

2003.02.166

T976.11

INFORMANT: GEORGE KLUTHE

SUBJECT: autobiographical;  
farming in the St. Albert  
area.

PERIOD: 1905 - c1950

LENGTH OF TAPE: 1 hr. 10 min.

INTERVIEWED BY: Arlene Borgstede  
July 2nd, 1976

birds &  
cars in  
BG

Probably only  
4 children

006 - 008 George Joseph Kluthe, born on present farm, November 2, 1905.

009 - 060 Father: Joseph Kluthe, <sup>pronounced 'KLU-TEE'</sup> born in Germany; came to St. Albert area in 1893. Impressed with the <sup>west</sup> grass, trees and water, brought wife, Elizabeth Sprenger and 5 children out. Bought present farm, 2 quarters from the CPR. for \$4-\$5 per acre. Built house, barn, cleared land. - Moved here from the Dakotas. Chevigny's farm is immediately south.; boys put up fence with wire brought from the States <sup>because it was scarce + expensive here</sup> Also brought windmill

061 - 072 First house was used until 1949; 2 rooms, a kitchen and bedroom downstairs, 2 rooms upstairs. Later a larger kitchen was added (before 1905).  
1914 - 1915 the house was raised, basement put in with furnace, and large kitchen added.

073 - 082 Schooling available for children; (1894) teacher lived at the school, children stayed for the week, returned home on weekends.

083 - 097 Father's trip to the Klondike in 1897-98; was away almost two years. Mother's brother looked after farm.

098 - 122 Personal reflections of father and mother. <sup>political</sup> Father's attitude towards citizenship in Canada. <sup>easy-going, opposite of father religious</sup>

123 - 142 Life on the farm as a child: supplies bought from St. Albert, occasionally trips made into Edmonton (perhaps once a month) by buggy. Sisters all sewed, made their own clothes, orders placed with Eatons catalogue.

143 - 155 Chevigny's <sup>came ~1880</sup> were here before the Kluthes. Their pigs got into mother's garden, ruining the years supply of produce. In fall Mrs. Chevigny brought over a truckload of vegetables.

156 - 162 Farmed oats, barley, cattle, chickens, geese. Traded butter for groceries.

163 - 166 Medical services: mid-wives. <sup>Closest doctor was in Edmonton.</sup>

167 - 174 Children in Joseph Kluthe's family: Frances  
Theresa  
John  
Millie  
Mary  
Anne  
George

- 175 - 180 Entertainment: dances, basket socials, canoeing. Had a gramophone at home.
- 182 - 198 Early Christmases: lots of preparation. Santa Claus would come Christmas Eve, mother and children would attend Mid-night Mass. *Christmas tree w candles*  
Christmas dinner was roast goose. New Years Eve was not as important; did some visiting. *~2 weeks*
- 199 - 244 Attended Bouland (?) school for the first year. Walked the 3 miles. Then went to the Guilbeault School 2½ miles away. Recalls Father Sullivan (prior to studying for the priest-hood) boarded at their home for 3 years. *From Ireland*  
Many teachers boarded at their home. Recalls a Mr. Madden who return after 40 years to visit; mother had not ~~cash~~ cashed his cheque for room and board.  
About 20 - 30 pupils attended grades 1- 8. George completed grade 8 and part of grade 9; left school at 13- 14 years of age.
- 245 - 256 Prejudice felt at school during WW I, *Some name-calling at school* little in the community. Brother was not called.
- 257 - 280 Stayed on the farm (now 5 quarters). Brother, John, was given 2 quarters when he married. Farmed mostly grain, cattle, had a lot of horses. *Helped father with remaining 3 quarters*  
Harvesting was done by threshing machine, tractors. Steam engines came in and did custom threshing. *2+ helpers, depending on time of year.*
- 281 - 297 Grain was hauled to Edmonton by horse and wagon (40-45 bushels at a time). Cattle were driven into Burns Packing Plant in Edmonton; later loaded on the train in St. Albert.
- 298 - 314 George went to Montana, worked in the oil fields for 2-3 yrs. Returned in 1928 to take over the farm.
- 315 - 321 Parents moved into Edmonton; *to retire* father died at 80 yrs, c. 1935 *1916*  
mother died at 83 yrs. c. 1941. *1944*
- 322 - 327 Married Dorrie Chevigny 27 August, 1929 at St. Albert by Father Jan, OMI
- 328 - 339 Farm at that time included full line of horse machinery, tractor and livestock. *cattle, pigs, chicken*
- 340 - 381 Depression in 1930: in 1929 wheat sold for \$1.28 - \$1.32 per bushel; in 1930 they threshed 4000 bushels, stored for the winter. In spring, paid storage and received 30¢ per bushel. Took 14 pigs (200 lbs. each) in to sell; got \$4.00 each. Milked cows only for their own use. *Once barley went from less than \$10/bushel to \$20/bushel & they sold most of their stock.*
- 382 - 390 Dealt with Hector Lemer in St. Albert, (present location of St. Albert Pharmacy).
- 391 - 398 Father paid taxes on the farm for a couple of years. Others lost farms.

*Eggs couldn't be sold, because price was too low they would kill calves instead of feed them*

- 399 - 406 Entertainment: visiting, dancing, playing cards. Didn't travel to Edmonton often.
- 407 - 423 1 son, Wesley, born June 30th, 1930 at Misericordia Hospital. Attended Guilbeault school, then went into St. Albert beginning with Grade 9. *Didn't teach gr 9 in the country schools*
- 424 - 437 Guilbeault school was moved into St. Albert to replace the home of Bill Fraser which had burned down. *Lived there until 1937 mid-60s*
- 438 - 462 Turning point in the depression: *1937* Barley could be sold for 80¢ per bushel at elevators for breweries, Hauled about 3000 bushels. *in Manitoba & Saskatchewan*
- 463 - 478 Sold grain at Volmer., St. Albert, Edmonton. Some people would trade grain for flour at Gillespie's Flour Mill in St. Albert.
- 492 - 530 WW II: prices went up, some labour shortage. *Rationing wasn't too hard on them. Some (not much) prejudice - Bro's served.*
- 531 - 537 Improvements to Highway 2: became a busy road. *'Alaska Highway'*
- 537 - 585 St. Albert: c. 1912 - Perron's old store, LeChambre's store in the Dawson Block; burning of the Dawson Block in 1928. Trips into Edmonton made often with car. *> 1000/week*
- 586 - 595 Sports in St. Albert: didn't participate much. *Hockey in winter.*
- 596 - 636 Influence of the church: Celebration of the unveiling of the Lacombe statue - 1927. St. John the Baptist Day was a big celebration with picnic and sports day. Easily assimilated community; town was mostly French, outer areas were a mixture of ethnic backgrounds. *They had moved to St Paul*
- 637 - 668 In 1949, drilling was done on his land, (had bought Guilbeault corner). Lease went to Imperial Oil, farmed out to Redwater Lease Holds. Sturck oil on the land where he didn't hold the mineral rights. Later struck oil on land that he held the rights on.
- 669 - 695 In 1949, present house was built, power came through the same year. House had running water, power, heated with diesel fuel.
- 696 - 710 First house had been built of lumber, heated with coal from the McDonald or Starkey Mines for \$2.50 - \$3.00 per ton.
- 711 Interested in politics but not actively involved.

SIDE II

- 003 - 026 Father raised Horses; brought 14-15 head of Percheron horses from the States. Raised them and sold to German-Russian farmers from Stoney Plain for \$500-\$800 per team,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cash, remainder at 8%. Many horses died of Swamp Fever. *Raised to 3 yrs.* Also bought a pair of Registered Belgium Mares. *Raised & sold stallions*

- 027 - 049 Father had left 2 Purebred Belgium mares on the farm. In the 30's George was able to sell a stallion for \$500 and bought a used tractor.  
Showed horses in Edmonton, Toronto Royal Winter Fair. "Watercress Lorraine" took a second in Toronto.
- 050 - 059 Government would ship horses down to Onario. (1943-46)
- 060 - 072 Neighbours on surrounding farms: Chevignys, Terraults, Belilles.
- 073 - 091 Businessmen in St. Albert: Goulin and Meyhew had garages, Blacksmith, Matt Leonard. A blacksmith named Judge later moved to Volmer.  
Mr. Hogan owned a farm nearby.
- 092 - 123 Sold all but 40 acres of the farm and is now raising Hereford (Registered) cattle. Showed Bulls in Calgary, Edmonton etc.
- 124 - 158 Death of hired man, Maxx, discovery of his bones after two years, buried behind barn. (Before George was born) Got lost, had seizure + died; they wouldn't bury him in the church yard.
- 159 - 180 Father had hired Indians to clear land; promised them a case of whiskey to do the job quickly. Father was almost arrested for giving liquor to Indians.
- 181 - 195 Problems of excess water in the area; man took a boat as far as Morinville. Bought farm in a dry year, didn't know about water.
- 196 - 207 Cold winters.
- 208 - 214 Mother spun wool she obtained from Chevigny's.
- 215 - 239 Winter 1949: blizzard closed the highway, left many stranded. 1/2 days
- 240 - 264 Father had left a 1924 Essex Touring car on the farm. In 1928, bought (traded Essex in) a sedan for \$1275 which was a 'lemon'. Traded it in for a Ford Coupe in 1930 for \$814, was forced to sell that same year for about \$500. Also had a truck which he kept.

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