

Orleans County Historical Association

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Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW

Mrs. Anna Sivila Roth Egloff
East Lee Street
Barre
Albion, New York

Mrs. Anna Roth Egloff was born August 26, 1892.

This interview was conducted by Mrs. Helen Mathes of
Barre, New York



Anna Roth Egloff



Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

Anna Egloff
Signed
11/16/82
Date

Understood and agreed to:

Helon Mathis
INTERVIEWER
11/16/82
Date

For the Orleans County Historical Society

This interview is with Mrs. Anna Egloff at her home on East Lee Street in the Town of Barre. I am Helen Mathes, Historian for the Town of Barre, recorded Nov. 16, 1982.

M Mrs. Egloff when and where were you born?

E I was born 1892, August 26, at Buffalo, New York. There were four boys and six girls in our family and we lived at 414 Dearborn St. in Buffalo. I lived there until I was married. Then I came to Corfu. We lived at West Batavia, Corfu and our four children were born there. Two girls and two boys, Mary, Alex, Florence and Edward. My full name is Anna Sivila Roth Egloff. I celebrated my 90th birthday this past August and I had 90 people come and visit bringing gifts and flowers and I had a Birthday Card from President Reagan.

M Can you tell about your Mother and Father?

E I was two in August and my mother died the second of December. Three years later my father married again. My oldest brother, Vincent and sister, Katherine stood up for them. Our Step-mother was a wonderful woman. Her name was Mary Robinson. My own mother died at 44. Her name was Mary Katherine Kirsch. My grandmother Kirsch (who was my mother's mother) came to live with us and help take care of us. After my father remarried, my step-mother took care of ten of us and there was no trouble with any of them. She lived until 1923. My father was a carpenter. He made a lot of furniture for our home. Once my step-mother came to visit us before she was married and my brother, who was about ten years older, told me to go in and tell her that I didn't like her. She asked me, "why not?" so I had to go back and ask my brother why not because I didn't know. He said, "tell her you would like some dishes for a present." So then she brought me some little China dishes, and I still have those dishes in the doll cabinet my father made for my sister.

M That is a beautiful little cabinet and the dishes are so pretty. Are any of your brothers and sisters still living?

E All my brothers and sisters are gone. I have two sisters-in-law still alive. One is 93 and the other is only in the eighties.

M When you were a child where did you go to school?

E Saint Francis school on East Street in Buffalo.

M Did you enjoy school?

E Shall I say it! No, I didn't! I went through the nine grades.

- E We were taught by Nuns. They were good teachers but strict. No discipline problems. If anyone was naughty they had a leather strap.
- M Do you remember what books you used?
- E No, I don't. It is to long ago.
- M Any particular reason why you didn't like school?
- E To much homework.
- M Is the school still there and what did you do when you finished?
- E The school is still there. I stayed at home wuntil I was married.
- M How did you keep house then?
- E Each of us had our regular work. Oldest sister had to work upstairs, next one had to do the downstairs and one of my sisters and myself did the cooking and baking.
- M You always liked to cook?
- E I do and I like to do handiwork and crocheting. I just finished a baby blanket for the Church Bazaar.
- M That looks real nice. What did you have to cook on back then?
- E It was a wood stove. My father was a carpenter contractor and he brought all the scrap wood home. We had that for starting the fire, and for the regular fire we had coal.
- M What did you do for refrigeration?
- E The ice man used to bring a hunk of ice twice a week. You put it in the top part of the Ice Box which had a sort of metal box that you put the ice in and the food was down below.
- M You had a pan underneath to catch the water in.
- E Did you ever forget to dump the water and let it run all over?
- E No, my father had it fixed with a hose that run down in the basement to the sewer. He was handy that way.
- M Where did your father come from?
- E Alsace-Lorraine, Germany. He came to this country when he was about three years old in the care of the Captain of the ship. His mother died and his father remarried. The step-mother didn't like him so sent him to this country to an Uncle Smeltz. He lived with him until he was married. My father went by the name of Smeltz. When he was married my Uncle Smeltz told him he better use his own name which was August Roth. He died when he was about 82. My own mother was from Buffalo but I don't remember about her. My step-mother was a wonderful woman. She took good care of us, had two more children after marrying my father. She said she had more trouble with her

- E own two, then the eight of us. At that time there were eight of us. Two had married.
- M When you lived in the city, where did you get your milk and supplies?
- E There was a house about two blocks from our place where we used to get our milk. A farmer would bring it there and then we would go get it. Butter and eggs we bought at a grocery right across the street from where we lived.
- M How much were your father's wages?
- E Well, he was the boss. At that time if you had over \$500. in the bank, you were a wealthy man. He had maybe three or four men working under him, carpenter work. A regular carpenter got a \$1.00 a day and the apprentice 75¢ a day. We lived in the Black Rock district.
- M Is that near the lake?
- E No, it's near Niagara River. You could see it from our house.
- M Did your family fish in the river?
- E My brother's used to fish. I don't know what kind they caught. I guess they were just fish.
- M Did you go down to the river to play ever?
- E OH NO, we never went near it. We had a boundary line in the front yard and back yard and we stayed in it.
- M What programs in your school do you remember?
- E Well we used to have little plays. There were nine grades each by itself so it was a big building. We had Nuns for teachers. The grade I was in was taught in German in the morning and English in the afternoon by two different Nuns. It was called a German School.
- M What games did you play as a child?
- E My step-mother was very good about keeping us all together. We played Lotto or Dominoes or something like that, but first of all get your home work done. I didn't like spelling. I would get a hundred wrong out of a hundred. I was a poor speller.
- M That comes natural, I am too. What else do you remember?
- E I liked Geography best of all. I used to love to draw maps. You bet, you were well educated when you finished the Catholic School. When you graduated you got a gold medal with your name engraved on it, very nice. We went to Church every school day morning. Mass was at half-past eight and school at nine. The school, Church and Priest House were all in

E one block.

M Did you go up in the city of Buffalo any?

E I was sixteen years old the first time I went alone. They put my name and address and telephone number on a paper and pinned it on me and they told me just how to get there and where to come back to. When I got back my Uncle was standing at the end of the roadway for the street car to come so I wouldn't go past. I was sixteen then, and now they are married at that age. They were afraid I would get lost, I guess.

M Buffalo was a big city then. Do you remember about the Trolley Cars.

E I rode on them to Buffalo and back. They used to run every half hour. It cost a Nickle for adults and 3¢ for under sixteen. I would go shopping for my step-mother in Buffalo. If there was a sale on in the paper she would send me to it.

M What was some of the food you prepared for the family?

E My mother was a very good cook. We had a big variety, never the same thing twice. No special dishes, maybe a German dish was fried potatoes for breakfast. My father was a good provider. In the winter time he put 10 bushels of potatoes, and stuff like that, down in the cellar and my mother always canned and we would have hundreds of cans of stuff. We were never really 'strapped'; we always had plenty to eat. Most people don't have the money to do it with now-a-days.

M Were there any Indians around Black Rock when you were young?

E Oh No, it was past the Indian time.

M Do you remember any more about the Niagara River?

E We used to go down, when we got older. We lived about two blocks from it. Where there was a dock we would go down and set there in the evening and watch the boats go by. One time we had one of our cousins that lived in the country, way back from the country come in to stay with us for about a week. We took him down there and we were down on the rock watching and the big Crystal Beach boat came along and he said, "OH LOOK there's a house coming down the river."

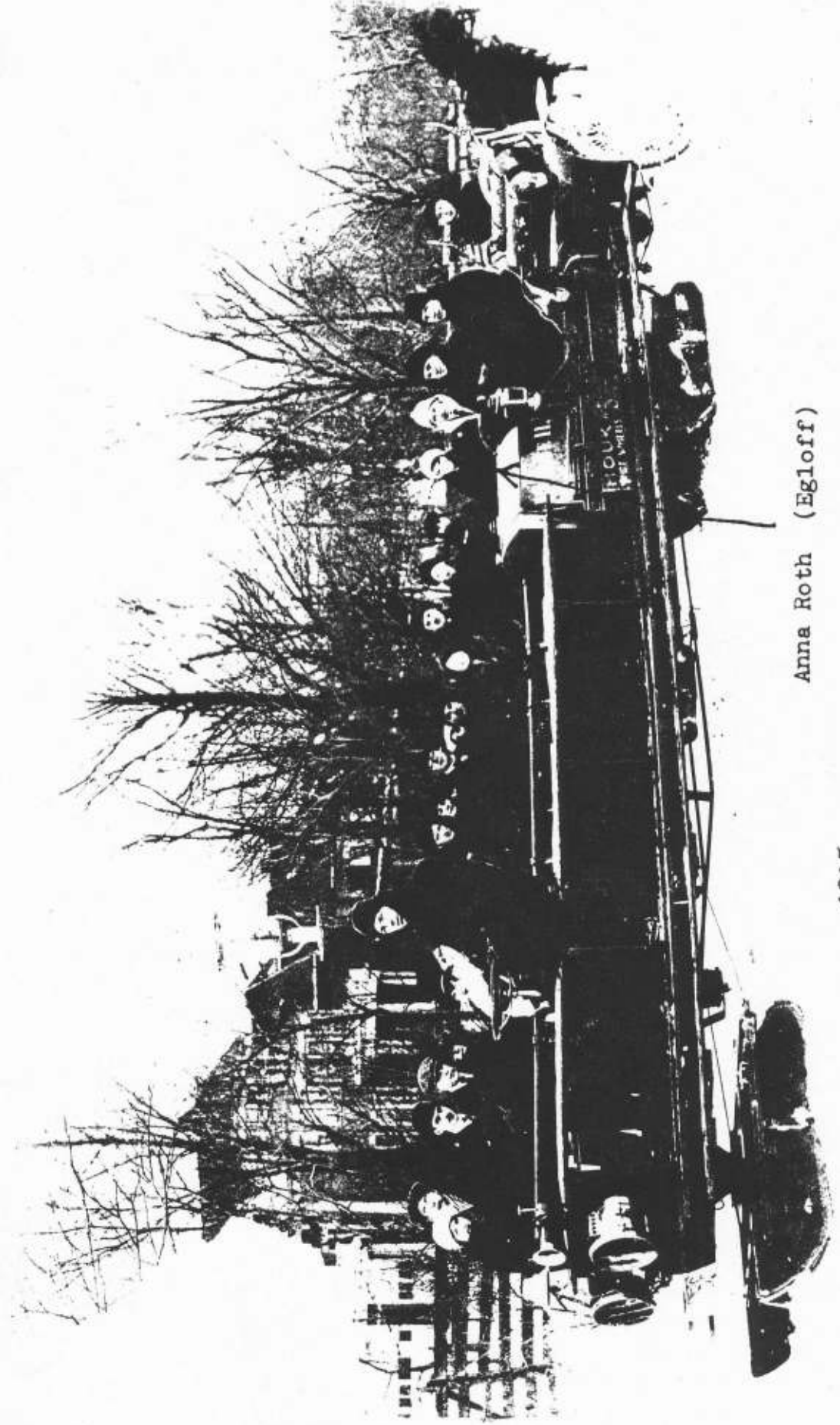
M Did you ever go to Crystal Beach?

E Oh Yes, lots of times. We rode the Ferris Wheel, Merry-go-round and the House that Jack built and haunted house.

M What did they charge?

E It was a nickle a ride. We used to go to Fort Erie amuse-
ment park too. Crystal Beach was a going place at one time.

- E I never rode on the roller coaster. The first time I saw it a bunch of kids went around, didn't stop the first time but had to go around the second time and when they came down one of them got sick to their stomach. When I saw that I wouldn't go on. That was not for me. My mother would pack up a lunch. She would buy a California picnic ham, smoked shoulder. She would boil that all up and take the skin off and grind it and make sandwiches and we would have cookies and cake and apples and peaches. She would make a great big basket and we would spend the whole day at Crystal beach. It was a wild time for us. We would have a little to spend and when it was gone, that was it.
- M Did you have any pets when you were young?
- E We never had a dog in Buffalo. We had a cat to keep the mice away. I had lots of dolls, home made ones. Anna and Mary (my grand-daughter and daughter) are going to classes to make China dolls like that one.
- M Did you have long hair when you were young?
- E No it never grew very long. I used to have curls down to my shoulders, when I was very young. I always had it cut short the last twelve years. I get pernaments.
- M Your hair is still real dark, most people have white hair at your age.
- M You said your family moved at one time?
- E Yes, we moved to Corfu for two or three years (1914) then back to Buffalo to Roesch Ave.
- M When you moved from Buffalo to your new home how did you come?
- E My sister had bought a horse. She lived in the country. Her husband had bought a new horse and they wanted to get it from Buffalo to Batavia. We were coming out to Corfu and my father had a horse and lumber wagon so I drove the buggy and her horse, and Pa drove our own horse and lumber wagon. It took us from seven o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock at night to get to Corfu. We stopped at Clarence for two hours to rest the horses. When we started up again the horses headed back for Buffalo and we had trouble turning them back towards Corfu.
- M When did you meet your husband and what year were you married?
- E February 6, 1924, to Henry Edward Egloff. He was seven years older than I was. He was from Batavia. My brother worked for him out on the farm a couple years. He told Ed he had a sister his age. "Come up and I'll take you down to see her."



Anna Roth (Egloff)

1915

E My brother John brought him over to the house when he and his mother came in to Buffalo one night. John said, "this is Ann the one I was telling you about." We were talking and visiting about fifteen or twenty minutes when my mother said, "Ann it is time to go to bed." So I had to go to bed with the rest of the children. I knew him a long, long time before we were married. I was 19 at that time and he was 26 and my mother didn't want me to get married. She said, "he is an old man and you are just a kid". So I didn't see him for two or three years after that. I met his sister and I would go visit her and stay a week at a time for a vacation. Of course when I was there I would go out with Ed. Then we were married in 1924. I was 30 and he was 37. He was very persistent. One reason my mother didn't want us to get married was because he wasn't Catholic. Of course my mother thought you had to marry a Catholic or you wasn't nobody. So that was one reason why he kept putting it off so many times. One time he came and he said, "I have good news for you, I joined the Catholic Church and was baptized, made my first communion and everything last week." I couldn't say no then.

M After you were married where did you live first?

E We went to West Batavia. My father was retired. He and my two brothers came out Friday, Saturday and Sundays and built our first home at West Batavia. Ed's father had 170 acres and he gave us 4 acres off of that piece to build a home on that spot. They gathered up all the stones and an old man 80 years old built the cellar wall all put up by hand. All our children were born there. When I had my first child, at home, a midwife by the name of Miss Myers came with the Doctor. She gave me toast and tea for nine days. In the evenings when she left I would send Ed to the kitchen for something to eat. The next day she would come and wonder where that food was she was going to serve Mr. Egloff. After the nine days were up, she came and said "now you can get up" and left. I wasn't ready then.

M What did your husband do for a living?

E He had a saw mill was a farmer and thrasher. He thrashed all his life time. He had lots of machinery, thrashing machines, for grain and hay pressers. We lived next door to his father's farm, they had cows and he would help there too. We lost everything when Ed got sick, to tell you the truth of it, and started over brand new.

M What was the cause of Fd's sickness

E He fell and broke his back. After 10 years in our first home we moved to Batavia on South Main Road for about 3 years. We moved several times during the next few years including Dorsey's, Bonleneo farms and then to Coverts. We kept dragging along then until about the time Alex came home from the Hospital, 1942. (Alex, son).

M What did Alex have?

E He had Polio and was in the hospital for three years. 1939.

M Was that just before they came out with the shots?

E I guess, there were 13 from Batavia in the hospital at that time with Polio.

M That was a bad scene. What did you do next?

E Well when Alex got Polio we were working for the Bonleneo farms. This was a dairy farm. There were six or seven families working for the same man. We had separate houses. When Alex went to the hospital of course they shut us off from selling milk and we had to move out. We moved to Barre Center to the Lime Kilm Road in 1941 and where we are now in 1961.

Well my husband was looking for work. A Mr. Stanley Foley told Ed. about this job. His son was in the hospital with Alex. Mrs. McNall asked him to take over the farm on the Lime Kilm road. Our son Edward is still on the same farm. He married Helen Kress and they have eight children, Rose, Edward Jr., John, AlexII, Mary Ann, Teresa, Ben and Margaret. I have 12 grand-children. My eldest daughter married Thomas Driesel and they have four children, Anna, Joseph, Gerard, and Karl. The oldest just got married Oct. 16, 1982, Joseph Driesel, and bought a lumber yard down there in Albion. I went to my Grandson's wedding and danced.

M That's wonderful, dancing at your age.

E Joseph came up and said " come up here Grandma". I got up there and went around two or three times, then Gerard grabbed me and went around, and then Karl. So I danced at the wedding. I think they held me up mostly.

M Do you remember any bad snow storms?

E The biggest blizzard I remember was 1977. We had seven people stranded here from Friday until Sunday. They couldn't get home. That was the worst one I remember.

M When you were young in Buffalo and they got snow did they

- M have equipment to clean the streets?
- E They had to clean the tracks so the street cars could go through. They plowed and piled the snow so high you couldn't see the street cars going by from the house.
- M When did you first vote was it a big thing when women first had the vote?
- E I don't remember that. After we came down here I voted.
- M Did any of your men have to serve in World War I or II?
- E None of our men went in the service. They were either over age or under age. We had ration cards for sugar, gas and other things. You were allowed just so much. An interesting thing happened to my father during World War I. He thought he should work in a defense plant because so many young men were gone. They told him he couldn't because he was not a citizen of the U. S. So at the age of 72 he became a citizen in 1914. He had been voting for years with no question.
- M Did you go to any Country Fairs?
- E Not before I was married, but afterwards. Ed was great for that. He never showed anything at the fairs but he liked to see the machinery.
- M How about outside work and gardens?
- E My father was great for flowers. We had a lot in the garden. He would spade it over by hand. I never worked outside to much before I was married. One time Ed. wanted me to drive tractor. He showed me how and I was going along real nice and someone came and hollared "Hello" or something and took my attention, ~~and~~ I drove up between two trees and they had to chop one tree down to get the tractor out! So that was the last of the tractor business.
- M Did you have chickens?
- E No we didn't keep any chickens because when Ed. was home he had bought a bran new buggy. He put it in what you called the carriage barn at that time and the chickens got out and dirtied it. So we didn't have any.
- M Mrs. Egloff the tape is beginning to run out do you have any thing more to add.
- E Well Ed's mother said to him once, "you better not marry her because her mother died young and she might not live long." How about that, here I am 90 years old.
- M Wonderful! Thanks, Mrs. Egloff for this interview. It has been fun.

