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Recalls judging 1920 election

Mrs. Josephine Nixdorf, 93, remembers when she was a "little girl," her family from near Iberia, "had to go by horse and wagon and it would take all day" to visit her grandfather in Olean.

Her grandfather was Dr. George Washington Landsdown, Miller County's first known physician and one of its earliest settlers.

Living now with her children near Ulman ("Been here on this place for 71 years, I guess"), she says she never expected to reach the age of 93: "When I was little, I said I'd never live to be 40 years old. I thought that was awful old!"

Mrs. Nixdorf is not quite so old as the house in which she and her family live, which she says is more than 100 years old. What is now a nine-room house was "just a log house with a fireplace. . . and a little side room" when she and her husband, Carroll, who died in 1961, moved into it in 1902.

In those days, "I could just sing and sew all day" with a treadle machine her husband had bought for her. "My machine will be 70 years old in July," she says, but the sewing machine has been retired to a storage room.

Mrs. Nixdorf also has retired from duties she was given by Miller County Sheriff Bud Mayfield in 1920: Election judge and clerk. She assumed her duties during the first election in which Missouri women voted.

She had reservations concerning the voting, as she told the sheriff: "I don't believe in women voting." But she has served the county in every election since then, except the last two.

Women voting for the first time "just scribbled all over" the ballots, and Mrs. Nixdorf had to help straighten them out and count them.

Sitting in her rocking chair, she says she occupies herself by reading newspapers and watching square dancing and country and western musical programs on television without glasses. She says she always "could see just as good without them and I don't want to be bothered with them."



JOSEPHONE NIXDORF