

Interview with Cordelia Froetschner
September 28, 2009
Conducted at the Froetschner home, Kinsley, Kansas
Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff

Interviewer: What is your full name?

Cordelia: Cordelia Anna Maria Gall Froetschner. I live at 903 East 7th, Kinsley, Kansas. I was born September 5, 1918 in Ford County at the home of my parents. I am now 91. My parents were Ida and Emil Gall, my mother's maiden name was Kurth, her parents were Edward and Bertha Kurth. Paternal grandparents were Jacob and Annamaria Gall. I was named after my grandmother, my middle name.

Interviewer: Can you describe the household you grew up in? How many brothers and sisters you had? And where you grew up?

Cordelia: I grew up on that same farm where I was born. It was in Ford County, about eight miles south of Offerle. I was the youngest in the family. My sister Gunilda was the next youngest. And then there were four boys, the oldest was Herman, second was Edward and then there was a baby that was born not complete. Her name was Aurora, and she died very soon after birth. Then the next was a boy, Adolph, and then the last boy was Armin.

Interviewer: What brought your grandparents here? Who was first in Edwards County?

Cordelia: The Galls and the Kurths were both here. I think mostly religion. The Galls lived in Chicago, and the Kurths lived in a small town close to Chicago (*Manhattan, Illinois*).

Interviewer: When you said "religion", what did you mean?

Cordelia: There was oppression in Germany. I'm not sure what it was and had better not say what I'm not sure of.

Interviewer: Do you mean they were Catholic or Lutheran?

Cordelia: They were Lutheran, I know what they were, but I don't know what chased them out of Germany.

Interviewer: So they went from Germany to Chicago and then came here?

Cordelia: The Galls did, yes. The father was a butcher, he had a meat -- butcher shop in Chicago, and then he decided to come west.

Interviewer: He came to farm? He didn't open a butcher shop here?

Cordelia: Yes. The Kurths were farmers from the beginning..

Interviewer: You were born in 1918, tell us a little bit about growing up. What was it like growing up on a farm with four big brothers?

Cordelia: Well, I was enough younger that it wasn't too bad, although some of them stayed there longer. I remember when my sister and I used to go out to get the milk cows in. We'd eat wild onions while we were out in the pasture; and the one brother that was farming with dad used to really scold us because our breath was horrible. We gathered the eggs and things like that, carried in wood for the wood cook stove, a big old Majestic. Our house was quite elaborate, since my dad was born in Chicago, so he had a lot of insight into the more modern way than most out here. We had a big house with stucco, a metal roof, four bedrooms upstairs and four downstairs, a tile kitchen floor. We had running water and inside toilet by the time I was born. It was a modern home for those days.

Interviewer: When did you get electricity?

Cordelia: We had that from the time before I was born. There was a motor in the basement.

Interviewer: A generator?

Cordelia: I guess. It had 16 big batteries. We had running water all over the house. There was a big tank upstairs that we filled with the windmill.

Interviewer: Did you have a bedroom to yourself? You had enough bedrooms...

Cordelia: Well, when we were little we shared always, our bedroom was next to the folk's. When we were older and thought we were big girls, we had our own rooms.

Interviewer: Your family must have been pretty well-to-do, compared to the neighbors. Or was the whole community out there like that?

Cordelia: No, it wasn't. I only know of one other family at Windhorst that had running water and that type of thing.

Interviewer: Well, we've interviewed people who didn't have electricity until after WWII! So you were very lucky in that regard. Can you remember the Dust Bowl? Can you tell about it? I'm trying to think how old you would have been by then.

Cordelia: I was in high school then. When my parents would come and get us, sometimes we would have to stop because you couldn't see the road. Our farm my dad had bought had a tree-claim, the government sponsored it, and that was there when he bought it. There were a lot of locust and cottonwood in it, that's about all I'm sure of. Our folks took us to school, and in later years we rode with some cousins who were old enough to drive.

Interviewer: How did your modern house hold up in the Dust Bowl? Did the dust get in?

Cordelia: That's what I started to say. We had a lot of trees all around the house, and that helped. Then, the house was well built. I remember a mulberry hedge on the place and a small orchard too. This sister-in-law, my brother Adolph's wife, I have a picture of us standing on top of this tall hedge because it had snowed and blown in there so much. I thought that was something else, two people walking on top of a hedge full of snow. She was a tall woman, and the hedge was taller than she was. She must have been about 6 foot, so the hedge was maybe eight foot. It kind of served as a shelter for the orchard. It was pretty compact, it would have to be to hold enough snow to hold up two people.

Interviewer: What kind of trees were in the orchard?

Cordelia: We had plum, cherry, peaches. Then around the house we had a lot of apples, couple kinds, fall apples and early spring blooming apples.

Interviewer: Was it your job to pick fruit too? What did you do with the fruit.

Cordelia: Oh yes, we picked it and canned it. Mother and us. We always canned a lot, jam and jelly and pie filling.

Interviewer: Well, the Dust Bowl and the Depression kind of go together. What do you remember about the Depression?

Cordelia: Well, it definitely put us in a bind. I don't know, I think during the Depression was when Dad took out a loan on the place. I think he'd spent most of his money. At first, the harvests were good. Then I think there was one year when they didn't get to cut any wheat.

Interviewer: So you were in high school during the Depression. Did it kind of cut out the spending?

Cordelia: Well, that didn't bother us, everybody else was in the same boat. I never let it bother me anyway.

Interviewer: At the library, that's when they didn't have a yearbook. Did it affect activities that you remember?

Cordelia: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember people losing their farms and moving away?

Cordelia: Yes, my Uncle Edward Kurth lost his farm, and later on Carl's dad bought the farm, or helped Carl buy it. That's where we went when we got married. My grandson lives on it now. Edward's family moved on to Buttermilk, Oklahoma, wherever that is. He wasn't in very good health either.

Interviewer: Well, that brings us up to the main topic, World War II. How old would you have been on December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor happened? About 24? What do you remember about Pearl Harbor Day?

Cordelia: Well of course, we were all real shocked.

Interviewer: Where were you when you heard the news?

Cordelia: I don't think I remember that. What day was it?

Interviewer: A Sunday, December 7.

Cordelia: My dad read a lot, so I'm sure that's where I heard it.

Interviewer: A lot of people remember sitting by the old radio and hearing the war declared...

Cordelia: We had a radio.

Interviewer: Were there members of your family who were in the military or were drawn into the military at that time.

Cordelia: No, none of our family. Oh, Carl's family, his youngest brother, was in the army. But the others were married and on the farm by the time the war broke out. They left the farmers alone pretty much. Carl was a rancher and farmer. But toward the end, I think they had him on a list, but the war ended and he was never called.

Interviewer: Do you know how he felt about not going to WWII? Did he ever talk to you about that?

Cordelia: Well, he never wanted to. He never wanted to go. He had his farm there, and what was he going to do with it if he went? His one boy wasn't old enough to farm it yet.

Interviewer: You said Carl's little brother was in the army. Did he go overseas?

Cordelia: He was in Germany. He had one narrow escape when a bullet hit the pack he had on his back. Then he almost got into trouble because he went and visited a relative he had over there.

Interviewer: You probably still had communications with relatives over there!

Cordelia: Oh yes, Carl's dad did, but we didn't so much. We did later. We visited there; we've been to Germany three times I guess. We visited Galls and Froetschners and people that we'd sent care packages to during the war. Through the church, they gave us names. The first time we went over there, we got to this one home, a man came to the door and said, "Oh come in, I've got something to show you." Well, he had the suit that Carl had sent. It was years later, but he still had it.

Interviewer: Was Offerle settled pretty much by German people?

Cordelia: Mostly, yes.

Interviewer: So during the war, did you ever feel any animosity because of your German heritage? Like in other places, or were you protected because of the community?

Cordelia: Yes, there were too many here.?

Interviewer: When your brother-in-law went and visited, did he tell you any stories about the family he visited at that time and how they felt about the war?

Cordelia: Oh no, he tried to keep it a secret, but they found out. I think that was about the end of the war.

Interviewer: Could you speak German? Could he also?

Cordelia: Yes, I spoke German, and I think he could also, enough anyway. His folks spoke German.

Interviewer: How did you learn German?

Cordelia: At home, we talked some at home. My parents spoke it and we all learned German. Our church had German services for years and as long as there were some of the older members who knew German well, I think every other Sunday there was a German service. For a while anyway, then gradually they changed it to all English.

Interviewer: I grew up in a church of German ancestry. When I was a child, we still sang *Silent Night* in German at Christmas time. That was held on to.

Cordelia: I still know it.

Interviewer: Was your brother-in-law married or was he single when he was in the service?

Cordelia: He was single (*He married while in the service*).

Interviewer: So Carl had an agriculture deferment and a family deferment, I guess. You were a housewife? You didn't work?

Cordelia: No.

Interviewer: So what was your life like during the war?

Cordelia: We didn't have any trouble. All our friends and church members and that were German, so nobody bothered us.

Interviewer: What about rationing?

Cordelia: Well, sometimes. But you knew you couldn't get it, so...

Interviewer: What types of things were rationed?

Cordelia: Sugar, gas, tires, things like that. Those are the main things I remember.

Interviewer: You lived in the country, so did that change how many times you went to town? Or didn't it seem to?

Cordelia: I think so. Dad had to go to Dodge quite often, because his farm was in Ford County. The government always had some control, so he had to go sign papers and things like that.

Interviewer: Do you remember any sacrifices that you made because of the war other than the rationing?

Cordelia: No, I don't think so. If so, they didn't affect me very much.

Interviewer: And you had small children at that time.

Cordelia: Yes, that's another thing that kept Carl home. He had a family.

Interviewer: Do you remember supporting the women whose husbands were gone in any way? Did the community come together in any way for them?

Cordelia: I belonged to our Ladies Aid, we called it. Still do. I know we sent care packages to Germany and to families, during the war.

Interviewer: To soldiers or

Cordelia: Through the church, they got names, and if you wanted to send something you got a name. You didn't know them at all. I know that we and Carl's folks sent quite a few.

Interviewer: I find that interesting, because you had the connections to Germany, but the United States allowed that to go on. You were able to help them.

Cordelia: I don't know how they managed that. I never did hear.

Interviewer: I don't think I've ever heard of that before.

Cordelia: It was through the church, I know that. There's some letters that these folks had written; they were very grateful.

Interviewer: Yes, times were tough there for the common person.

Cordelia: And they were common, there were no millionaires that I know of.

(NOTE: Following the interview, research seemed to establish that these relief packages to German families were organized by the Lutheran Church after the war, not during it.)

Interviewer: Did you see the war affecting the roles of women in Edwards County at all?

Cordelia: Yes, a lot of the women went to work then. Some of them locally, because the men were gone. Some of them in cities, like Wichita, they got jobs they needed them bad because the men were gone. It didn't affect our neighborhood much, because they didn't have the education for that; they were farmers.

Interviewer: I guess we didn't talk about your education. You finished high school. Did you go on at all?

Cordelia: No, I got married the day after my 18th birthday. I wasn't going to have it that Dad had to sign for me. I was doing this on my own.

Interviewer: Did your parents approve?

Cordelia: Yes.

Interviewer: So you were somewhat of an independent woman?

Cordelia: I guess. I must have been.

Interviewer: What did Carl think about that?

Cordelia: He never objected!

Interviewer: Do you remember VE or VJ day when the war was over? Do you remember those days at all?

Cordelia: Well, yes. There was a lot of good feelings and “Hip Hip Hooray.”

Interviewer: Was there any celebration in Offerle?

Cordelia: No, I don't think so, and I don't remember when those days are, do you?

Interviewer: November 11 was the armistice. But the Japanese, I don't remember that date, and we've looked that up too, because you're not the first person to ask us that. We're not supposed to remember anything... So everybody was pretty happy?

Cordelia: Yes, everybody was really relieved and waiting for their troops to come home.

Interviewer: Did you remember feelings about your relatives in Germany at time too then? Was there relief there?

Cordelia: Oh yes.

Interviewer: When the soldiers came back, do you remember how Offerle or Edward County celebrated?

Cordelia: I think the families had celebrations whenever a soldier came home.

Interviewer: The community didn't do things, just the families?

Cordelia: I don't think so, of course, not having one actually in our family...

Interviewer: Did you know any families that lost members?

Cordelia: Yes, my uncle's son. He only had one boy. He had three or four girls. He was shot down in a plane and killed. I think he was the only one out of our church that was killed.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything about the soldiers when they came back and how they integrated back into the community?

Cordelia: Well, I think they took a lot of ribbing and questioning and all that. But everyone was real glad to see them.

Interviewer: Did your brother-in-law do all right?

Cordelia: Oh yes, he married my sister.

Interviewer: But you didn't notice any change in him when he came back.

Cordelia: Oh no, I don't think so. He was always ornery, and he still was.

Interviewer: At the end of the war, did you notice any changes in the community or the county when the men started coming back?

Cordelia: Evidently not. You know, the farmers didn't associate that way much. The church activities were about the limit. Of course, when we met them in town or anything like that, that was different.

Interviewer: But when the men came back, they went back to farming? They didn't go off and get jobs somewhere else?

Cordelia: Ernie didn't, and Carl's brother didn't. As a matter of fact, his dad was about ready for him to take over. I think most of them...the Sawyer boys weren't farmers in the first place, and I'm not sure where they went to. But they took other jobs. There weren't too many of our people that went away, or went to war, because they were nearly all on the farm. So those years, there was no great big deal, I don't think. Just private pleasure.

Interviewer: It sounds like your farm was a good place to be, if there was going to be a war.

Cordelia: Yes, there were some farms where a fellow tried to start up a farm so he wouldn't have to go, but I don't think that worked.

Interviewer: Was there a labor shortage for farm labor during the war because the men were gone? Or did you have enough relatives?

Cordelia: Well, with four boys, I guess Dad never needed help. Well, yes he did, I remember a lot of hired hands. He would get boys from the Lutheran College.

Interviewer: Where was the Lutheran College?

Cordelia: It was in Saint Louis.

Interviewer: So they would come out for the summer?

Cordelia: Yes, they would come and work for the summer and live in the house with us. I remember them real well. I guess we could get them, because they didn't take them out of the seminaries for soldiers.

Interviewer: Okay, I think this question is from that time period, but you are the first Offerle person we've interviewed. Were there any minorities at that time in the area? Hispanics or blacks?

Cordelia: The Santa Fe had a home there for the Hispanics who worked on the railroads, but there were no difficulties that I ever heard of. I had one of the girls working for me, helping me cook during harvest. We'd have as many as five or six hired hands when the older boys were gone before I was married. But they kept to themselves and we got along. I don't think there was any feeling there like there is now, before they kind of took things over.

Interviewer: And they spoke both English and Spanish?

Cordelia: Most of them, the ones I had did. There was just the one time I had a Mexican lady. She had been working around Offerle. I don't know all that she did, but she took jobs in different places.

Interviewer: None of them stayed on in the community though?

Cordelia: No, they had a cement sort of building for them that the Santa Fe had built.

Interviewer: Where was it? Do you remember?

Cordelia: Well, it was close to where the elevators are, I really don't know, on the same side as the elevators. The south side. I guess that was kind of bad, because I heard they had a lot of tuberculosis and pneumonia and things like that because they were cement houses and probably not being properly heated. They were probably happy to go back to Mexico, where it was warm.

Interviewer: This is our first interview with an Offerle person. The community of Offerle, did you have a doctor who lived there at that time?

Cordelia: I can't say for sure.

Interviewer: Where did you go to the doctor then? What doctor delivered your children?

Cordelia: I went to Kinsley.

Interviewer: So maybe there wasn't...

Cordelia: Must not have been. It seems to me that earlier, there was a doctor connected with a drug store or something.

Interviewer: What was the business community like at that time? There was a drug store, one or two grocery stores...what else?

Cordelia: Yes, There was a bank, and the elevator was a big deal. There was one that had clothing, always a restaurant, a beauty shop.

Interviewer: Was it one grocery store?

Cordelia: I believe so.

Interviewer: What about car dealerships?

Cordelia: Not that I know of?

Interviewer: The lumberyard?

Cordelia: Yes, they had a big lumberyard. It was run by the Farmers Elevator, I think.

Interviewer: Did you do most of your business in Offerle or Offerle /Kinsley?

Cordelia: Dad went to Dodge, but Carl and I went to Offerle and Kinsley because we were in Edwards County.

Interviewer: Where was your farm, can you give a general direction? You said your grandson's there now...

Cordelia: It is... 12 miles from Kinsley, south and west. The town had a restaurant and a beauty shop, a barber shop.

Interviewer: Do you remember when Ehler's was in Offerle?

Cordelia: No, I didn't know they ever were.

Interviewer: Maybe you're like Rosetta and you couldn't shop there.

Cordelia: Well, I didn't do much shopping at that time.

Rosetta: Did your children go to school in Offerle? Was there a country school?

Cordelia: Carl's family went to a country school till it closed and then they later organized one at Offerle. But we went to parochial school. Our church Zion Lutheran Church, had a parochial school. It was about two miles from home. It was just elementary grades.

Interviewer: Do you have a picture of that school?

Cordelia: Yes, I do.

Interviewer: Let us look for that in a minute. Did you see Rosetta's eyes light up?

Cordelia: There's even a picture inside the school. The others are of the church.

Interviewer: So your life was basically centered around the farm and the church.

Cordelia: Yes. We had Walther League the youth group, Sunday schools. The youth group had three Sunday nights a month. The first was a business meeting, the second one was a Bible study, and the third one was a social. We played outdoor games. I don't know what they call them... Farmer in the Dell... relays and things like that in summer.

Interviewer: How did you get to school?

Cordelia: Depending on the weather a lot, we walked.

Interviewer: And you said it was two and a half miles.

Cordelia: When it was otherwise, or late or something, dad took us in the horse and buggy.

Interviewer: Did the school have a barn for the students that rode horses?

Cordelia: Yes, as a matter of fact, the parson had a cow to milk (one of the neighbor members had loaned him a cow) and he had chickens. He was a farmer too, sort of.

Interviewer: Who were your teachers?

Cordelia: They were out of our Lutheran parochial schools. I don't know if they were in the seminary...

Interviewer: Where did they live? Did you have housing for them?

Cordelia: They usually stayed with...there was a man and woman lived a half mile from the church, there was just the two of them, and they usually boarded there.

Interviewer: Were the teachers male or female?

Cordelia: Both. My first grade teacher was a man. Then I think it went to women and then a man, you know, who ever was available.

Interviewer: And the grades were separate?

Cordelia: Yes, there were probably no less than four in each grade. I don't know how high it would go. My sister was part of a larger group, I think there were 12.

Rosetta: So when did the school close? Do you remember?

Cordelia: They had, let's see, I was... it only ran about two more years after I graduated in, well, I started when I was six and went for eight years. I went to high school, and was 18 in 1936.

Interviewer: Now Zion Church is in which county?

Cordelia: Ford.

Interviewer: Why don't you tell us a little bit about farming with horses. Before the interview started you were telling us about combines and threshing.

Cordelia: My uncle had a threshing machine, and he went all over the country in this area here. He didn't go like the custom cutters do now, but he went in the community. But first a farmer had to use a header to cut the wheat and blow it into the header barge.

Interviewer: Now, the header just cut off the tops of the wheat, or did it cut it off at the bottom?

Cordelia: It cut off most of it, it headed it, but pretty deep. It was put into the header barge, and then put into a stack. Then when the thresher came around, they would pitch it into that and the straw was blown out into a pile. That was a straw stack, and that was used for feed. The grain would go into trucks and be taken home. When dad used the header, we once in a while, used to ride the header in the back. It would swing around, and we thought that was great fun.

Interviewer: What about farm accidents, do you remember any of those with that threshing machine?

Cordelia: We didn't have any.

Interviewer: So you had granaries at your house to store the wheat? You didn't take it into Offerle?

Cordelia: Well, some probably, depending on what the price was and whether we needed money right then.

Interviewer: What did you raise besides wheat?

Cordelia: Oats and barley, I think. I know we did part of the time. And alfalfa. I imagine that was cut about the same way with a header. We didn't have combines then.

Interviewer: Do you remember when you got your first tractor?

Cordelia: No, my dad had a tractor a long time ago, an oil...Hartpar, that's what it was called (*Spelling is correct. The tractor had an "oil pull" engine.*) Before that, it took four horses to pull the header.

Interviewer: Did you use Morgan horses? Do you remember?

Cordelia: Not any particular, just horses.

Interviewer: Just good horses. Could you ride a horse?

Cordelia: Yes. I herded cattle a couple times at different times.

Interviewer: What do you mean? Herded cattle, took them...

Cordelia: They would put cattle out on the field, maybe alfalfa, when it needed eaten off, they'd put the cattle out on it for awhile. You had to watch them, because it wasn't fenced. That was my job.

Interviewer: But you didn't stay with them all the time, you'd go back in shifts, of did you camp out with them like a cowboy?

Cordelia: No I didn't do that. They fed them there for so many hours, and then you put them in the corral and went home. Yes, I rode a horse quite a bit. One time, a cow got away. This was a borrowed horse, by the way. They said it was real tame, so Dad borrowed it for me to ride. This cow started down a ditch by the road and I didn't realize how trained this horse was. When the cow stopped, or whatever it was, a critter, it stopped and that horse turned, just on a dime, and nearly threw me off.

Interviewer: It was trained to stop with the animal?

Cordelia: Oh yes, he was well trained. It was a palomino, I know. That's as close as I came to falling off a horse. Fortunately, I guess I had a saddle horn to hold on. We got the critter back. It might have been a steer, I don't remember.

Interviewer: What are some things from you German heritage that you did at home? Customs...

Cordelia: Do you remember the story of our schnitzbrot in the paper? Well, that was from my grandparents Gall, who lived in the Black Forest. She's the one who brought the recipe over here, and it's been made every year since they came over.

Interviewer: Do you remember what year that was?

Cordelia: I've got it somewhere, but I don't know it off hand. Now some of my children are making it.

Interviewer: What was Christmas like in a German farmhouse.

Cordelia: Well, we went out and cut a cedar tree. Mother had quite a few glass-blown ornaments. They were made in Germany, I don't know who brought them over here or if they were bought here. They were nearly all, I'd guess you'd say, religious. There wasn't a Santa Claus or a Mickey Mouse, though I guess he came later. I still don't put those on.

Interviewer: Did you go to church Christmas Eve or Christmas Day?

Cordelia: Oh yes, we had a program. We learned all the songs, and sometimes they had some of them dress like shepherds and Mary and the baby (usually a doll).

Interviewer: When did you open the presents? Christmas Eve or Christmas Day?

Cordelia: After we got home from the program.

Interviewer: Did you have candles on the tree?

Cordelia: Yes, well, I don't know if the church did. We did at home, but Dad also had a bucket of water standing beside it.

Interviewer: Did you decorate the tree, or did your parents decorate it and surprise you?

Cordelia: They used to surprise us. I don't remember when it got started that we did it.

Interviewer: Did you hang a stocking?

Cordelia: No, we had a big fireplace, but we didn't have... Santa Claus wasn't important. We never had a Santa Claus. Company, now sometimes they had somebody dressed like Santa Claus.

Interviewer: Now, in the German community I grew up in, confirmation was very important. Did you have confirmation classes and join the church? About what time did you do that?

Cordelia: Oh yes. About the time of the 8th grade, about 13 or 14 or something like that

Interviewer: Did you memorize catechism?

Cordelia: Oh yes.

Interviewer: Were you examined before the church?

Cordelia: Yes, we sure were, and you had better know the answer too.

Interviewer: I found that to be a real rite of passage. That's when I got to wear my first high heels. Was that a rite of passage for you? Were you considered more grown up after that?

Cordelia: I think so. You joined the church formally and went to high school and joined *Walther* League, the youth group.

Interviewer: In my community too, there was a little bit of prejudice too, about who you should date. Did that go on? Or were you all German Lutherans in your community?

Cordelia: There were a few that married otherwise. I know one boy that married a Catholic girl, but she turned Lutheran. It's kind of strange. It just amazes me when I drive, I still go to church out there, that's just the home church, to see all the homes out there that are just not there any more. They're gone. And that's where they belong. It just seems wrong to see all the empty farms out there.

Interviewer: Did that start after WWII? When did that start?

Cordelia: I think it started then already. And now it's the young men now. Well, most of them go to college to begin with, and they learn something besides farming. Some of them do go back to farming, but a lot of them don't.

Interviewer: In you family, you said your grandson farms? And who else?

Cordelia: Yes, my grandson. And well, the man that our oldest daughter married is a farmer. Our oldest daughter has passed away. He and all his family are farmers. They live in Missouri.

Interviewer: How much of the original Froetschner or Galls is still owned by the family? Is it still pretty much in the family?

Cordelia: A lot of them are, yes. Some of them have different names because the girls inherited it or bought it.

Rosetta: You went on to high school. Did most of the girls in your parochial class go to high school? Or did they quit at the eighth grade?

Cordelia: A lot of them, but most of them went on to high school.

Interviewer: Did any of them go to college?

Cordelia: Well, my sister did. She was a registered nurse. She went to Saint Louis, my oldest brother was living there. But most of them didn't.

Interviewer: When did you move into town here in Kinsley?

Cordelia: In '67. John was married then and I told Carl, let's move while you're still able to do something else. If John's going to be the farmer, he'd better learn it from you. So we moved in here, and then we traveled a lot. I've been to most continents, except I've never been to Australia. We never went there. But we covered a lot of Europe, well there's some, Czechoslovakia I guess we never hit. We've been in Russia, Yugoslavia, France, Hong Kong, we went there several times.

Interviewer: Did you go with a group?

Cordelia: Usually with a tour group. The first time, we went with a Lutheran group and visited all the Lutheran big deals... The Martin Luther places.

Interviewer: Well, looking back over all. How would you describe how WWII affected your life? Are there things that wouldn't have been the same if it weren't for the war?

Cordelia: That would be hard to answer. If I had lost a member of the family, I'd have a way different view. But really, I can't say it affected our family that much. We always had enough to eat and plenty of clothes. Mom sewed a lot of clothes. I inherited my sister's... I don't remember there being any problems.

Interviewer: And you sewed your children's clothes?

Cordelia: Oh yes, quite a few of them.

Interviewer: Okay, if it didn't affect you so much, how do you think it affected Edwards County in any way?

Cordelia: Well yes, they lost quite a few boys. I mean, during that time. Maybe that was only boy or help a man had, like my uncle. He lost his farm too. I think he just lost interest all around when he lost his son.

Interviewer: Now was his wife still alive when the son was lost? "Yes." But then he lost interest? You thought people started leaving the farms after WWII?

Cordelia: They did. And then the depression did a lot of that to. It just... One year my husband, the only wheat he cut on quite a few acres, he had a lot of rented acres, was seven acres.

Interviewer: About how many acres did you run at your height?

Cordelia: That we owned? Well, that was just our farm, a half section, 160 acres. But he farmed lots more. And over the years, my husband wasn't one to let money lay in the bank. So whenever it built up he would buy some more land. And he still owned land in Colorado and around here. We sold the original farm to that guy (*Scott Schaller*) because we didn't want to fix up the house and all that and I'm sure they wanted to and did. So we sold that, and then the other boy, of the two boys together, the Schallers, Lynn's boys, bought the other land that we owned, which was a section and a half. Well, we had given our son already the home place. To kind of balance it, we gave the girls some of the land in Colorado, but we farmed it and went on same as always. A lot of activity. We had a section and a quarter out in Colorado. When we harvested out there, part of the time we lived in the adobe house.

Interviewer: You mean like a sod house? What was that like?

Cordelia: Well, just like a house. (*It was an adobe house*) It was papered on the inside and had wood floors. It had a regular roof which was laid on top, I suppose. It was fastened somehow, I suppose, if the wind there was anything like what we have here.

Interviewer: What was it like living in a soddy?

Cordelia: It was nice and warm when it got cold and stayed cool inside when it got hot. It was better than houses we have now days.

Interviewer: Were you heating with wood or electricity then?

Cordelia: I can't remember... we didn't have no stove, or did we? We must have cooked with wood. I think there was a soddy washhouse outside too, and I think that had a range to heat the water, just across the walkway.

Interviewer: Are there any other memories you would like to share? To get down? Something special or different?

Cordelia: Well, let's see. I think we were very lucky we chose moving to town when we did. It gave us time. Carl helped John a lot, but by the same token, we went on a lot of trips. I think we went on five different cruises and a number of other visits. One covered a lot of... you know, we went to Russia and Denmark, England and Ireland. I really enjoyed Ireland. (coughing heard) It must be the air in my house. The caregiver this morning was coughing without a cold.

Interviewer: I know you like to make cider. Does that go back to the orchard?

Cordelia: A friend of ours owned that, and when he didn't want it any more, well he died, she sold it to us. So we made cider, five gallons or more. We always went to the Warner Bluegrass Festival close to Jetmore. We gave it away there. They bought the apples and people really enjoyed that. And we thought it was fun. See, once we went to Dodge. I don't recall much about it. It was a Halloween something. They asked if we would bring the cider press and serve apple cider. But those are probably all things we probably couldn't have done if we had stayed on the farm, because on a farm there is always something you need to do. We square danced quite a bit too.

Interviewer: So retirement was a good time for you.

Cordelia: Yes it was. I think of that often. I don't know which of us thought of it or was ready for it, both of us I guess.