Remembering Territory families

The White Russians

And then they'd be singing dancing – because you have to remember, these farmers were mainly Cossacks – and so that they were pretty good horse riders and very much into the singing and the dancing...

And I do know too, that another entertainment that they used to provide the townspeople – someone described that they actually added colour to Katherine at that time – was when they would go into town for various reasons, maybe supplies or picking up bags and so on, they would spend some time at the hotels. And then they would ride up and down the main street doing all sorts of tricks on the horses because Cossacks are very skilled horse people. They can stand on a horse's back. I remember my Dad talking about doing the trick where you climbed under the horse's belly, as the horse was moving.

And they would always be singing. I recall even parties when I was older, always sort of singing and dancing. And my mother says too, that amongst the Cossacks there were – there's one in particular, but there were others too, who had come from a religious background, even though they didn't want to actually explain what their background was, because she said that they seemed to know the format of all the services, the various religious services. And they would be the ones who would lead the religious service, say for over Christmas or over Easter.

So that they tried to keep up as many of their old traditions as they could, even though they were living in a different environment...

[Northern Territory Archives Service NTRS 226, TS 595 and NTRS 219, TP 731, Erina Tokmakoff-Hill]