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- LT: 00:02 This is Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a Saturday KMRS news feature. Today, we're talking with Mrs. A.C. Sather of Donnelly, Minnesota. And Anna, tell us you were born in a country other than the United States, which country were you born in?
- AS: 00:17 I was born in Madagascar.
- LT: 00:20 Maybe you'd better to explain how it was that you happened to be born in Madagascar.
- AS: 00:25 My parents were sent out as missionaries from the Lutheran Church, the Free Lutheran Church at that time. And we were born out there. We were four in our family that came here.
- LT: 00:38 Okay. Now, Madagascar is located, what, real close to Africa?
- AS: 00:41 East. Just an island east of Africa.
- LT: 00:45 Now it's an independent country, but at that time—
- AS: 00:47 At that time, it belonged to France. They were under the French government.
- LT: 00:53 How long did you live in Madagascar, up to what age?
- AS: 00:57 I was nine years old when we came back. My father died out there, so my mother came back with the children.

LT: 01:04 Anything that you remember as a child living in Madagascar? I'm sure that it would be certainly a lot different than other people looking back on their childhood.

AS: 01:13 Oh, yes. We lived in a big house that had a veranda all around it, and the house stood up from the ground about three, four feet. And we used to play hide and seek under the house and chased each other around. We played with the natives a lot of the time, but we had to speak the Norwegian language in the house and the native language outside.

LT: 01:36 Was that a problem to speak the native language?

AS: 01:39 Oh, no. We learned that as fast as you learned in the other language.

LT: 01:43 And I'm sure that kids can pick up a language a lot quicker than an adult can.

AS: 01:47 We sure did. We learned that you don't have to—you play a little while with them and the first thing you know, you can speak it.

LT: 01:53 Okay. Then when you came back to the United States at the age of nine, do you remember the trip back?

AS: 01:59 Yes. It was real stormy. We came back from Liverpool to Minneapolis on a boat that was really windy. Everybody was seasick except my sister and I, and we ran around on the deck and all around in the boat. Kind of mischievous when we weren't supposed to be.

LT: 02:23 And you're having too much fun to be sick.

AS: 02:25 Yeah. That's just that it, we weren't sick, but the rest of them were.

LT: 02:29 Okay. Then you talked about coming back to Minneapolis. Did you grow up in Minneapolis?

AS: 02:34 We grew up in Minneapolis on the Augsburg College block where the school stands today. We lived there for many, many years.

LT: 02:42 Okay. I think a lot of people are acquainted with Augsburg College. It was a little bit different though when you lived near it.

AS: 02:47 At that time, they had an academy for high school and then a college and then seminary. Just a small school at that time, there was only one building that they had the school in.

LT: 03:00 Okay. Where did you attend school when you lived in Minneapolis?

AS: 03:03 And Minnehaha Academy was the high school that we attended, and that's a Swedish covenant school down by the river in Minnehaha. The river, Minnesota River, I suppose it was, but it was down by Minnehaha Falls.

LT: 03:19 Okay. And then after you got through high school, what did you do?

AS: 03:22 Well, then we went on. I took a normal training course and taught in the country for a few years, and then I went back and got my second year at Mankato and taught a while, and then went back to Augsburg and got my degree.

LT: 03:36 Okay. In the meantime, you had come out here to teach school, out in this west central area.

AS: 03:41 I came to—the last school I was at was at Wheaton. And while I was in Wheaton, I met this swell guy of mine over here and we got married. So now we are living in Donnelly here on the farm.

LT: 03:55 Okay. When you finished up your college education, it was during some pretty hard times. And coming up with money to attend school must have been quite a problem.

AS: 04:05 Each time—you taught so many years and then you went back to school and then you went back and taught some more and then you went back. That's about the only way we'd get through school.

LT: 04:13 Kind of on the installment plan.

AS: 04:15 Yes, exactly.

LT: 04:17 Okay. You mentioned that you met your husband while you were teaching school at Wheaton. You'd lived in the city all the time, this country living was kind of a new experience for you.

- AS: 04:27 Oh, yes, it sure was. It was something different. We didn't have electricity. We did have a nice new home, Arnie built a new house, so that was a good thing. But no electricity, but we had lamps and stove so we were—cooking stove.
- LT: 04:47 Okay. Being a farm wife is a little bit more than the average homemaker for somebody living in town. Did it take a while to adapt being a farm housewife?
- AS: 04:58 Sure did. I had to learn how to cook. I'd never done much cooking before, and when it came out here, I found that cooking on a stove was something different from a gas stove.
- LT: 05:08 Why don't you tell about the time you decided to make chokecherry jelly?
- AS: 05:12 That was one of my first experience with making chokecherry jelly. We had—at this time, we were camping down in the basement, and I had put on a big kettle full of chokecherry. And I left the chokecherry cooking on the stove, and we went down in the basement to have our lunch. And we were going to go up here, I found chokecherry jelly running from the stove down on the floor, down towards the basement steps. And what a mess that was to clean up.
- LT: 05:45 I suppose they had to do the whole stove, clean the whole stove.
- AS: 05:48 Arnie had to clean the whole stove, it was all smeared inside. And of course, the floor was easy enough, we could wash that, but the stove was a mess.
- LT: 05:57 Now, most farm wives, too, are called upon to be kind of an equal partner out in the field. Did you get any field work during your years as a farm wife?
- AS: 06:07 Yes, later on. Arnie had a sister named Clarice and she and I used to help him with running the tractor and the combine when the combining came.
- LT: 06:19 Did you ever have any idea, as a student growing up in Minneapolis, that you'd be out doing farm work?
- AS: 06:24 No, never. In fact, I never cared about going out in a farm or out in the country. But if you're going to marry the man you want, you'll have to marry whatever he's doing.

LT: 06:35 Okay. Then after you're married, too, you went back to teaching for a few years, and which districts were you in then?

AS: 06:41 I was in Donnelly here. During the war, they were short of teachers is when I started teaching in Donnelly, and I taught there for many years.

LT: 06:50 Education has changed considerably over the years. The way that it was done then, and the way it's being done right now, did you—do you know of any things that were done differently or if you were teaching today, some things that you might be doing differently?

AS: 07:05 Oh, yes. At the time we were teaching, everybody had to learn the combinations and multiplication tables and spelling, but now it's not required at all. They don't need to, they have what they call a—

LT: 07:21 A little calculator?

AS: 07:21 Calculator the kids can use instead. Now, there's no memorizing now. We had to memorize at that time.

LT: 07:29 And they have kind of been murdering the English language a little bit, too, over the years.

AS: 07:34 That they have. Bothers me to hear someone say "I, from me" when they're talking.

LT: 07:40 So you taught them the proper grammar.

AS: 07:43 For many years, I taught seventh and eighth grade in Donnelly and we've stressed English and grammar very highly.

LT: 07:52 Do you still get a chance to visit with some of your former students on occasion?

AS: 07:55 Oh, yes. I see them every once in a while. And then they remind me of how strict I was. But we had still had a good time.

LT: 08:05 But I bet you they still thank you for all the things that they did learn.

AS: 08:08 Yes. There was one of the girls that had had English, went—for the ninth grade English in Morris. She came

back to me and she said, my English teacher told me I should be sure to go and thank you for what you taught in grammar because she was one of his best students.

- LT: 08:27 Well, it sounds like you've had lots of different experiences. By the way, how many years did you teach altogether?
- AS: 08:32 I thought 30 years.
- LT: 08:34 For all the many experiences, it sounds like you've really enjoyed living around West Central, Minnesota.
- AS: 08:39 Yes, I did. And now that we are connected here with the Kongsvinger Church and the children grew up in this section. It's a nice place to live.
- LT: 08:48 Anna, will you give us your age?
- AS: 08:50 Oh, I'm 74.
- LT: 08:52 Okay. Thank you very much. We've been talking with Mrs. A.C. Sather of Donnelly on Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a Saturday KMRS news feature.