

MT. LAKE'S OLDEST RESIDENT CELEBRATES 100th BIRTHDAY ON VALENTINES DAY

"I was so lonesome and homesick for Russia the first years I lived in this country that if I could have I would have run home," commented Mrs. Katherine Schroeder, when she was interviewed in her cozy room at Eventide home.

It is 87 years ago February 14 since she came to Mt. Lake from Russia and she will be 100 years old on Valentine's day.

As Mrs. Schroeder is hard of hearing and prefers to converse in her native tongue, her daughter-in-law, Mrs. F. F. Schroeder, who is also a resident of Eventide, graciously interpreted for this reporter in the interview.

Mrs. Schroeder recalled the trip by boat to the "new" country - where the family hoped to have Christian liberty. "We came voluntarily because my brothers did not care to serve in the army, which training was compulsory.

Mrs. Schroeder was a young girl of 13 and endured the two weeks of boat travel on the high seas with her mother and stepfather, six brothers and two sisters. She told of the huge waves and the terrible sensation of seasickness.

For the family the first few years in this new country were years of hardship, hardwork and disappointment.

"We had a beautiful home in Berghol, Russia. My father had a grocery store and tailor shop. I remember the tailor sitting from morning to night sewing and stitching. We left much in possessions when we came to this country but we gained Christian freedom.

"When we came to Mt. Lake we were met by Mr. and Mrs. Abe Penner and we stayed with them for a few days. They were very kind to us. We were very tired and lonely after the long boat trip and then the train trip to Minnesota.

"I remember there were only four buildings in Mt. Lake at that time. But there was much land to be homesteaded so we settled on a farm north of Butterfield. There was a "shack" on the land and we lived in that until my father and brothers could build on and improve it.

"The first year we had almost a complete crop failure. The grasshoppers came by the thousands. But God performed a miracle and they seemed to raise like a cloud. So part of our crop was saved.

"We had two yoke of oxen and they worked hard in breaking the soil. There were no fences so cattle grazed. Besides a few cows we had ducks and chickens.

"Often our thoughts went back to Russia where we had a comfortable home and my father didn't have to work so hard to support the family. But we were happy that we could live our lives in freedom."

As a young girl, Mrs. Schroeder did what all young girls did in that era. She learned homemaking. She helped her mother with the sewing, cooking and baking. Recreation and hobbies? She hesitated for a bit when asked this question.

"We loved to skate and that was the winter sport. I remember I had skates made of wood. They looked like sandals."

In her early 20's she married, and she and her husband lived with her parents for the first few years before establishing their own home. They had a family of five boys and one daughter, only one son and the daughter survive; Martha, Mrs. Alexander Balog of Florida and Peter of Yakama, Washington.