

**Mrs. George Jergenson**  
**Narrator**

**Lee Tempte**  
**KMRS**  
**Interviewer**

**1976**

**Interview done for the Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota KMRS Feature**



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Lee Tempte:	00:00	This is <i>Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota: a Saturday, KMRS News Feature</i> . We are talking now with Mrs. George Jergenson of Donnelly. Mrs. Jergenson, were you born around the Donnelly area?
M.GJ:	00:12	I was born right in Stevens County near Cod River Lake.
LT:	00:19	Where did you go to school? Where is the first school that you went to?
M.GJ	00:23	The first school I went to was in Grant County. I was already 10 years old and there was no school close by the home. So I stayed with some friends up there and went to school there about two years.
LT:	00:40	Where did you go to high school?
M.GJ	00:43	I went to high school in Herman.
LT:	00:45	After that then you decided that you wanted to try teaching school. Where was that?
M.GJ	00;50	Well, it was in the rural schools around here. District 56 was one and one was west of Donnelly. For five years, I taught.
LT:	01:04	How big a school?

M.GJ 01:06 Well, it wasn't too big, but they were plenty children to keep me busy.

LT: 01:14 Back then, the teachers had to do a little bit more than teaching. What are some of the other jobs that you had to do?

M.GJ 01:20 Well, we had to be janitor, had to build our own fires in the morning—get it nice and warm before the children came to school—and we have to do the sweeping and dusting and all those things.

LT: 01:37 I image you were the school nurse and the counselor too.

M.GJ 01:41 That's right.

LT: 01:44 After you taught school, you got married. Do you remember when that was?

M.GJ 01:50 We were married the 17th of July in 1907, at Kongsvinger Church.

LT: 01:59 And that's the church that you still belong to?

M.GJ 02:00 Yes, we still belong to that.

LT: 02:04 How did the Kongsvinger Church get that name?

M.GJ 02:07 Well, the first settlers that were here, most of them—or quite a few anyway—came from Kongsvinger, Norway, and they took that same name and put it on their church.

LT: 02:21 Was it your parents that were some of the first members of that church?

M.GJ 02:25 Yes, they were charter members.

LT: 02:29 Tell us a little bit what it was like to be a farm wife back in the early years. Raising 11 kids, you must have had your hands full.

M.GJ 02:39 Well, I didn't raise all of the 11. One little child died when he was just a few weeks old, and a little girl died when she was about seven, seven-and-a-half. Our oldest son died when he was around 40.

LT: 03:01 To take care of all those different things that perhaps people just take for granted, like washing clothes, what did that involve?

M.GJ 03:09 Well, it's different from nowadays. At first, we could just rub on the board, doing our washing that way. But now, these later years when we had electricity, we had an electric machine. The first washing machine I had, I just worked it by hand.

LT: 03:36 What about your food, did a lot of them come from the farm?

M.GJ 03:41 Yes. Our first years that we farmed, we had our own beef and pork and eggs, and whatever we didn't use ourselves, of course, we brought to town and sold it. We did canning: canned meat and canned fruit also that we could get.

LT: 04:08 I imagine as a good Norwegian cook, you fixed some of the Norwegian delicacies too, like lutefisk?

M.GJ 04:18 Yes, I've cooked lutefisk many times.

LT: 04:22 Are you a pretty good lefse maker?

M.GJ 04:23 Oh, I made a lot of lefse in my life too, but these latter years, we have the electric lefse maker. But sometimes I bake it right on the stove and that works pretty good too.

LT: 04:42 Well, 1976 is a presidential year, and you've seen lots of presidents in your lifetime. Any favorite president, anyone that you thought did a good job?

M.GJ 04:54 Well, we thought Eisenhower was a good president, and I think Wilson was a good president. We thought a lot of Nixon also. Too bad that things should turn out like that for him.

LT: 05:12 Do you have any secrets of living to be an older age—any secret living a long life?

M.GJ 05:24 I thank God for a long time. He has given me the strength, the guidance, and the wisdom that I've needed. I've always been careful about my eatings and other things of life.

LT: 05:41 You are still pretty active in keeping house. Anything that you don't do anymore?

M.GJ 05:48 Well, I do most of my housework. But when housecleaning time comes, then our daughters come and help.

LT: 06:00 Nice to have them living close by then?

M.GJ 06:03 Yes, it surely it. A woman helps me now with the washing.

LT: 06:09 There is one more question that I'd like to ask and that's your age, Mrs. Jergenson.

M.GJ 06:15 I was 93 last November. Yes.

LT: 06:21 Thank you very much. We've been talking with Mrs. George Jergenson of Donnelly, on *Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota: a Saturday KMRS News Feature*.