

**Ida Hagen
Narrator**

**Lee Tempte
KMRS
Interviewer**

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- LT: 00:00 This is *Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota: a Saturday, KMRS News Feature*. Today, we are talking with Mrs. Ida Hagen from Starbuck. Ida, you came originally from the Waseca area. Tell us about your parents? Were they born in this country or elsewhere?
- IH: 00:19 Yes, they were born in this country. My dad was born in Wisconsin, and my mother was born in Minnesota—one of the first white children born in Minnesota.
- LT: 00:31 Back then one of the first white children; the rest were Indians.
- IH: 00:36 Yeah, the first whites, and the rest were Indians.
- LT: 00:40 Times were exactly pleasant in all the different things that the white people and the Indians didn't always get along. You remember your mother telling you about some of the nights that were a little bit treacherous.
- IH: 00:53 Yeah. She told us about many nights they hear shooting and they thought it was the Indians. She'd get up many of nights, she said, and walk with her parents to some cottage where they thought the Indians wouldn't see so well. The children and the women would sleep inside while the men were outside with their guns watching.
- LT: 01:16 It wasn't quite that bad when you were growing up though?

IH: 01:19 No. The Indians were gone by the time I had grown up.

LT: 01:23 You came from a pretty big family. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

IH: 01:27 I had six brothers and were six sisters, 12 children.

LT: 01:32 That's a pretty big family. Your mother probably had her hands pretty full.

IH: 01:35 Yeah, she sure did have her hands full.

LT: 01:38 I bet the kids had to help out with lots of chores then?

IH: 01:42 Yes, we all had to do something. We all had to help with chores. We didn't always like it, but we had to help.

LT: 01:51 Milking cows was one of the things you remember as a girl.

IH: 01:53 Yeah, we milked cows and we fed chickens, we fed calves. The main thing in the summer was picking potato bugs.

LT: 02:03 Tell us about that.

IH: 02:05 The potatoes were so full of bugs and we had to go out and pick them and kill them. Start early in the spring or they'd eat up the whole potatoes because we didn't have anything those days to spray them with.

LT: 02:21 You just picked them off the plants and stomped on them?

IH: 02:25 No, we always had a stick and we hit them into a pail. Then we destroyed them after we got them in the pail.

LT: 02:35 You said it was as big job, but I'm sure with a big family like that for your mother to cook meals, the cooking and baking and washing clothes must have kept up most of her time.

IH: 02:46 Oh, yeah, she was so busy woman and we had the big kettle, I tell you. She baked breads just about every other day, many a loaves at the time.

LT: 02:55 You remembered the first time that your mother happened to get some store-bought bread. How old were you about them?

IH: 03:02 I was just a little girl, and mother went to town. There wasn't much money those days, and she had a few cents

left after she had sold the eggs. She bought a loaf a bread, and she paid five cents for it.

- LT: 03:16 Was it different than the bread that your mother made?
- IH: 03:19 Oh, yes, it was different. It was more like cake to us.
- LT: 03:25 It was kind of a treat but it was a little different than homemade bread.
- IH: 03:30 Yeah, it was more soft, and it wasn't so big. Our mother made big loaves, and this was such a small loaf. We thought it was so different.
- LT: 03:44 You were pretty busy doing a lot of different things, helping out with the family at home. How did you come in the family of 12? What ranking in the family are you—are you the oldest? Youngest?
- IH: 03:56 I was the fifth one in the family. There are seven younger than I.
- LT: 04:01 So you had plenty to do to take care some of your younger brothers and sisters?
- IH: 04:05 Oh, yeah, we just about raised the smaller ones. Our mother was busy outside with chores, and we had to take care of the little ones.
- LT: 04:13 Tell us a little bit about food preparation. That has kind of changed. Everybody has got freezers now; they put something up and they throw it in the freezer. What has it like for vegetables and meat?
- IH: 04:25 We had to cook just for the day what we needed because we couldn't keep much over. There was no way to keep it cool, so we just cooked for the day.
- LT: 04:36 What about in the fall for vegetables?
- IH: 04:40 We just took them down in the cellar and kept them there. The beets and the potatoes and carrots and everything would keep pretty well on the basement floor.
- LT: 04:50 What about meat in the summertime?
- IH: 04:53 Well, we always butchered, and we had our own meat. We'd put the hams and the bacon and the dry beef in brine.

What was ready, we'd hang it up in the smokehouse and smoke it.

- LT: 05:05 You came from a big family, and when you were a little bit older you worked in a couple different towns for some relatives—uncles and aunts. In fact, that's how you got to Starbuck first.
- IH: 05:16 Yes, I did. I came up here with my uncle and that's how I got up here and got acquainted. A couple years later I was married and made my home here.
- LT: 05:27 But for that first year-and-a-half, a kind of a family tragedy—your aunt died, so you were in charge of how many kids?
- IH: 05:36 About 10.
- LT: 05:39 You had a big family right away as soon as you got here.
- IH: 05:41 Yeah.
- LT: 05:45 You lived in rural Starbuck, not too far away, when you were married?
- IH: 05:51 Yeah, four-and-a-half miles northwest of Starbuck.
- LT: 05:55 I bet from sunup to sundown you were pretty busy.
- IH: 05:58 Yeah, we were sure busy. We milked the cows by hand, and I raised a lot of chickens. We had a big garden and did a lot of canning. Especially, during the war, we canned everything.
- LT: 06:10 Of all the different things that you've done, anything that was a little bit more unpleasant or a little bit harder than anything else? Was it the milking?
- IH: 06:19 Yeah, the milking and wash the cream separator was always a drawback.
- LT: 06:25 What things did you enjoy the best? Work can be fun too. What things did you enjoy the most?
- IH: 06:30 I enjoyed the sewing a lot and the baking and having company.

LT: 06:38 You told me a little bit that when somebody came into your home they didn't get out of there unless they had coffee, right?

IH: 06:45 Yeah, I always served coffee to everybody that came in.

LT: 06:49 Homemade baked goods and that type of thing is still very, very delicious, but people don't do it quite as much as—

IH: 06:57 Oh, they are buying almost everything.

LT: 06:59 What things did you used to bake? What things were your favorite?

IH: 07:04 I used to like to make pie and donuts, especially, and rolls.

LT: 07:14 Lefse too?

IH: 07:15 Oh, yes. I made lefse and flatbread.

LT: 07:19 When things that are really famous in history and things happened—as I remember when I was in high school when President Kennedy was assassinated. You remember when a different president was assassinated. Who was that and about how old were you then?

IH: 07:36 Yeah. I remember when McKinley was killed. I was about 15 then.

LT: 07:44 So when different things in history happen, you can remember just exactly where you were.

IH: 07:49 Yes, I can remember that.

LT: 07:52 You have lived in the 1800s, in the 1900s; things have really changed. Do you think that things have change to the better or to the worse or some of each?

IH: 08:03 Oh, I think in both ways. I think some things are better and some things are much worse than when I grew up.

LT: 08:12 You mentioned that you worked very hard during your life. What about some of the people today, do people have it a little bit easier today, do you think?

IH: 08:18 Oh, yeah, people have it so easy. They don't like to work hard anymore like we had to.

LT: 08:25 You didn't get vacations and time off and things like that?

IH: 08:28 No, there wasn't much time-off because there was always chores.

LT: 08:32 Ida, you had some very interesting experiences. How old are you?

IH: 08:36 I'm 92 years old.

LT: 08:38 You were born back in what year?

IH: 08:40 In 1886.

LT: 08:42 Ida, thank you very much for talking with us. We've been talking with Mrs. Ida Hagen of Starbuck, on *Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota: a Saturday KMRS News Feature*.