

Interview with Mrs. Allie Long
June 19, 1978
Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection
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Interviewed by Calvin Gower and John LeDoux

Gower: This is an interview conducted by Calvin Gower and John LeDoux for the Central Minnesota Historical Center on June 19, 1978, and we're talking to Mrs. Allie Long, is that O-L--

Long: No, A-L--

Gower: It's A-L--

Long: L-I-E.

Gower: A-L-L-I-E Long, L-O-N-G and your name is--

Long: Elsie.

Gower: Elsie, Elsie Long of the United Methodist Church of Finlayson, and you've been a member of the church all of your life?

Long: Well, we dropped out but we came back, when we moved away, we dropped out and then when we came back again, then we started going again.

Gower: Your parents as I understand it were founders of the church.

Long: Ya, along with the Ryans, Foleys, and Martins.

Gower: And this was in the 1890's that they started the Sunday School operation in the homes?

Long: Well, the church was dedicated in 19--

Gower: 1903 or so.

Long: 1902 or 1903.

Gower: Well were your folks in the Sunday School operation before that?

Long: Oh, yes.

Gower: Now, where did your parents come from?

Long: My parents came from down at Chaska, Minnesota.

Gower: Where would they, were they born in the United States?

Long: Oh, yes.

Gower: Were they of English descent or--

Long: No, German.

Gower: They were of German descent? And the name was spelled B-EC-K? had that name been changed?

Long: I don't know. My grandparents, great grandparents came from the District of Alsace Lorraine. So either French or German, whichever.

Gower: Oh, I see, sure. Now, your parents though were born in the United States?

Long: My dad was born down in Ohio.

Gower: Ohio.

Long: My mother was born down at Chaska.

Gower: At Chaska. And they moved up here to this area after they got married?

Long: Ya.

Gower: And what did they do? Have a farm?

Long: Ya, had a farm out at North of Pine Lake. And the first Sunday School they had was in the Pine Lake School House.

Gower: Oh yea, that's right, we heard from the Reverend. Did you, would you mind telling us what year and day you were born?

Long: I was born January 5, 1907.

Gower: 1907, okay, and you went to this church all though your early girlhood and so on into your early adult years?

Long: Yes.

Gower: And then you said you moved away for a while?

Long: Yes, in 1956 we went to Wrenshall. He was working in the Match Mill in Cloquet.

Gower: Oh, so you were here from 1907 to 1956 though.

Long: Ya, but I was away to school, I went to high school up at Carlton.

Gower: Oh, but you were essentially in this church for 50 years then. And then you moved away for a while to Wrenshall and then you came back here when--

Long: 1972.

Gower: 1972, okay, did you maintain your membership in the church during that?

Long: No, we dropped it.

Gower: You dropped it.

Long: While we were gone.

Gower: Okay, now what do you remember about the church back in the earlier years, was it quite a small group of people?

Long: Oh, no, the church was always full. They had little chairs for the children, everybody had big families and everybody came.

Gower: Was the church in the same building that it's in now?

Long: Ya, but it was -- they moved it over when they put the basement in.

Gower: Oh, they moved it but it's the same building though.

Long: It's the same building only with an addition.

Mr. Long: They remodeled.

Gower: And when you were growing up, it was, quite an active group of people?

Long: Oh, ya, everybody came with their horses and buggies or wagons.

Gower: Did your folks go to that church all the rest of their lives?

Long: Oh ya.

Gower: Did they live in Finlayson?

Long: They lived right off the lake.

Gower: Oh, but they lived there all through the years.

Long: Ya.

Gower: And then what about, did you go to Sunday School there then and then to the church?

Now were the people there in the church pretty much born in the United States?

Long: Ya, most of them.

Gower: You didn't attract very many of the Finnish people or anyone else there.

Long: No, when I was going up, the Finnish people, that's all they talked was Finnish. So they had their own church and their own ministers that spoke their language.

Gower: The sermon was in Finnish?

LeDoux: Do you remember how long roughly that went on? To about what year they changed to English? Relatively recently or into the 30s?

Long: No, I really don't know because I never went to one of them. So I wouldn't know.

Gower: How did you get along with those people in the other churches?

Long: I got along alright with them.

Gower: There wasn't any kind of rivalry or anything like that with those churches?

Long: No I don't remember any.

Gower: Okay, and what, now, we understand that in the late 1920s the church membership was way down. Do you recall that? I thought they said it was only 29, or something like that, members or not 29, 12. Do you recall that at all?

Long: No. I never recall being that small.

Gower: Oh, but you do recall that it was smaller there for a while?

Long: Ya, it was small for a while there, but we had a hard time getting a minister. Sometimes I can remember some minister come down from Ely.

Gower: Oh, that was back in that earlier period too, as well as sometime later on. Did you, you had a Methodist Minister all through those years in the earlier period?

Long: Ya, they were nearly always Methodist.

Gower: But you couldn't get one to come here and stay for very long.

Long: No, they changed quite often.

Gower: Was this the policy of the conference that they changed?

Long: I don't know.

Gower: but you do know that they didn't stay very long in most cases.

Long: My dad was lay minister, when they didn't have a minister he would take over.

Gower: What did he do as the lay minister? Everything that a minister did practically?

Long: Everything outside of marrying (Inaudible).

Gower: Was this for very long period of time?

Long: (Inaudible)

Gower: When did they start this arrangement with the United Church of Christ. That goes back a number of years, doesn't it?

Long: (Inaudible)

Gower: Now when they started that, did you feel that that was a good move to make?

Long: (Inaudible)

Gower: So if you could just get a minister this way though that would be preferable to not having a minister.

(The remainder of this tape is inaudible.)