

Heather Nelson
interviewing

Mrs. Anita Meyland

ME: This is Heather Nelson interviewing Anita Meyland at her home on Dec. 30 about her life and her work with art. (Pause) Okay, when and where were you born?

Mrs. M: Milwaukee Wisconsin, 1897

ME: What were your parents names?

Mrs. M: Ummm.... My mother was a Ladwig and she married a man by the name of Elke and his name was Fredrick Elke, and my mothers name was Anna.

ME: How many brothers or sisters did you have?

Mrs. M: I had one brother, I was the baby in the family, he was ten years older than I was, he was born in 1888. His name was Arthur.... Elke. And then I had a sister who was 8 years older than I was. page 1

s.m. - And her name was Elsie Elke. So I was
sorta the papoose.

IE: What did your father do for a living?

rs.m. - my father was a frisco painter
he would, ah, decorate churches, you know,
these elaborate things around the alters
and all over, which was a profession, that
he learned in the world's fair in St. Louis,
in the early 1800's.

IE: Did you have any pets when you were little?

rs.m. - Always, always had collie dogs. I used
to have a collie who'd have puppies and
then everybody in the neighborhood came
for puppies. And to this day, my grand-
children and my daughter all have
collie dogs. A dog, collie dog, family.

IE: What kind of chores did you have to
do?

Mrs. M. - Oh, yes, Saturday was dusting day, and watering the rubber ~~plant~~ plant which was about three feet high. And taking the carpets out with the carpet beater and helping my mother, around the house, that was when I was in school as you are now.

ME: What did you do on your leisure time, for fun?

Mrs. M. - Oh I was a, you mean in my early days?

ME: yes.

Mrs. M. - Well, I was quite a nature lover. I had a very good friend, and she and I would go out with a net and get butterflies and bugs, for insect collections. And then I was ALWAYS interested in painting and sketching. Those were my main hobbies, along with some others.

ME: Was there any games that you used to play with your friends?

Mrs. M - Well, there was one game, and it's sorta like you play the stock market now, the name of the game was Pit, and some of you were bears, and some of you were umm,.... what was the other? and bulls and you'd try to make money with cards games.

(interrupt herself) Oh and then those were the days, even on the schoolyard you played games like "Farmer in the Dell" and things like that. It was fun.

Many neighborhoods, there were more CHILDREN in those days, you know there isn't a child on this whole block now! And I miss children, I miss you know their laughter and their playing.

ME: What was a special treat for you and your brother and sister?

Mrs. M - What do you mean a treat to eat or a treat to go to ~~one~~?

ME: Both, either one.

Mrs. M - Well, chiefly in school, I think the day I enjoyed most in the Milwaukee Public Schools, in every grade from the 3rd grade up you'd have one day where you'd go to the public museum and art gallery downtown and that was always my favorite visit because I learned things there that I had never seen before.

And then. Oh... going on the Milwaukee River, boating and canoeing in the summer, skating in the winter, there's always something to do in the big city.

ME: What was your favorite holiday as a child?

Mrs. M - I really think it was Christmas because we had ah... relatives, my mother had 2 sisters and I had I think 10 or 12 cousins, and we all got together at one person's house on Christmas Day, and the gifts were always under the tree and you had supper with the whole family. And then after Christmas

mrs. m- they would light the tree which had "living" candles on it and then you had to say a piece, either one that you learned in school or learned in church. And all of us, no matter what age, some of my cousins were older, we all had to stand and recite a piece, and as you recited your piece, not a Santa Clause but someone from the relatives would give you a gift. Then we all sang like we do now... Holy Night... all the Christmas carols.

ME: Did you have to walk to school?

mrs. m- yes but um... Milwaukee is divided into wards, areas, and each ward I guess had 2 or 3 schools. So you never had to walk more than, oh... 3 or 4 blocks. There were so many schools, so I... I lived so that when school was out at noon, I could run home, get lunch and get back to school by 12:30. So that'll show you how close I lived to school.

ME: Did you have a favorite or least favorite teacher?

Mrs. M - In the grades ^(me) (yes) yes I did have a favorite, I think it was my 5th grade teacher, who traveled a lot, those were the days when teachers would use their vacations and go to Yellowstone Park and this teacher would travel in the summer and she'd ~~send~~ send you postcards no matter where she was and then when she'd come back in the fall she'd give you a real travel talk about where she had been. She was always a real favorite of mine.

ME: What was summer vacation like for you?

Mrs. M - Vacation. ... Oh ~~you~~ ya know up here we call them camps, and in Wisconsin they call them cottages. So every body had a summer cottage, that you went to, and men went fishing and the women went boating, and kids ran around. So, usually we went to a cottage for the summer.

mrs.m- Or we had swimming pools and of course, Milwaukee is on the lake, like we are on Lake Superior, that was on Lake Michigan. And there were many swimming schools along the lake to go to.

me: Did you have any childhood diseases?

mrs.m- Oh no! I had measles like @ every body, that was about all, ah, ... we were quite a healthy family.

me: Did you have to go to the doctor or did the doctor ^{come} to your house?

mrs.m- I never was ill enough to have a doctor come I, ... I'm not @ a Christian scientist but I talk wellness rather than illness and even now I haven't been to a doctor for oh... I guess... ^{well} when my daughter was born and she'll be 60 years old, so even then, but we did have doctors when my mother and father were ill, the doctor would come to the house. Only when you had a serious operation did you go to the hospital.

ME: What college did you go to?

Mrs. M - I went to the University of Wisconsin.

ME: How much was tuition?

Mrs. M - Well, I'll tell you um... I became a teacher and when we went to the summer sessions it was \$42 for 6 weeks in the summer. And in the winter it never was more than \$100 or so. Tuition was ^{very} reasonable you know those are state colleges.

ME: How many years did you go to college?

Mrs. M - I have a bachelors degree I went 4 years

ME: When did you move to Marquette?

Mrs. M - I moved to Marquette in 1924. I had taught in Milwaukee for about 8 years. And uh... the man who I married, also was a college graduate and he started working on a higher degree so in 1924 we were married and we came to Marquette. We went, came up here about the 15 of January, and I've been here ever since. page 9

Mrs. M - My husband was in the college and
I went to the college out here and
then in 1927 I had my only child, Charlotte.

ME: How old were you when you got married?

Mrs. M - mm... I was 27, and I was 30 when
my first child was born.

ME: What was your husband's name?

Mrs. M - Gunther, Gunther Christian Meyland,
He's Danish.

ME: Did you go on a honey moon?

Mrs. M - Oh YES! We uh... first we went back
to the U. of Wisconsin to pick up our
diplomas really, and then we went all
the way, in a Ford car, all the way to
Yellowstone Park, and Black Hills, and as
far as San Diego and back it was a nice
honeymoon. Because we had the whole
summer to do it, you see.

ME: Where did your husband work when ^{you} ~~we~~ came back here?

Mrs. M - He was an English professor at Northern Michigan University.

ME: When did you have your first radio or television?

Mrs. M - When did I own one? Oh I think in the early twenties isn't that when we all had them? and television, oh..... I know I oh.. we had television when Kennedy died because I have a, I took a picture of the screen on the television where Nancy or what was her name, ... Jackie was walking, before the funeral up the street very sadly, I was very, very ~~too~~ heartbroken when Kennedy was shot.

ME: Do you remember the snowstorm of 1938?

Mrs. M - Oh I ~~can~~ imagine I do, was that a big storm? up here?

mrs. m - Well I do remember there was a big storm and we had a big fire down here in Marquette at that time, the great big opera house burned and everybody walked downtown because the streets weren't plowed. And I remember getting into a snow bank on the side, up to my neck almost and the snowplow came along (laugh laugh) and I was so afraid they'd bury me in the snow and they wouldn't find me (laugh.....)

mes: When did you first get interested in artwork?

mrs. m - I was always interested in artwork, and when I went to public school in Milwaukee I was oh so happy when the teacher picked up the drawings and she picked out some that were good, and I remember there was a wire around the inside of the room, and I never was happy unless my geranium or my rooster was up on that. So all my life I've been in art. page 12

Mrs. M- and all the way through high school and all the way through college, and of course up here I've done a lot of art,

ME: What kind of artwork do you like the best?

Mrs. M- Well uh I do art and crafts as far as art is concerned I'm a watercolorist but lately I've ~~used~~ used acrylics which is a new form of watercolors. And as far as crafts are concerned, oh I really don't know, I like all crafts, I'm a weaver, I weave ~~weave~~ and I do pottery, I have a pottery collection that I exhibited at Northern, I have 200 pots, that I didn't make, but collected.

ME: Did you ever sell your artwork?

Mrs. M- No I never did, they were like my children if they weren't any good I didn't want to show them and if they were good and I liked them they were like my children I wouldn't sell them I never made any money on my art.

mrs. m - I helped other people make money

I taught art teachers, I taught little children, I had a paintbox in Marquette for a long time, It was called the 'Paintbox' where ~~any~~ any child in the city could come Saturday morning to paint. And I still have some of the boys that were in my class, well younger than you, little bitzy boys, come and visit me now, I just had an architect that is an architect in San Francisco come and visit me, he comes every Christmas when he's up here, because he remembers when he was in my little paintbox, that's the thing that gives me most happiness like when your teacher, had many, many honors and got her scholarships I've always watched Bobbi Ameen from the time she was as old as you are, when she went to college, and then when she began to teach

Mrs. M- and I always feel like a part of me is in her.

ME: What kind of art projects did you start like Art on the Rocks?

Mrs. M- Yes, yes, and Art on the Rocks ~~was~~ ^{was} 26 yrs old in 1984 and the Lake Superior Art Organization wanted to honor me so they collected a lot of money and they built a gazebo out on the island in my honor. And then from the state I got that plaque over there as being an honored art woman Mrs. Edsk? Ford was the woman before me she got that plaque and I got the second one. Those are highlights in my life.

ME: Did you start any other art organizations?

Mrs. M- Yes, I had a group of young married women who all had young children and I had them for 11 years and they met every Thursday night not during the summer 15

Mrs M. But during the year they called themselves "the group" and they all painted in a different way. I had a way of teaching where I would show them works of artists and they wouldn't copy those but they would paint "in the manner of" now put that in quotation marks, in the manner of those artists, like when ~~showed~~ I showed them a print of Van Gogh, they wouldn't dare copy it! But they would paint in his manner. And that was quite new, I give you a word for that the word is ~~the~~ p-a-s-t-i-c-h, pastich, in French that means painting in the manner of. And then later on when they when their children kept them busy I just discontinued that. And then I taught the elderly here at Pineridge I taught the elderly for years for crafts.

ME: Do you belong to any Art organizations now?

Mrs. M. - of course! I belong to Lake Superior Art and Milwaukee Art Gallery and what we call the yarn winders their people

mrs. m- who do weaving. Is that enough?

what do you do now edit it?

me: Yes we have to make it into a story
and then it might get picked for our
Red Dust Book.

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