

STORY OF KATHERINE KINDSVATER SINNER

My ancestors were the Handaniels Kindsvaters from the village Huck in the Volga Region of Russia. Johann Daniel was my great grandfathers name and we were always referred to as the "Handaniels Kindsvaters".

My grandfather John Kindsvater was Vorsteher for the village of Huck for a long time. When we left Huck in October 1911 my uncle John Kindsvater was the ober-vorsteher.

There were 11 people in our house. My grandparents John and Elizabeth Weigand Kindsvater and three of his sons and their families. The oldest was my fathers brother John Kindsvater the ober-vorsteher, his wife Emma Koch and six of their 8 children. There was Pete, Phillip, Margaret, John, Elizabeth and George. Two children died when they were small. My uncle Pete and his wife Margaret Koch, they did not have children. None of these people came to America. Then was my father George, his wife Elizabeth Schuckman and their four children, Katherine (me), Pete, George and. Elizabeth all born in Russia. My father had another brother Phillip, his wife was Christine Frick, he was second to the oldest, they built themselves a house because our house was getting too small for all these people. Their house was on the same street as ours except it was on the north side of the street and about a block west, closer to the Frick Mill.

We left Huck in October of 1911. The last of October because we were on the ocean on my birthday which is November 11. We drove to Schilling and from there we took the "puddlerutch" up the Volga to Saratov. From Saratov we went by train to Germany. I do not know the name of the ship we took to come to America. The "puddlerutch" was a little ship. It took 14 days to cross the ocean and they were 14 rough days. They served food on the ship and we also had plenty of our own food. My father always wanted to come to America. He said he was going to stay here 10 years. He lived to be 98 years of age. We were gone from Huck 3 days when my grandmother died. We corresponded with them until the revolution. One time my father got a letter from a lady, she was a Hixts, she was married to my dad's oldest brothers son, John Kindsvater. She said she was on her way to she didn't know where but she asked for help. She said John, her husband, had died and would my dad be so kind as to help her. She had 2 children, she said don't send anything until you hear from her. We never heard from her.

My Kindsvater family were farmers in Huck, but my father was also a cabinet maker.

We lived on the first street in Huck, the southern part of town. We were on the second. street south of the school. Our home had trees in front and a little fence all around it. Not all the houses in Huck had trees out front. We had big gates that opened into our place. In the summer time, once a week Friday evening or Saturday morning, we had to get out and sweep the street clean in front of our place. Everybody swept the street in front of their places. There were no sidewalks. The dirt that was swept from both sides of the street to the middle of the street was put in a wagon and hauled away. The street was as hard as a rock. We had a very large "bak" house where we ate. In the wintertime we did a lot of weaving in our "bak" house. It was a very large room. Our "bak house" was built onto the back of the house. To one side of our house we had a building where we kept our flour. Our flour was kept in big bins. Further back we had a big place where we had bins for our seed that we used for the next years crops. Under this building we had our

ice cellar. I think the whole neighborhood brought meat to our cellar in the summertime. Towards the back we had our animals cows, horses and sheep. There were about four or five thousand people in Huck. I do not know how many houses there were. Several Russian towns were not to far away.

There were three stores that I know of; Kindsvaters, George and Phillip, they were brothers and cousins to my father. I think their store was on the same street as my grandpa Schuckman, only toward the Kindsvaters Mill. There was Eckerts store which was on the same street and on the same side of the street as our house and then there was a Koch store which was on the same street as the school. They had sugar, raisins, coffee, tea and material.

There were no house numbers in Huck while I was there.

There was a government building in Huck, it was 3 or 4 blocks down from us, across the street and towards the Kindsvaters Mill, which would be east of us. The mail was brought to this building and then it was delivered to our house. I do not know who delivered it or who brought it to town. Our mail was addressed: DANSEL DOLOWKA SARATOV KABANA BLOWNUCKA OYEST. (I spelled this the way it sounded.)

The main streets in Huck ran east and west. I think there were six of them. The houses went so far and then there would be a cross street going north and south. The cross streets went from the first street south in town clear through north to the street where the church was. There were no streets (south) behind our place. The streets were very long for they went all the way through town from east to west. If the streets had names I never heard them. SPLOWNUCKA RIVER. There was a bridge across the river. Every spring it would have to be rebuilt because the thawing of the heavy snow fall would wash it away.. You could walk across the bridge, it had a railing on it, and you could drive the horse and wagon over it. I do not know the name of the smaller stream that ran behind our place. I never saw the reservoir. It was a long wag from town.

WATER. The town of Huck had very good drinking water. The reservoir was way south of town in the forest. There was more then one well in town but I do not know where they were.

Most of the homes had cisterns, where the water was pulled up with a bucket. We had ours right behind our house. This water was used to water the cattle and horses and not for drinking.

At the stream where the water ran day and night, year in and year out, is where most of the people got their water. You did not water you animals there. Those people that lived further away had to haul their water by wagon. There were three square wooden troughs, the first one you could dip water out of it for drinking, the water ran into the troughs through pipes. When the first trough was full it ran over into the next, then on into the last one. When the last one ran over they had little ditches built and water ran down into the little stream of water right behind our place. There you could use that water to water your garden. Some times when it was nice, a lot of the women would take their clothes, after they had it boiled and wash their clothes in the stream. We made our own wash tubs out of wood. We made our own laundry soap. In summertime we went swimming in that small stream. We went swimming just before dark and then we didn't have to take a bath.

The part of town that was toward the Frick Mill was the Oberdorf and that part of town toward the Kindsvaters Mill was called the Underdorf.

THE PEOPLE ON OUR STREET. As far as I can remember these people lived on our street. We lived on the first street in the southern part of Huck. You go to the second street south of the schoolhouse, just straight down from the school, on the south side of the street the first house on the corner and then going east toward the Kindsvaters Mill was the following homes.

1. Phillip Kindsvater and his four sons George
2. John Kindsvater and his three sons. John, Pete and George (George was my father)
3. Geier (I do not know his first name)
4. George Geier his wife was a Weigand lived in the house behind the first Geier.
5. George Phillip Geier I think there was a street in here
6. Hixts
7. Schneider
8. Jacob Michel, I think there may have been a street in here
9. Eckert I believe they had the store.

Across the street, west from Phillip Kindsvater there were no houses. There was a building for our Bazaar. Later there were more houses west of the Bazaar building and on that same side of the street which is the south side of the street.

FAMILIES IN HUCK THAT I HEARD OR KNEW ABOUT:

WEISBERGER: A family lived the first street away from the church

NEIDERHOUSE. The parents of my brother-in-law, Jacob Neiderhouse, they lived close to where my grandpa Schuckman lived.

SCHAFF: I remember the name but I cannot tell you about them.

ECKERT: An Eckert family had a store about a block from where we lived. It was closer to the Kindsvater Mill than our house.

GEIER: Three families of Geiers lived next to us. The family that was right next to us had a daughter named Evlis (Eva), she and I were good friends. They just had one girl. I don't know their first name. A Geier family lived on the same place only behind the front house, his name was George Geier. His second wife's last name was Weigand. The George Phillips Geier family lived next to them. They did not have any children.

DIETZ: A Dietz family lived towards the end of town.

SACKS: They were called "de Sacks". They lived on the last street by the church. The Kindsvaters that lived close to the Sacks were cousins to my grandfather. I do not know the first name of the Sack family.

BROTZMAN: I know there was a Brotzman family lived on the same street as the school. Their daughter sat next to me in school. I do not know their first name.

MICHEL: "Bakers Phillip" Michel lived two blocks from the school house.' His mother was a Geier. Another Michel family lived on the same street we did. Another lived on the same street as my grandpa Schuckman only across the street.

HIXT: A Hixt family lived on the same street we did. One girl was married to my cousin. Christina Hixt was married to John Kindsvater. Another family lived way down toward the Frick Mill and on the north side of the street. I think there were two family that lived there by the name of Hixt.

HEIN: There were two families of Heins lived right across the street from us. They were called "de Luwicka". There were two families of Heins that lived across the street from the Bazaar building. They were called "de Schleptmicka". I do not know their first names.

FRICK: A Frick family owned one of-the Mills in Huck. A George Frick was married to my fathers oldest sister, Rosina Kindsvater. They lived on the same street as the schoolhouse toward the 'Frick Mill, They did not come to this country.

Some Fricks lived "driva am berich" they had the windmill south of town. A Jacob Frick lived across the street from us. He was a contractor and worked mostly out of town. He was a different family from the Fricks Mill family.

SITTNERS: There were 2 Sittner families in Huck that I know of. They were two brothers. They lived side by side. One of my cousins was married to one of their girls. They lived in the same area that my uncle Phillip Kindsvater and his wife Christina Frick built their home. It was on the same side of the street that we lived on. They were on the west side of the Bazaar building, closer to the Frick Mill. The Sittner brothers lived across the street from Phillip Kindsvater and west of the Bazaar building. I do not know the first names of the two Sittner brothers.

SCHUCKMAN: Schuckman was my mothers maiden name. Her parents, my grandparents, were Jacob and Katherine Pope Schuckman. My grandmother Schuckman was from Balzar. They lived the third street north from us, north toward the church. They ware the second house from the corner going toward the Frick Mill.

George Schuckman, my mothers cousin, ran the grainery in Schilling. His wife was Russian.

Alexander Schuckman and his wife Elizabeth stayed with my grandma and grandpa Schuckman. In about 1922 we all got together and sent them some money, because they were having such a hard time in Russia. We got a nice letter from them and my uncle said grandma and grandpa especially wanted to thank me. They didn't think I would remember them. My husband and I had Just gotten married at that time.

RELIGION: Our church was on the last street in the northern part of town. It was made of wood. There were no nails in it. You could hear just as good. in back as you could in front. It had three bells on top of the church. The first bell rang to let people know there would be church, then two bells were rung and when three bells rang church started. It was the only church in town and you could hear the bells all over town.

Inside there was a raised pulpit off to one side and you did not dare to inside the altar it was forbidden.

We went up to the front to take communion. First was the Lutheran then the Reformed, men before women and we used one common Chalice or Communion Cup. We had a big pipe organ.

Women sat on one side and the men sat on the other. Children did not go to church, maybe once in a great while like on Christmas. You went to church after you were confirmed, While the old folks were in church we studied our lessons.

We did not have Sunday School like we have here. After you were confirmed and on Sunday afternoon we had "jugenverreind". If you missed a meeting you were fined about three cents and that was a lot of money in those days. Because there was no heat in the church, in winter time the church services were held in the upstairs of the schoolhouse.

Our minister was Pastor Sterkel. He preached one Sunday at our church and the next Sunday at Norka. His home was in Norka. He was our minister for a long time.

SCHOOLMASTER: Our schoolmaster's name was Jacob Rausch. He was a son of a gun. His children, that I remember, were Amelia (Molla), 2 girls, a son Carl, an older and younger son that I cannot remember their names. If you did not know your lessons he would paddle the Heck out of you.

PRAYER MEETINGS: Prayer Meetings were held in peoples homes and in the upstairs of the schoolhouse. They were held on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

CEMETERY: The Cemetery and Church were on the north edge of town. I think the cemetery had a fence around it. I think it was a wooden fence. I know we had a picket fence around our lots at the cemetery.

SCHOOL: We had a great big schoolhouse. It was on the second street from the street where I lived. It was straight up from us on the corner. All the grades were in this one building. The schoolmasters house was right next to the school. Monday through Friday we had our lessons and we learned German, except the last two years I was there we had to learn Russian. Half a day German and half a day Russian. We had to salute the flag and sing the national anthem every morning. I can still count a little but that is all. On Saturday we had our religious instruction.

We had several teachers. I remember a John Kreich, he was my cousin. John Flammer (sp) he was married to my aunt, Pauline Schuckman. Carl Rausch, one of the schoolmasters sons was a teacher. Those are the teachers I remember. Some teachers come from out of town, others were from Huck and went away to school to learn to be teachers. John Kreich went away to school

We had to buy our own books which we passed down from one child to the next. We did the same in Saturday school.

Boy you had to know your lessons too.

There was also a private school in Huck. My uncle Emanuel Schuckman went to private school. Uncle Schuckman came to this country too.

THE MILLS: There were two Mills in Huck, plus one mill for removing oil from the sunflower seeds. That I can remember, we children could hardly wait to get the seeds shelled.

THE Frick Mill was on the west side of town and the Kindsvater Mill was on the east side of town. The mill for the sunflower seeds was about half way from our house to the Frick Mill. I don't remember who owned it, I think maybe the Fricks had it too.

The **Kindsvater Mill** was owned by a cousin to my father, George Kindsvater, but I do not remember their first name. He was a brother to the two Kindsvaters that owned the Kindsvater store in Huck.

The 'Scheppe' Kindsvaters name was George, his brother was Phillip Kindsvater. They owned the store. The store was kinds catty corner from the schoolhouse. Phillip Kindsvater had the "Zittle Rei" in the store. The people came to his store, got yarn, took it home and wove it into Gingham Material which he then sold in the store.

BLACKSMITH: I know of only one blacksmith in Huck, although there could have been more. The blacksmith I know of, his name was Herdt. He did not live to far from us. He lived close to the water.

CROPS: The crops we raised were wheat, sunflowers, barley, oats and rye. There were special places on the edge of town for the threshing floors. Every home that was a farmer, had a threshing floor. A lot of the floors were together, except each farmer had a fence around his threshing floor. They were pretty good sized. Every noon my aunt would carry out a hot meal to the men. My father made a threshing machine it was called a "butsmachine". He also sold them to other people.

The grain was stored in bins on our own place. After threshing what we did not need for our own use or seed for the next year we hauled down to Schilling where they had the granaries.

GARDEN CROPS: On the other side of the little stream that was behind our place we had a little garden and a small orchard. Our big orchard was on the Blownucka. That was about 3 miles away. (This may be a reference to the Splaunucha River.)

We had apples, pears, cherries, currents and gooseberries. No peaches, oranges or grapes. We had carrots, sugar beets, pumpkins potatoes, cucumbers and things like that. Watermelon did not do too good where we lived. In the fall of the year the Russians would bring grapes, watermelons and other food to town and they would sell it in the bazaar building.

PASTURES: The pastures were way out away from the village. They had a cow herder and a sheep herder for each street. He came down the street, you had your cows ready and as he went by your cows joined all the other cows. He

came the same time everyday so you knew when to have your cows ready. Same thing happened in the evening, he brought the cows back the same times each day. The sheep were taken out just once a year, they went out in the spring and came back in the fall. The sheep herder stayed out with the sheep. The sheep and cow herders were German people from our village. He was hired.

CLOTHES: Our shoes and stockings were made by members of our family. My grandmother made all the wool stockings, which were made from our own wool from our own sheep. She would start a stocking in the morning and by evening she would have it done. Some were kinda like a slipper, it had leather soles and knitted tops. Uncle Pete made the shoes for the whole family. Some times he just repaired the old shoes.

Most people made their own shoes, but I know of one shoe Cobbler in Huck, his name was Walker. He lived on the same street as my grandpa Schuckman only about a block away towards, the Frick Mill.

Our weaving machine for making our material was a big one, you had to work it with both feet. I could weave but I could not spin. I did put some yarn on spools for the "Zittle Rei" for the Kindsvater store. These little spools fit in the shuttle that we used in weaving.

A CAR: The first car I ever saw was from Denhof. I think it was electric. Whenever that car came through town everybody knew it and everybody was outside to see it. Two men were in it, they sat way up high and they wore white coats. The owners were German people from Denhof.

GYPSIES: In summer the Russian gypsies came through town in covered wagons. They parked. behind the bazaar building. We children traded our bones that we had cleaned. and our rags for toilet soap, ear rings, needles, ribbons and other little things.

GAMES: We played hide and go seek, checkers, dominoes and went swimming. No cards, we were not allowed to play cards. We played a game called. "Shutka". I don't know if that was a German word or a Russian word.

BAZAAR: We had a big building in Huck where we had a bazaar the fall of the year. It was located on the same street where I lived. On the south side of the street and across the street toward the Frick Mill. Each fall the Russians brought their products to town to sell, grapes, watermelons, onions strung or braided together, apples, cabbage and. things like that.

MARRIAGES AND WEDDINGS: There were 8, 9, 10 couples married at once. Twice a year, after Christmas and after Lent. Some weddings lasted for days, they served big meals, not all weddings had dances, the horses were decorated. It was pretty. Not all marriages were arranged. Most couples knew who they wanted to marry. They had boyfriends and girlfriends. On Sunday evening they would pair off and walk up and down the streets. The only attendants that I saw was a bridesmaid and a best man.

FIREHOUSE: I know we had a firehouse but I do not know where it was located.