

1.6.6

JOHN PETER EITZEN \*

Katharina was the daughter of Peter and Maria (Rempel) Falk. Her parents had immigrated to Mountain Lake from the Chortitza village of Bergtal in south Russia in 1876.<sup>13</sup> John met Katie when he worked as a farm hand following the harvest. She was keeping house and cooking for her brothers Dave and Jake on a farm in North Dakota which they were working for their parents. While he was working on the Falk farm, he came to admire Katie very much and to love her. She would carry the afternoon lunch to the fields and one day when she brought his lunch out to him, he made her a special seat on a shock of wheat. He had her sit down, then knelt before her, took her hand and asked her to be his wife. She said yes and made him very happy. (Years later when my mother, Nina, was a child and her parents were farming in North Dakota, her father made her a special seat on a shock of wheat and told her this story when she brought out his afternoon lunch.) When he moved on with the harvest they had made their plans.

John and Katie were married at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 21, 1911<sup>14</sup> in a double wedding ceremony with her younger sister, Helena and Peter Pankratz, in the First Mennonite Church in Mountain Lake. In the wedding procession the two ministers came down the aisle first, then the two brides together, then the two grooms. First came the sermon, longer than we are use to today; then Helena and Peter Pankratz were married by Rev. Gerhard Neufeld. Rev. David P. Eitzen, John's brother, performed their marriage ceremony. The brides wore identical dresses made for them by their Aunt Katharina (Rempel) Schroeder. After the ceremony a luncheon was served to all the guests at the City Hall.<sup>15</sup>

The first winter John and Katie made their home with her parents but soon rented a place of their own. John worked as a carpenter when they were first married. Katie was an excellent cook and a talented seamstress. Their first child Nina was born to them in Mountain Lake, Minnesota on November 30, 1912.<sup>16</sup> When she was nine months old they left Minnesota to work as cooks for the threshing crew in North Dakota. They did this in the fall of the year for several years.

In 1915 they moved to North Dakota and rented the farm of his brother Cornelius in addition to farming their own land five miles north of Munich. During the ten years they lived in North Dakota, two more daughters were added to the family - Martha and Bertha.

They rented out their quarter section which was adjacent to the C. P. Eitzen farm and returned to Mountain Lake in 1925 when John was encouraged to join Peter Stoesz, his brother-in-law, as a partner in the Ford Garage. It was here in 1928 that their son John was born.

Katie became ill in 1933 and was hospitalized the last part of her life and died of cancer July 23, 1947.<sup>17</sup> After Katie was hospitalized, John became a McConnors Products dealer and was successful in this venture.