

**My Memories by Jean
(Anistia (Nena) Andrieva)
Koyman**

My name in Russian is Anistia Andrieva, but I was called Nena. I was born on December 25, 1929.

The Massey Harris 101

From my younger days I seem to remember the war years the most. We learned to do a lot of

things that we wouldn't have ordinarily done. I was nine when I learned to drive a tractor: the first rubber-tired tractor in our part of the country. It was a Massey Harris 101. Brother Mike converted the horse driven binder to tractor. Dad rode the binder and I drove the tractor. How proud I was; I certainly had something over the other girls! It was a very hot and tiring job. There was no power steering, all the power had to come from your arms! Seems like to this day I never got off a tractor!



Jean (Andreeff) Koyman

Jean cutting ice for our summer supply of drinking water. The blocks of ice were moved into an ice house made of logs. There were no windows. The blocks were piled on a bed of clean sawdust and covered with sawdust for insulation. As needed, a block would be uncovered, washed of sawdust and melted for drinking and cooking. Well or dam water was used for laundry, bathing and watering animals.

It was with this same 101 Massey that Nick and I had the job one spring to plough 60 acres of back-setting (first plowing after breaking). This was around 1942 or 1943. We were taking turns ploughing and sleeping in the car at night. I know that 2 a.m. is the darkest part of the night, just before it goes totally black!! This was the time Nick came too close to a big slough and just buried the tractor and plough. Somehow we managed to dig the tractor out, but the plough was something else. Water was beginning to drown it. We had plenty of chains with us so we had to pull it out backwards. All the tractor would do is spin out. Finally we made it. The deep holes we made at the edge of the slough were there until 1967 (after I was married) when we cleared the rest of the quarter. The big breaking plough re-ploughed it all and covered up the scars!

During the war years you couldn't get a mechanic for any money, not that there were many around to begin with. Our little Massey needed an overhaul: to change the rings and grind the valves. Nick and I took on the job. We took the motor out and took it all apart, put in new rings, ground the valves, put in gaskets, spark plugs and anything else that was needed.

When we put it all together again we had one extra small bolt left over. To this day, I still don't know where it belonged. We

started the tractor and it ran like a charm, without a glitch! The little old Massey worked for a good many years after that. That was my first lesson in what makes a motor tick. There would be many more.

I had my driver's license when I was 13 years old in 1943. It was mostly through necessity. Dad didn't know how to drive so I became his chauffeur. We had a 1937 Ford. It seemed like the mechanical breaks never worked. I learned to drive very, very carefully and shift very quickly from "low" to "reverse". The driver's license cost 1 dollar. Dad co-signed for me.

Skating and Playing Ball

There were the times we went skating on the Hines Creek. A bunch of us would get together and go to the "Creek." Someone would have to have a watch as we would skate down the creek for an hour or two. That way, we knew when to turn back in order to get back home in time to do chores before dark. That was great fun. We also did a lot of skating on our lake. We'd go after supper. The moon was so bright it was almost like daylight. However, we took a coal-oil lantern with us and hung it on a fence post so we'd know which way was home.

Playing ball, I think, was the main sport for everyone. The summer days are so long here that you could play ball until 11

o'clock at night. Most of the school kids would get together after supper by Uncle Lorn's place on what was called the School Section. There was a small flat clearing, a little prairie, which made a perfect ball diamond. We'd choose up sides for games or sometimes it was just simpler to play the "Russians" against the "Germans and Indians." There was no such thing as discrimination, just the facts of life. Perhaps that's why we grew up knowing that all people were the same, except of course, if you lost the game!!

The Shield

Nothing could beat the event of the school year. That was when the school kids all loaded up into wagons and headed for Hines Creek for the annual track meet. After practicing for weeks for different events, the day had finally arrived. The coveted "Shield" was the prize. It must have been donated by the Board of Education or Sports and Recreation. Many country schools participated. On the Shield is written "Arctic Knights Annual Sports Award." The dates are 1935-1942. Any school that won it 3 times through those years would get to keep it. Our school, "Ranger" won it 4 times including the final one in 1942. We all came home with a lot of "red ribbons". The Shield hung proudly on a wall in our school well after the school was closed. I took my Grade 9 there in 1944. That was my final year of school.

A few years later we were fighting a big grass fire around the school so I went in and took down the Shield and brought it home. The school didn't burn down then; we managed to put out the fire. However arson was suspected.

I married Laurens Koyman in 1954. We had five children: Colleen, Don, Cindy, Shane and James. I have 15 grandchildren: seven girls and eight boys. My dear husband died in October 1999. I've had a great life. I don't think that I'd change anything. ♦



Mom

Mom at the spinning wheel. The spinning wheel was probably purchased at Hemstock's Hardware in Fairview. The L-shaped board on which Mom is sitting was made by Dad and holds the wool fleece. We raised our own sheep. They were sheared in the spring. The wool was washed several times and laid in wooden racks to be dried by the sun. During the winter months, Mom would card the wool until the fleece was separated. Occasionally Grandpa would help her even though this was considered women's work. The fleece was then spun into yarn and Mom would hook mittens and socks. It wasn't until later that some of the girls learned to knit. Mom also made wool comforters with the fleece.

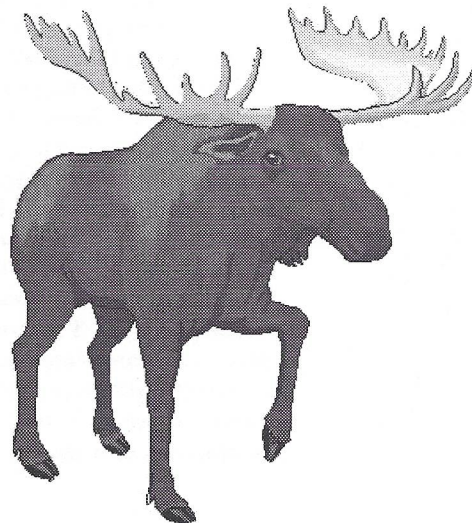
Jean's

Canned Moose Meat

We had quite a lot of Indians living around here in the 30's and 40's. They used to come to our place with moose and deer meat to trade for potatoes, bread, eggs or any other food we might have. They were allowed to hunt all year round, so when they came with meat in the summer we would can it. This is how we canned it:

- ◆ Cut meat into about 2 inch chunks.
- ◆ Let drain for about 24 hours in a cool place. (Wild meat is quite bloody. You can wash the meat first if you want to, just make sure it's well drained.)
- ◆ Pack into one-quart jars.
- ◆ Put one teaspoon of salt and a little bit of pepper per jar.
- ◆ Place a strip or two of bacon on top. (Sometimes we used a bit of chicken fat if we had it: gives it more flavour.)
- ◆ Seal jars and process in a canner for 3-3 1/2 hours.
- ◆ Keep the water level to the neck of the jar.

Should turn out perfect: Good enough to eat!



My Life as a Child by Fannie (Feodosia) Schischikowsky

Playtime

My life as a child was quite memorable. As I look back at so many fun things, and some not, it seems like forever. When we were little, we used to have all the cousins and neighbour kids over to play games like Russian baseball, run sheep run, hide and seek, and fox and goose. Some of us smaller ones couldn't play those games, so we would play house. I remember using spools to glue to our heels with gum or whatever we found that would stick, and pretend we were grownups. We walked every rail fence and climbed every tree in the yard.

Trapping

As we got older, Jean, Nick and I, did a lot of trapping for weasels, snaring rabbits, and shooting squirrels. We skinned everything we caught and dried the skins. The money was good, anywhere from 3 to 10 cents a skin, depending on how many nicks there were in the pelt. Grandpa was a trapper and I guess that's where we got our training. I remember Grandpa as an old man, who went on his trap line every morning during the winter and spent a lot of time upstairs reading the Bible.

Buggy Things

We kids all slept upstairs. Some of the unfortunate things we encountered were having to sleep on wooden framed beds that were infested with bed bugs and, believe me, we had big red welts and itched like everything. Mom used to take the beds apart and douse the cracks and joints with hot water, creoline and kerosene. It seemed like that would help for a while and then they'd be back. I don't know how we ever got rid of them, but we probably burned the beds and made new ones. There was a time when lice were in the schools, so naturally we all got them. We had to wash our heads in kerosene and when that didn't work, our heads were shaved. We wore sugar sack kerchiefs for days. Mom made a lot of our under garments and things out of sugar or flour sacks. She boiled them to get them white and get the printing out.

Of course, there were the usual measles, scarlet fever, and chicken pox that we all had to contend with. We would be quarantined for 10-14 days at a time and couldn't go anywhere or have anyone come over. It was awful!

Mom and Dad were very strict, but were very good disciplinarians. If we needed a licking, we got it, and most of the times not only the one who did something wrong, but the one that tattled got it as well.

Radio listening was for *news* only and especially during Lent. We would sneak into the front room on Saturday nights and listen to the hockey games. Mom and Dad would sit in the kitchen, Dad reading and Mom knitting or spinning wool by lamplight. Mom never learned to read, but as the years went by, and we learned English, she could understand and even say a few words. As long as Dad was with us, he did all the business, so Mom felt she didn't have to learn.

Haying was for the Whole Family

I remember the haying season. Everyone got on the hayracks and off to the meadows we went. Mom always had a big lunch and lots of water. The days were long and hot. The hay was put up by first raking with a team of horses and then the rows would be bunched up and built into hay cocks, all rounded up neat in case of a rain. Then, when that was all done, we had what you call a hay sweep (kind of a ramp and two sides that would hold the hay to start a stack). Mom would have one horse, a long pole and a couple of long ropes. She would poke the pole close to the ground through the hay cock, throw one rope over the top of the hay cock, the other around and tie it to the back end of the pole.

Our job was to stand on the pole at the back and hang on the rope for tightness and away we would go. Mom would lead the horse to

where the stack would be made, drop the haycock and go for another. There was a team of horses hooked up to the back side of the sweep that would then pull the hay up the ramp about 6-8 feet high and the hay would fall onto the stack. When the stack was high enough, the ramp would be pulled ahead a few feet and the whole procedure would start again. Dad would get up on the stack and round it off on top so the rains and later snow would run off. It was a very tiring season, but that's how we did it. It required at least 5 or 6 people, so you see the whole family was involved, and though we were tiny, we still had a job. We thought it was fun and of course, eating out in the fields was most enjoyable.

Harvest Time

Harvest time was fun because we got to stay home from school sometimes so we could go in the granaries to shovel grain. We would also have to take lunches to the threshing crew and if there was any left, boy it was a treat to eat! As we got older and Dad could afford a tractor, we had to learn to drive it for cutting the grain. The binder was converted. After a day of cutting, stooking the bundles was usually done in the morning when it was too damp to cut. The canvasses would get wet, not like today when canvasses are rubberized and moisture doesn't matter.

Dad had a threshing machine

and one fall went out custom threshing for people in the area. He would have a threshing crew who had their own horses and racks to haul the stooks to the machines. My sister-in-law, Natalie, and I were the cooks as most people Dad threshed for were bachelors, or if not, the women did not want to cook for 8-10 men. I think that I was the flunky and Natalie did the cooking. I remember one year we threshed until about October and when we came home, it snowed and we still had potatoes in the ground, so we had to dig them up. It was pretty cold on the fingers, even with mitts on.

We Never Went Hungry

We had a garden for vegetables, wild berries for fruit, and mushrooms. Boy, we did a lot of berry picking. Mom did a lot of canning and we also froze a lot of blueberries and cranberries in the barrels. There were 45 gallon, wooden barrels for sauerkraut and cucumbers for the winter. We never went hungry, but we sure weren't allowed to waste any. Mom used to dry leftover bread in the oven until it was nice and brown and crispy so it wouldn't mould and be wasted. It was really good.

Mushroom Treats

We used to go about 3-4 miles on foot and maybe on horse, to bring back mushrooms, blueberries and cranberries that grew in the sand hills. Anyway,

these mushrooms, "grusdee," grew in spruce bluffs, sort of under cover like leaves and pine needles, so we really had to look for them. They would be quite dirty so here's how Mom did it: she soaked them in water and then scraped them clean.

Sometimes it would take a couple of days. Then she would put them in a salt brine for days (I'm not sure how long). When they were cured, we used to eat them with thick sour cream. Boy what a feast, a little slimy but good, especially with "braga" or "brashka" as they would call it.

Working Out

I did a bit of housework and helping with children for different families; I guess during the summer holidays. I couldn't have been very old, maybe 12-14 because I got married when I was not even 17. I had to do the cooking and cleaning. I worked for a couple at Gage. He was the elevator agent and she was diabetic, so I had to sterilize her needles, make meals, clean and even take the grain prices off the radio for him. I also worked for a family in Hines Creek. She had a birth at home, so I was in charge of the other kids and the housework. I even worked in Peace River for a fellow, looking after his kid after his wife passed away. I was a busy girl in my young days.

The Sling Shot

Jean and I were pretty good sling

shot shooters. One day Mom and Dad were away and by some chance we found the lead from a .22 bullet and wanted to see if we could shoot a chicken. I don't know which one of us loaded the sling shot with this bullet, (probably Nick) took aim and down went the chicken. Were we ever scared! We didn't know what to do with it because we knew we'd get the "lickin' of our lives", so we took it way out in the bush and hid it under some brush. One day Mom wandered onto some feathers and of course questioned us. We told her we had no idea where they came from, maybe a hawk got a chicken, and it was left at that.

I'm sure that had we chopped its head off, we may have gotten a licking, but at least we would have had a good pot of chicken soup, feet and all! Boy, did we love to eat those chicken feet and of course, the "kleochkie" that Mom made out of an egg and a bit of milk and flour and dropped by teaspoon into the soup, homemade needles. They are good and I still make chicken soup, with no feet, but lots of "kleochkie."

Chores

During the winters, our chores were to clean barns, chicken coops, and melt snow for the animals for water. The snow melter was a large piece of heavy tin tied to 4 posts, a big fire underneath made from the roots picked in the fall, dry trees and

such, as the clearing of land was yearly. Another big job was the splitting of a huge pile of green poplar, enough wood for the summer and the winter ahead.

Playtime

We did have time for play too. Christmas concerts at Ranger school were a must for every family. The folks would hook up a team to the big bob sleigh, put some bells on the harnesses and away we'd go, lots of hay, blankets and even a hot brick or stone to keep our feet warm. We used to do a lot of skiing down straw stacks or behind horses holding onto long ropes. The skis were homemade from birch, usually, the end shaped and soaked in hot water for a few days then bent and held with weights until almost dry and the bend would hold. We nailed on the straps to put the feet through and the skis were made. We even skied a few times behind a car going to Fairview to a show. There were not too many cars on our country roads in those days. We all found our own entertainment and fortunately no one got seriously hurt.

Religious Holidays

Sunday morning was prayer time at our house with the whole family. We were taught to pray before meals, upon rising and of course at bedtime. Sometimes I remember on Sundays, Mike would bring out the button accordion and play a few tunes.

It was probably Russian, as we didn't know what he was playing, but it was nice just to have music.

During Lent, which was 6 weeks before Easter and Christmas, we were not allowed to do a lot of things, like listen to the radio or go dancing. Our diets were limited, no dairy products, meat or eggs, so you can imagine how we enjoyed our first meal Christmas and Easter mornings with milk, eggs, and meat. We could have milk on our porridge, or I remember having puffed wheat (boy, what a treat!).

During Lent, our lunches to school were mostly Crisco, instead of butter, and sometimes mashed potatoes. If Mom was making a vegetable soup, with a bit of sardines for flavor, we would get a sardine mashed in with the potatoes. When Lent was over, sometimes we'd have balogna and I tell you, that was a delicacy. We would also have peanut butter and, later when Dad had his own bees, we would mix the honey with the peanut butter and that was good!

Sheep and Sewing

We had sheep for a while so we ate lots of mutton. Mom sheared the sheep every spring, sold the best wool and either carded some for blankets or spun it for knitting socks, and mitts. Mom even knit a sweater for Dad with one hook. I did my share of

spinning the wool and also knitting.

Mom had a hand crank sewing machine and of course she felt we had to learn to sew. I guess I was a little more enthusiastic and tried to learn. It's hard to hold the material with one hand on the crank and the other trying to make a hem or even a seam. We later had one with a foot pedal and that was much easier.

Things weren't easy, but I guess we're maybe better for it and are now here to tell our stories. Mom and Dad told many of their stories, mostly hardships...and we think we had it tough!

Louis and I married in a Greek Orthodox Church in Edmonton on January 21, 1948. We took a train from Gage and brother Mike came with us. In Edmonton we contacted Jessie Sideroff and the two of them were our witnesses at the ceremony. When we arrived home, we had the traditional 2 or 3 day celebration where all the neighbors were invited for a big dinner, presentation of gifts and lots of Russian singing, telling stories and of course, free flowing "brashka." The next day everyone came back and the party started again. After everyone had eaten, someone brought in an armful of straw and threw it on the floor. A few saucers or cups were smashed for good luck. The bride was given a broom and when the sweeping started, coins were

thrown and the groom helped pick up the money. Just about the time the straw was swept up, someone else dragged it back and threw more coins. That could go on for a couple of hours. I think on the third day, some people came back to help with the clean up, eat and drink up the leftovers.

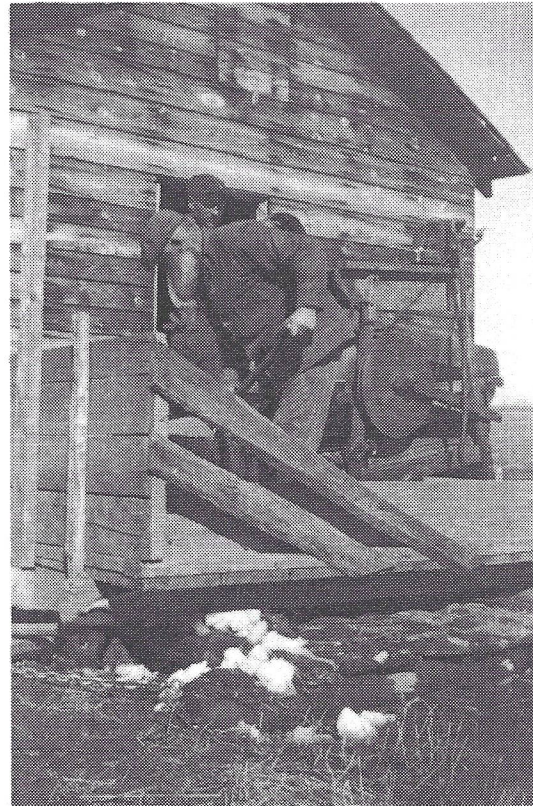
That's how it all began

We now have one son, Christopher, 3 daughters, Annette, Karen, Tresa, 11 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren (and 2 more on the way). One great-grandson born in September, 1999 passed away in October, 1999.

Louis worked in Port Alberni in the sawmills, then returned to Alberta and worked for Shell Oil

Louis and Dad cleaning grain before seeding.
No motors to shuttle the sieves back and forth...strictly manpower on the big wheel.

for nearly 29 years. He is retired and we are living happily ever after, enjoying a life with our families. To write the story of our 52 years together is another chapter for another time.♦



Louie & Dad

Fanny's Chicken Soup with Kleochkie

Pluck and clean a chicken with feet attached. Pour boiling water over the feet to clean them and peel off the old skin. Cut up the chicken and place in a large pot with onion, salt and pepper. Cover with water and simmer until ready. To make the kleochkie, beat one egg with about 1 tsp. milk and enough flour to make a thick, runny liquid when beaten. Drop by teaspoon into the soup to make noodles. (One egg will feed two people.)