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SOMETHING NEW!!!!

EACH MONTH WE ARE GOING TO PRINT A FAMILY HISTORY OF ONE OF OUR SENIORS. THIS FIRST HISTORY IS CHARLIE WARDELL'S. AFTER READING HIS HISTORY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHY HE IS THE FANTASTIC GENTLEMAN HE IS.

Charlie Wardell's 1.5e

My Grandfather was born in Lancashire, England and in 1816 emigrated to America in 1827 with his family, settling in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1840 he married and pioneered to Ripley Co., Indiana. In 1842 he ventured further west to Rock Co., Wisconsin. Then on to Springfield, Illinois; Mitchell Co., Iowa, finally settling in Worth Co., Iowa in 1857. Here he raised his family bought land, built the first Mill in the county and helped lay out the town of Northwood, Iowa.

My Father was born in Mitchell Co., Iowa on May 14, 1856. He married Eliza E. Malcolm Blighton in 1878, whose Grandparents emigrated from Scotland to Brantford, Ontario, Canada and homesteaded in the Grove Township in Iowa. My Mother had in her possession the Homestead Entry signed by James Buchanan, President of the United States. My Mother's Great Grandfather was a captain in the immediate service of Queen Victoria.

I am one of ten children. Born, reared and educated on our farm which was known as "The Homewood Stock Farm", couple miles from Northwood, Iowa. On June 24, 1913, I married Minnie Seuser a beautiful, vivacious, dark haired "School Marm". Our families lived about three miles apart and had been friends for years. Her ancestors emigrated from England and Germany in the 17th Century and had settled near Philadelphia, Pa., close to the

Delaware River. Later pioneering to Chetak, Wisconsin. They came by boat and rafts up the Great Lakes which was the only safe way to travel the west at that time. There are great tales yet told of our families being a part of the Civil War, the shooting of a Black Panther, Indian raids and being attacked in the wilderness by wolves.

Min's Brother Walt had come West about 1905 and was working as a cowboy on the Circle C Ranch out of Zortman, Montana. Before Min and I were married she packed her pearl handled derringer and traveled by train as far as Malta, Montana then took the stage coach from Malta to Zortman, to visit him. Needing a teacher in the area they offered her the job. She quickly refused and returned to Iowa. (Three former teachers had been shot by students who were older than Min) As you have read both our families were adventurous, so we came by it naturally to want to go further West to see our great country, so a few months after our marriage we decided to pack up our belongings and head for the great plains of the virtues of the soil. Wheat grew tall, vegetables grew enormous size and cattle grew fat on the native grass. The Federal Bureau of Lands was giving 320 acres to all who had homestead rights. Terms seemed easy, two years with six months residence each year, a small homestead shack and forty acres of tilled land. An opportunity of a life time. We were to get off the train at Inverness, but Min got a cinder in her eye, from setting by the open window of the train, and we had to go on to Chester, where an old French Doctor put Bella Donna in her eye and extracted the cinder. It cost me a dollar. We took the "Local" back to Inverness where we were met by George Clink and went by wagon twenty four miles North to their homestead to stay over night. Next day we went on to our homestead which was about ten miles further north. George helped us build our new home in Township 37, which bordered the Canadian line. We spent many happy hours exploring the Milk River, Sweet Grass Hills and Canada Coulee that summer. In the fall we couldn't believe the beautiful sunsets and the most breath taking of all were the Northern Lights.

Min's parents and youngest Brother Victor joined us in the late fall. They brought with them horses, machinery and seed grain. In January of 1914 the temperature dropped to 60° below zero. We thought the thermometer was broke as all the mercury was in the bulb. Spring of that year was very busy, plowing up the sod and getting it ready for seeding. Our first wheat crop brought us 30 cents a bushel. In 1915 our crops were destroyed by hail. In June of that year our first son Sterling was born. "Grandma Gustafson (midwife) brought him into this world. Crops were very meager in 1917, the drought had taken its toll. Walt was one of the first to join up at Fort Benton. He was killed in action in France a few months later. That year our second son Charles Fred was born. Because of crop failures and the war, I had to find work elsewhere in Montana to help us thru the cold treacherous winters. But along with the hard times we had many good times. We traveled by horse and buggy every Sunday to church at Minneota. Sometimes there would be a traveling Minister in our community, other times we would study and read the Bible with the help of "Grandpa Bangs". Minneota was the center of all our activities. School, dances until dawn, church and all other community affairs. Min helped teach school. The children having to bring their own books. Grassy Butte was another school house and community gathering center. Fourth of July Celebrations were our most exciting holiday. All neighbors would either gather at Goldstone, Big Sage or Minneota for the big celebration. Everyone bringing baskets of homemade

food, baseball games, rodeos, dances in the evening. The rodeos were most thrilling, we would form the arena by placing our wagons or buggies in a large circle and many times the wild horses would jump over or run thru to get out to the open prairie. In the fall we would have "Jack Rabbit Roundups" killing as many as possible as they were eating what spring wheat we had. All the farmers would form a two mile circle and slowly walk toward the center chasing the rabbits until we got within good shooting distance. We would kill hundreds of rabbits on each drive. We didn't travel into town very often, but when we did it was for supplies or to sell our grain and the trip would take us three days. In 1920 our daughter Mary E. was born.

About 1925 we decided to get a bigger farm and settled on the "Wolery Place" about ten miles from our original homestead. Here we not only raised wheat but also turkeys. They had to be herded because of the danger of coyotes. We had no refrigeration so had to wait for cold weather to kill and pick them. Middle of November we finally got our first snow. I picked the turkeys and Min and the children pulled the pin feathers and put them on a shelf in the feed shack, where they froze almost immediately. After packaging I took them to town in my new Model T truck and sold them for a dollar a piece.

The children were going to Grassy Butte school which was about four miles away, all three of them rode together on the "old graymare". We bought our first radio about 1926 it was a Freedisman. It had nine dials with a huge speaker that sat on top of the radio and was operated from the power of the Model T battery. I can remember staying up all night listening to the broadcast (from Los Angeles, California of George Young swimming the Catalina Channel which was a first to swim that distance.

Children were growing up fast and high school was going to be a big step. So we again pulled up our roots and moved closer to town. This time it was 640 acres five miles north of Joplin. All our problems were solved. Many of our dear friends were doing the same for their children. The Poplars and Plummers only a few miles away. We bought our first tractor, a new car, and Min had a gasoline powered washing machine. We had good times going to Chautauquas, the children were participating in all the school events Farmers Union celebrations, over night trips to Sweet Grass Hills, to the Marias River to pick Choke Cherries and fish, camping trips to the Bear Paws to pick wild currants. Then President Herbert Hoover decided to close the banks. We lost all our saving that we had in Joplins only bank. Depression was upon us. I remember Sterling and Fred trying to make some extra money by going out with a team and wagon and gathering dried cattle and horse bones on the prairie and selling them to a company from out of state for a penny a pound. After years of drought, grasshoppers, hail and the depression a friend of many years Martin Olson offered us a trip to California in 1935. Sterling was going to be in college. Fred had graduated from High School that year and Mary was going into High School, so again we took up the challenge of new adventure.

We were in California only six years when World War II was declared. We had longed to be in Montana, but this was not to be for awhile. The saddest time of our lives was when our boys were drafted and our thoughts and prayers for many days, months and years were with them in the South Pacific battle zone. We were one of the lucky families to get them both back safe and sound after four years in the service to our country.

Sterling and Fred both returned to Montana and Mary stayed in California to raise her family and we again returned to our "Big Sky State", that we had yearned for. This time we made our home at Canyon Ferry on the Missouri River about thirty miles from Helena. Many summers of good times when our children and grandchildren would come see us from near and far. Fred had moved to Washington and would bring his wife Helen and children Dale, Carol and Scott; from California, Mary and her husband Dick and children Connie and Dennie; from Chester, Sterling and his wife Janell and children Wayne, Mary, Jackie, Janine and Phil. We celebrated our 50th anniversary at the Chester High School with our life long friends who had shared hard times and many many good times. Our Sixtieth anniversary was celebrated with all our children, ten Grandchildren and five of our Great Grandchildren (I now have nine Great Grandchildren). I lost my beloved partner of 64 years in September of 1977 but my memories of her and so many wonderful years shared shall never be forgotten.

Charles A. Wardell