

**Fern Noyes  
Narrator**

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KMRS  
Interviewer**

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LT: 00:04 This is Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a Saturday KMRS news feature. We're talking now with Mrs. Fern Noyes of Morris. Well, Mrs. Noyes, you didn't come from Morris, you came from a different state, which area did you come from?

FN: 00:18 I'm from Missouri.

LT: 00:20 Okay. Which part of Missouri?

FN: 00:21 Excelsior Springs, Missouri, just 28 miles from Kansas City.

LT: 00:26 And that's kind of a resort area, a tourist area?

FN: 00:29 Yes. A resort town.

LT: 00:31 Of course, they got some natural attractions there.

FN: 00:34 Oh, yes, that's where I met my husband.

LT: 00:36 Yeah, they've got the springs, right?

FN: 00:39 Yeah. That's right. Mineral waters, many different kinds.

LT: 00:42 Well, then, you got to Morris, I think about 1916, and you were the brand new bride.

FN: 00:50 That's right.

LT: 00:52 Okay. Where did you first live when you got to town?

FN: 00:55 La Grande Hotel. And we had room and board there for \$50 a month.

LT: 01:00 That's for the both of you?

FN: 01:01 That's for both of us.

LT: 01:03 Well, now, what was the La Grande Hotel? Of course in the last year or so, it's been taken down, but what was it like back then?

FN: 01:10 Well, it was very nice. It had a large dining room and facilities for parties and so forth.

LT: 01:18 Really kind of a regal place then?

FN: 01:20 Yes, it was very nice.

LT: 01:21 Well, shortly after you got to town, you started doing some volunteer work and then that was something that you did for many years as you lived in Morris, what was one of those first volunteer jobs you had?

FN: 01:32 Well, it was working in the ration office during the World War.

LT: 01:38 Okay. Now, tell us how that worked. Now, for things like, what, sugar then?

FN: 01:43 Yes, we had a ration—count ration books and give out sugar coupons and like that.

LT: 01:52 Okay. Now, how did they determine how much sugar each person could buy?

FN: 01:55 Well, depending on the size of family and about how much they wanted to can.

LT: 02:01 Okay. Now, if you worked in that office, you certainly knew whether everybody was playing the game. Did everybody follow those coupons or was there a lot of abuses?

FN: 02:11 Well, I'm afraid not. Some would get more than coming to them, I think at times.

LT: 02:16 So not everybody went along with it?

FN: 02:18 No, they didn't.

LT: 02:21 Well, when you came to Morris in 1916, and of course you were from out of state, did Morris disappoint you, were you surprised when you got to town? What did Main Street look like?

FN: 02:35 I felt very much at home because the town that I came from was about 5,000, and this was 2,500 here for many, many years. And I found people very friendly here. I made friends right away and I've had a nice time, all the 60 years I've lived in Morris.

LT: 02:54 Well, tell us a little bit about the social life back then when you were a newlywed, what types of parties or dances went on?

FN: 03:00 Oh, yes. Well, we had many dances in the old armory, and many, many parties, five and six tables at a time and you have to send out your invitation a couple weeks ahead.

LT: 03:13 So it was a pretty good social life back then?

FN: 03:16 Yes, it was. It was wonderful.

LT: 03:18 Now, you were mentioning to me about the Masons had a dance series one time, how did that work?

FN: 03:23 They had a series of dances in the winter time, had six dances for \$5.

LT: 03:30 That's quite a bargain. Well, now, your husband worked for many years for the Great Northern Railway, and back then, they put in a few more than 40 hours a week.

FN: 03:41 Oh, yes. He worked seven days a week for many, many years. And when they put him on 40 hours, he thought he had it made, so he didn't retire when he should have.

LT: 03:51 Well, now, back then, and I guess we've talked to Ed Nelson about that there were lots of people working on the depot then.

FN: 03:57 Oh, yes. They had—they worked around the clock, there was someone there all the time.

LT: 04:03 So what job did he have at the depot?

FN: 04:05 He was cashier and operator.

LT: 04:07 So that was a pretty busy job.

FN: 04:08 Oh, yes.

LT: 04:10 Well, now, what do you think about Morris today? There have been lots of changes, lots of improvements. I suppose a few things aren't quite as good as they used to be, but what are some of the things that you've noticed that you've been pleased with some of the big changes?

FN: 04:24 Well, I think it's all the building that's gone on and the town has extended every direction. And the Sunwood Inn, I think is wonderful for our town.

LT: 04:37 And the university of course is—

FN: 04:38 Oh, the university, yes, that's above all.

LT: 04:41 Well, a lot of the buildings on campus are named after people, and one is Edson Auditorium. Well, you knew the Edsons, didn't you?

FN: 04:48 Oh, yes, very well. I knew the Edsons, yes.

LT: 04:52 What kind of—did you socialize with them?

FN: 04:55 Yes. In later years more than I did at first.

LT: 05:00 And you knew the—see, I think there was—the football field used to be P.E. Miller Field, you knew the Millers, too?

FN: 05:05 Oh, yes, I knew the Millers very well.

LT: 05:08 So when you're on campus and you go into Edson Auditorium, you perhaps have a little bit more insight than most people when they just think of Edson Auditorium as a building, you knew the person.

FN: 05:18 Oh, yes, and I knew the whole family.

LT: 05:22 Well, you have lived in both Missouri and Minnesota, and have you ever thought about going back to Missouri?

FN: 05:29 Oh, I wouldn't think of it, my roots are too deep here. The first winter I spent up here was the hardest winter they'd had in 20 years, and I didn't know what storm windows were for until I came up here. So they had them stored in

the hotel up on the third floor and I thought, well, do they put those on every time it storms? Well, I found out before the winter was over.

- LT: 05:51 They work pretty good, don't they?
- FN: 05:53 Couldn't be without them.
- LT: 05:56 So through thick and thin you've enjoyed living in Morris, Minnesota?
- FN: 06:00 Oh, yes, I wouldn't live any place else. I've traveled around all over United States and Canada, and there's no place like home.
- LT: 06:08 And you know that, I'm going to ask you one more question and that's your age. And as I mentioned before, everybody has been very cooperative and even the young ladies I've talked to, and could I have your age, Mrs. Noyes?
- FN: 06:22 Seventy-nine.
- LT: 06:23 Seventy-nine. Thank you much. We've been talking with Mrs. Fern Noyes of Morris on Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a Saturday KMRS news feature.