a great hand for coffee.

Q And what time was that, about three in the afternoon?

A Well, about ten o'clock in the morning and three in the afternoon.

Q I remember that from my grandmother, they had about six meals a day.

A Yeah, yes. Yeah they always had good eats.

Q Are you getting tired?

A No, no.

Q I suppose they worked a lot harder?

A Oh, yes, papa'd get up real early. I'd hitch up a team and he'd hitch up a team and we'd go out there and work. I was right by his side. My brother married so young so it left papa without any help.

INDEX

Helen Schneider Jungman
Tape # B20
Sides 1-2

Molasses cookies & sugar cookies B20 1&2

ORAL HISTORY OFFICE AGREEMENT

I, Jungman Helen Mary Elizabeth, volunteerly
interviewee's full name - last first

give Castroville Public Library the full use of the information recorded on tape on the Nov. day of 21, 1980, in return for which I will receive a tape of the interview.

Helen Jungman
Interviewee's signature

I, Faustina Sharp, the interviewer of Helen Jungman hereby release all rights, title, literary or copyright interest in the interview conducted on 21 day(s) of Nov., 1980, to the Castroville Public Library Oral History Collection.

Faustina Sharp
Interviewer's signature