

**LIVING A FULL LIFE**  
**BY**  
**ED GUDAJTES**



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LIVING A FULL LIFE

BY

EDWARD RAYMOND GUDAJTES

Having retired in 1976 and having no hobby to spend my leisure time, I have decided to write my memoirs. I feel I have already lived a full life. In doing this script, I will not only be occupying my spare hours, but at the same time pass on to my grandchildren my numerous experiences and changes that have taken place during my life span.

I would like to say that this is my first attempt in expressing my life and memories. Since my memory is very good, I hope that you will find my script not only interesting, but educational, as what I shall say will be all truth.

Life has been good to me despite numerous physical and financial setbacks. God has always helped me recover, and with His assistance, I expect to be able to complete my memoirs.

Life is a --- miracle ---  
and the right to live  
is a gift.  
It's wrapped in a ribbon,  
woven with dreams,  
and whether you are  
very young or very old,  
life is filled with  
Wonder and Surprise.

Ravia

## GUDAJTES FAMILY

I was born in Warsaw, N.D. on July 28, 1911, one of nine children of Anton Gudajtes and Johanna Byzewski.

My father was born close to Wilno, Poland in 1860. At the present time, the name of the city has been changed to Wilnus and is part of Lithuania. This change was brought up in the change of the boundaries of Poland and Lithuania after World War II and the Yalta Treaty. He emigrated to this country at the age of 21. My mother was born on the western edge of Poland (close to the German border) and came to this country at the age of four with her parents, August and Julia Byzewski.

My father helped establish the town of Warsaw. Together with John Szarkowski, who lived just north of the present Warsaw (the John Mielcarek farm or the farm now owned by Mrs. Joe Shoults), my dad bought the first lots in the city.

On the purchase of the first lots, my dad immediately erected a small general merchandise store which housed the post office throughout the years. He had a total of \$80 in assets when he started the business. Being a carpenter as well, he erected all the buildings himself.

Through my dad's efforts and Mr. Szarkowski's, the U.S. government established a post office for the town which Mr. Szarkowski and my father named New Warsaw. President McKinley appointed my father as postmaster in 1892, a position which he held for over 41 years. It was discontinued because of the encroachment of rural routes, leaving only a small delegation of patrons to serve. The U.S. postal department dropped the New from New Warsaw shortly after appointment and the village has been known as Warsaw up to the present day.

My dad spent the first few years in America working in copper mines in Michigan before coming to North Dakota. He was first a farm hand for the harvest and then went into the jewelry peddling business through the area. He could speak Lithuanian, Polish and English (which he learned in America) and enough of the Russian, Czech and German to sell his ware.

The Gudajtes clan numbered nine. There were four boys and five girls. Benjamin, the oldest, is now deceased. He served four years as Walsh County treasurer and 12 years as auditor, and died at the age of 47 from cancer.

Alphonso, the second oldest, was an accountant and spent most of his life in St. Paul. He died in 1976 from a heart attack at the age of 78.

Neman, the third son, still lives at the place of birth and continues to operate the store, but on a lot smaller scale as it is more or less a convenience store.

Sophie was the fourth child and first girl of the family. She married George Wysocki. After spending most of their time farming, they now live in Minto.

Blanche was next born. She married Harry Babinski and they farmed until 1975 when Harry was killed in a tractor accident.

Then came Helen, who married Steve Paschke. After farming a few years, they moved to Grand Forks and later to East Grand Forks. Steve died in 1977.

After three brothers and three sisters, I came along and was followed by Cecelia. She married Florian Babinski and they were engaged in farming. Cecelia died with the birth of Gary in 1950.

Sister Frances (the caboose of the family) was married to Leonard Risky, who died in 1972. They farmed for about 30 years before moving to Grand Forks where Frances still resides.



Left to Right: Front Row: Johanna, Benjamin, Edward, Neman, Alphonso, Anton  
Back Row: Frances, Sophie, Helen, Cecelia, Blanche

The interesting part of the history is that all the children were born in the upstairs living quarters of the original store. To my knowledge, all of us were born without any doctor in attendance. In those days, the midwives were used and most of the births in the area were handled that way.

My father was a strict disciplinarian with all his children. His greatest desire was to have all his children grow up as outstanding citizens and receive as much education as he and they could afford. He worked hard all his life. As postmaster of Warsaw, he walked and carried the mail from Minto to Warsaw for one and a half years. He received no compensation for this, only the satisfaction of fully serving his postal patrons. He died in 1946 at the age of 86 without spending any time in bed with an ailment, having clerked in the store the entire day before his death.

I don't believe any woman worked harder than my mother. Raising nine children without any conveniences, she ran up and down the stairs from our living quarters to the store to serve on customers. There was no inside water at the beginning and she had to carry all the water for the household from a well located near the church. The thing that I and the rest of the family will always remember her, is for her love. When we would get in trouble, mother would be there to help us out. She died at the age of 74, after a lingering illness with cancer. She wanted to live so desperately.

## LIVING IN WARSAW

Growing up in the store was educational. We were all taught at an early age (as soon as we learned to count) to serve on the customers. Dad had alot of business sense. He would instruct us continuously as to how to handle the customers; have a smile; be courteous at all times; and especially respect older people, as you will be old yourself sooner than you think, and you will be expecting the same treatment.



Age Four

It would be interesting to know how many hours we spent playing customer and clerk. We'd come up with a long shopping list. After the order was filled, we would pack it into boxes for carry out and the clerk would thank the customer and ask him or her to sit down for a friendly visit. At the same time, he would bring up some other items that the customer might need, thereby, making another sale. This was fun and we could kill alot of time.

Another nice thing we had going for us, was that the store was an ideal place to play hide and seek.

When I was growing up, I had no boys in town my age. They would be at least five years older or five years younger. My closest brother was 11 years older, so I spent most of my days with girls. My sisters and I used to love to sing and just about every night we would spend at least an hour by the organ (we had no piano) singing Polish and English songs.

Mother baked all the bread. When she went to Grafton (about twice a year), she would bring us a loaf of bakery bread for a taste and we would anxiously wait for our slice which was such a treat. It sold for 10¢ a loaf.

I don't know why, but mother seemed to be the best cook in the world. She could whip up a cake, cookies, or dessert without a recipe. Her favorite cake was Johnny cake (corn meal and molasses cake with alot of granulated sugar sprinkled on top) and it makes my mouth water just writing about it. Her favorite cookies were date bars, monkey cookies and honey jumbles, which looked just like bakery made. The family ate alot of pork and beans (which I still love), pancakes (both potato and buttermilk), potato dumplings, pierogi (made with cottage cheese), and zacoka (soup made of eggs and flour dumplings and milk). We also ate alot of tapioca soup, which we would call soup with fish eyes, and various other soups and alot of rice.

When mother went to Grafton shopping, she drove to Minto by horse and buggy and then took the train to Grafton. The train would arrive in Grafton about 10:30 a.m. and leave back to Minto between four and five. We kids couldn't wait for the day she went, as mother would always take one of us along. What a thrill to ride the train. Mother would always buy some animal crackers for us.

We always had plenty of guests for meals. My mother never complained as we always had some pork and beans in the store and ring bologna, which in those days we got in kegs about the size of nail kegs. They would be in brine as there were no cooling facilities. They would spoil in no time if they wouldn't be in brine.

As soon as we were able to read, we would help distribute the daily mail that would come in. We would have to know how to issue a postal money order and figure out the postage on 4th class mailing. In order to figure this, you had to find the zone number for delivery. A lot of parcels at that time were mailed to the Twin Cities. I still remember the rates for that area. Zone 3 was 9¢ for the first pound and 2¢ for each additional pound. Compare those rates with today, and you will say that it was impossible. Each post office in the country had a number. Warsaw's was 98838. You had to use the number so many times, that I will never forget it. Money order fees were charged according to the amount they were issued. The rate for 0 to \$2.50 was 3¢ and for \$2.50 to \$5.00 was 5¢. First class letters were 2¢. Postal cards were 1¢.

Until February of 1940, I made my home in the store in Warsaw. These days are the most memorable days of my life. I have to say that if I had my life to live over again, I would certainly want them spent in the same environment. There always was something going on. The store was open for business practically 24 hours a day, so there would always be someone around. Another nice thing about it was the size of the family (nine children) and every one of us had a lot of friends. This combination seemed to work just perfect, as almost every night we had one of our friends stay in for a visit.

Up to 1940, the store carried a little of everything. We had hardware, groceries, drugs, notions and dry goods. You name it and we had it. The store even sold breast pumps and wedding rings.

In those days, the Warsaw area was thickly populated and birth control wasn't even thought of. Many of the infants died at birth, so we had a funer-



al about every week. That's when the breast pumps would sell, as alot of the mothers breasts would get full, so they needed the pumps to ease the pain until the milk flow slowed down and dried up.

Our store was packed with goodies. I can just see some of the penny candy we sold. These were most popular as there weren't very many nickel bars made. The only one I remember was the Hershey Bar. They were larger for a nickel than the 30¢ ones of today. I do remember when the Babe Ruth, Oh Henry, Mars and Snickers came out.

Cigarette sales were taboo until the late 20's and sold for 15¢ a pack. Bull Durham in cloth bags was a nickel and a great seller for those who would roll their own. Other popular brands of smoking tobacco were; Tuxedo, Prince Albert and Velvet. These came in tin cans and sold for 15¢ each or seven for a dollar. True Smoke came in a larger cloth bag and sold for the same price. Peerless, (a dry smoking or chewing tobacco) sold for 10¢ a paper container. Chewing tobacco came in sticks about a foot long and was sold by the cut. The cuts were factory marked and a cut was sold for 10 and 15¢ depending on the brand you bought. Each store had a special cutter for this. You would just insert the plug under the cutter (blade) and pull down on the handle, cutting it exactly the size you wanted. Spearhead, Climax and Yankee Girl were the ones we sold. A little later, Days Work came out which was precut and cellophane wrapped. Although smoking was never taboo for women, none of them smoked, as it was considered very shameful.

There was alot of cigar smoking at that time. The brands most popular were Royal Banner and YB's which sold for a nickel, and the White Owls sold for 8¢ or two for 15¢. There also was the rum dipped, which was a crooked cigar and sold for 5¢. My dad's favorite cigar was an old Virginia Cheroot. This was 2¢ a piece and later 3¢ a piece. Dad would smoke them to the last bit, holding the cigar in his mouth just about continuously. A majority of the time, it wasn't even on fire.

All the coffee would come in great big bags (100 lbs.) which was whole bean. Whoever purchased the coffee and didn't have a small grinder at home (which most them had), we had to grind in our hand grinder. Maybe most of you have seen one. It has a turning handle with two fly wheels about 30 inches in diameter. Every few years the grinding burrs would get dull and would have to be replaced with new ones. When the burrs got worn, the grinding would go very slow. The last and most popular brand I remember, was

called Peabody and sold for 25¢ a pound.

The store had a full line of hardware. All nails sold for 5¢ a pound in bulk with the exception of fence staples and shingle nails which were 6¢ a pound. I remember selling three tine (bundle) forks for 95¢, and six tine manure forks for \$1.60. Wood chopping axes (complete with handles) sold from \$2.25 to \$3.50, depending on the weight of the ax.

Our crockery department sold coffee cups (8 oz.) for 15¢ a piece. There were always alot of rolling pins on hand as well, and one pound butter molds with beautiful designs on them. Moving along, you would see all kinds of fancy decorative plates and lots of coffee and spice grinders. The spice grinders were smaller and used alot as most of the spices came whole, as was nutmeg, the last I remember. We had alot of kerosine lamps with decorative globes over the chimneys.

In our shoe department, we had ladies shoes that had real pointed toes and were about eight inches high and had no shoe laces (only buttons on the side). I wore out quite a few pair of button shoes which were six inches high. When they were new, you had to use a button hook to button them, as the holes were too tight, but in a few weeks the holes would stretch out, especially if you would lose the hook and you managed to button up. I can just see the cute infant shoes we sold for 60¢ a pair. They came in various colors and towards the top of them, they had a small tassel dangling.

Along with the shoes, alot of moccasins were on hand. They were much lighter than a shoe. There were felt shoes that were worn in the winter.

Next to the infant's shoes, were large skeins of various colors of netting to cover the small children from the flies, as there were no insecticides in those days. People used tangle foot which would come in sheets of about 9' by 12', or ribbons which when fully extended were about 15' and sold two for a nickel. These would be tacked to a ceiling.

There was one poison that was used. It came in sheets of about 9' by 12' and you would cut a piece and dampen it with water with a light sprinkling of sugar. The flies would suck on it and get killed. If you had small children, this method was not very safe, as if it was in a child's reach, they might take it to their mouths and get poisoned.

There were full lines of patent medicines. Dad carried the Severa Medicine line, which provided a medicine or salve for all ailments. The most popular were Severa's Cough Medicine and kidney pills. There were also

Severa's Stomach Bitters. This was mostly for upset stomachs and to a degree a laxative. It tasted like bitter wine and had an alcohol content of around 4%. I am mentioning this because we had a habitual drunk in the area in the prohibition era. People used to make their own whiskey and beer and alot of them would sell it on the sly. When the moonshine (as whiskey) wasn't available, the drunk that I mentioned before, would buy out all the bitter wine and drink it to carry on his drinking binge.

Another interesting item that was always in stock was old farm-style matches, as there were no book matches at that time. They sold for a nickel a box and used to come wrapped in cartons of six. They were always piled on the top shelf of the store which was hard to reach. Every now and then, someone reaching for the carton would accidentally drop one, and once they hit the floor, they would just make a short fizz and a little smoke, as the whole carton would ignite. Due to the solid packaging, it would never ignite into flames.

What the store really had alot of were felt hats for men. These were very popular at one time and every male had to wear one to be fully dressed. We had them in every shape and form, including army hats and caps.

Another popular item was the curling iron. This was just like the electric irons of today, except wasn't electric. In order for it to work, you would have to heat it. This was done by lighting the kerosine lamp and dropping it into the lamp chimney. It would hang by wood handles it had. There was also the marcel iron. This was actually two irons in one that weren't quite as thick. Using the same procedure, it would make two waves. No one ever heard of a permanent in those days.

During the early days, the store handled fresh fruits during the summer months and the only fruit sold in the winter was apples. They came in 40 lb. boxes and sold from \$1.50 to \$2.50, depending on variety. Bananas were bought by the bunch, and were crated in tall wooden crates made of light lumber so the bunch would fit in it snugly. That was a fruit dad lost plenty of money on, as before the whole bunch would be sold, they over-ripened. Any of the bananas that would fall off, we kids would have the privilege of eating and that bunch was bumped into plenty so that we would get our share.

Most of the groceries and other goods came in wooden crates. Alot of the canned goods came in wooden barrels packed with sawdust or something other. Salt was sold in barrels - something like 280 lbs. People used it for salt-

ing hay for storage and to feed their horses with the grain. We had shelves full of different stock foods and horse medicines, especially for colic remedy.

All cookies came in wooden (not in paper) boxes of about 30 lbs. I remember most the soda crackers, which came unsalted. The cracker was about twice the size of today's cracker. After they were open for a few weeks, they lost all their crispiness. Honey Jumble and Lemon Biscuits were the most common cookies.

Dried fruit, peaches, apples and apricots came in wooden boxes of 24 lbs. Lard came in wood tubs of somewhere around 60 lbs. or better.

We used to sell alot of buckwheat grits and pearled barley. The buckwheat was used for making sausages and the pearl barley for soups.

Small cans of sardines sold for 5¢ and six for a quarter. During Lent, we sold lots of herring that would come in small wooden kegs. I believe there were nine pounds in each keg.

We also bought eggs in trade for merchandise. We had to have a dark room to candle them, and in the depression, we paid from 6¢ to 10¢ a dozen, as they were priced according to grade.

I see large bolts of cotton and gingham material which were bought for sewing aprons or dresses. Some of the bolts were in beautiful patterns. The material I remember the best was the gray cotton (a darker drab). This was used extensively for baby diapers as there were no disposable ones in those days. There were various skeins of yarn, spools of cotton and silk threads, bias tape and ribbon. There were also bachelor buttons, that you probably never heard of. They were used primarily for work jackets and were a snap on that would open in half and you would push the one half through the bottom of the material where the button was to be and then push the other half from the bottom and snap it locked. This was a very simple and quick way to make the repair.

Continuing along, there were piles of hunting and duck coats. These were worn as an all purpose jacket for everyday work, as they were lined and the material was somewhat water resistant. Coon caps with furred ear flaps that covered the side of your face, sold for \$2.65. There were all kinds of gloves and mittens for winter wear. Most of the people wore the chopper mitts which were made of leather and a woolen knit mitt inside.

Next to the post office, there was a circular stand that held buggy whips, and a little farther down the line were binder whips. These were made of

bamboo about eight feet in length with about a five foot cord of leather lace sewed at the top.

We used to pack ice every winter for summer use, as that was the only way of cooling anything, especially when we got the beer license after the post office closed. We would cut the ice on the Forest River or Red River when it would get about 18 to 20 inches thick (in blocks about 17 x 20) so it would fit into a wagon box. In 1935, when we had the tavern, Leo Mondry owned a 1½ ton truck and he hauled the ice from the village of Forest River to Warsaw for 5¢ a block. This included the cost of the ice and delivery. We also used the ice for ice cream making and for ice cream we would buy from the creamery at Minto in the summer months and sell it for 5¢ a cone. We would pick it up Sunday morning from their freezer and sell it within a couple of hours. It came in metal containers with about a five or six inch space around the can for ice. I don't remember how much we paid for the ice cream, but at the very most it would be \$1 a gallon. We would get up to 150 cones from a five gallon can. Pop, which sold for 5¢ a bottle, was also cooled with the ice. We would chop up the ice, pour in about four inches of water, stack in the bottles and cover them with the ice.



During the early days, the store was enlarged as business progressed. The original store was 22x20x16 followed with the same size and a 20x20x10. All of this is still intact and comprised the business section. There were two additional storage sheds attached to the end. The living quarters were upstairs in the first two parts of the building (20x44) with only two bedrooms,

one for the boys and one for the folks and girls. With nine of us in the family and only three beds, we all had our turn sleeping on the floor. All cooking was done on a low type wood range with no hot water reservoir. There was no water in the building or bathroom. Looking back, I hated the outside toilet in the wintertime.

The front of the store had a canvas awning across the whole front, which we would put on every spring, and take off for the winter. The two large front windows had wood shutters on hinges that we would close every night.

This was to keep the cold out during the winter months and keep vandals from breaking the windows. The store was lit up by a couple of kerosine lamps that had a large wick. The one in the front part of the store was hanging from the ceiling with a spring adjuster for height from the floor. It was all bronze with a bronze shade. It looked good, but the lighting capability was more than limited, as it extended only about five feet each direction. In the early 20's, the gasoline lamp came in with mantles. The store had a double unit. This was a four mantle deal with two on each side about 18 inches apart. This really lit up the place but had maintenance work, such as keeping the lines clean, filling the fuel daily, and replacing the mantles, as by contact of anything, they would fall apart. In the summertime, the light would attract alot of bugs (especially moths) which would fly right into them. This lamp provided good light until the electricity came in December of 1945. The ceiling of the store and shelving didn't get painted until the late 20's as dad was too conservative to spend money for something that you could get along without.

In my memory, there were always two general stores in Warsaw. The one to the east of us was built by John Babinski. They handled just about everything plus funeral caskets. In 1919, it was sold to Mike Stupek who sold it to Richard Wysocki in 1921. The store had a lean on its west side where the caskets were stored. Wysocki tore the west wall out and connected a large bowery (dance floor). The musical band would be seated in the lean part and dances were held weekly throughout the summer. This enterprise didn't prove profitable. After one season, it was discontinued and the business was sold to Joseph Kiedrowski in 1923. Joe operated the store until his death. Minnie, his wife, then operated it until the late 70's when she retired.

In 1922, Richard Wysocki, who owned the competing store, put in the first gas pump in Warsaw. The entire town worried that one day the whole town would be blown up. About ten years later, we also put one up. The cheapest I remember selling gas from the pump for was 13.6¢ a gallon. This was for only a few days when the dealers had a price war. You may wonder how they could sell it that cheap, but in those days I don't think that there was any state tax, only a cent or two federal tax, and the freight was cheap.

Throughout the years, the operation of the store was run by credit. Most of the people were honest, especially in the earlier days. Then came the dirty thirties and the Great Depression. Everyone wanted credit and this

was just impossible for dad to do, as he had to pay cash for the groceries when they came.

There is one incident which happened I'll never forget, as at that time I was already through with high school and in my twenties. There was a young family with two children living in Warsaw. They were Mr. and Mrs. Julian Maszk, an honest, hard-working couple. There just wasn't any work and no relief checks like today or commodities to pick up. Anyone growing up in that era learned the true value of a dollar. It was in the latter part of February or beginning of March, that Julian came into the store for some bare essentials to survive and he asked my father to charge it. I can just see how hard it was for my father to say no. He said, "Julian, as much as I trust your honesty and know of your needs, I just can't credit you anymore. You owe around \$90 and have no job and no prospect whatsoever. I have to pay for my groceries as they come in. You will just have to figure out some other means." Poor Julian left and about an hour later came back when dad wasn't around and asked me to give him the groceries saying, "Mark it down in the back of the journal and your dad will never know about it." It didn't take me long to answer him. I said, 'I wasn't brought up that way. I heard what dad said and these are his groceries. To me it would be stealing someone else's property.' He left for his home very depressed. In about a half hour, I saw Julian walking east and about five hours later, I saw him coming back. He stopped in the store with a \$15 check which he borrowed from his brother-in-law who was teaching school by the Red River. Incidentally, the school teacher was getting \$35 per month. Mr. Maszk didn't get a job until towards the end of April, handcranking a fanning mill for 50¢ a day on his own board. As time went on, times got better and he repaid his bill in full. A few years later, he moved to the state of Washington and did very well. Julian and his wife are now in their 80's and enjoying their retirement.

The post office was discontinued in February of 1934, and we opened our beer tavern the following day. Brother Neman and I were both at home and single. With my dad wanting no part of the liquor business, we operated the business in partnership. Just about all beer sold was draft (keg) beer for 5¢ an eight ounce glass. As I recall, the wholesale price of an eight gallon keg was \$4.28 and we sold it for \$4.65. Not much of a markup, but it was all money. Pint bottles were sold for 15¢ or two for a quarter. Steinies (32 ounce bottles) sold for 30¢ and picnics (64 oz. bottles) sold for 50¢. As

the business got established and increased, we used 16 gallon kegs for draft beer as they were a little bit cheaper than two eights and you seemed to draw more beer per gallon. I got married in November of 1939, and moved to the farm in February of 1940. The following year, I asked to be dissolved from the partnership. Up to the present time, it's operated solely by my brother Neman.

When the Warsaw Hall was built, Adam Kiedrowski built a beer tavern just north of the hall. After operating it for about 20 years, the business closed and the place was vacant until about five years ago. Robert Kilichowski bought the building and opened a beer tavern under the name of Torks Polski Dom. Two years ago, he secured a license to sell hard liquor.

Life was different in my young days. Every household in Warsaw had at least one cow and some chickens, ducks, and even geese. Alot also had one horse. We always had at least four and up to ten when we enlarged our farming operation.

When I got out of high school and the depression hit, there were alot of young fellows my age within a radius of five miles. They would be in town at our place to play checkers or cards. We would always have at least two tables and sometimes as many as five playing whatever was popular at the time. One winter we played only Yoker, then Pinnochle, and Rummy (a nickel for five hand game). In the worst depression, we played Vyter for wooden old style farm matches. Each of us would buy a box of the matches and enter their name on it. Each evening when we would be through playing, we would just put the boxes on one shelf so they would be available for the next nights game. At the end of the season, alot hadn't used up even a box of matches. This was cheap entertainment. It goes to show that you need not have much money to entertain yourself.

I have witnessed many changes in the merchandising business as well as living conditions. In my early days, you could tell every customer that came in if they were a farmer or a labor man. Most of the labor people were poor and their clothing would show it. If that didn't show it, it would sure show up as to what they would be buying. Laborers would purchase only the bare essentials -- no cookies, fancy foods of any kind -- just the essentials to survive. When they would drive up with their horses, the horses would be like skeletons. I imagine if they had any extra feed, it was sold to buy food.

I remember when the Warsaw convent was built in 1919. Johnny Curtin and



Barney Greevers, who were at least five years older than me, got a job pulling nails from the curbing boards, getting 5¢ an hour. I wanted the job also, but they just wouldn't hire me as I couldn't even handle a hammer at my age.

Warsaw, as I remember in my younger days, had the public school across from the church and no residential homes to the south. The first home built in that area was built in 1926 by Joseph Gerszewski (Ted's father). On the east side of the road, the only other residence was the rectory.

People would drive to church services or shopping with horses or bicycle. The front of the street was lined up with poles to tie horses, and there were seven or eight large barns on the church property where the parishioners would house their teams in the wintertime while they were at mass.

Despite the size of the Warsaw church, in the late 20's and 30's, it was too small for our parish and they were seriously thinking of extending the choir loft to make more seating available. They already had seating for over 100 in the choir, and had at least 100 folding chairs that were set up in the main aisle of the church. Many times the steps of the choir would be filled up, as well as the entrance, and the outside steps. In the 1940's, things started going the other way, and there has been a continuous decline to the present, leaving the structure way too large for the present parish.

Warsaw always hired an organist. The last one I remember was Frank Fox. He lived in the old church rectory. He also taught organ music and my sister Sophie took lessons from him. Shortly after the nuns came, they took over the position, and he left back to Poland (his original home).

I served mass until I was through with high school. There must have been at least a hundred weddings that I served at. Most of these already celebrated their 50th or 60th anniversaries if they are living. The hardest serving was Holy Week, as you would forget from year to year as to what to do.

In the early days, the parish used to celebrate more Holy Days with special services. Among these were Three Kings, St. Steven's Day (December 26th), and Corpus Christie, which always came forty days after Easter Sunday. On that day, they always had four or five outside altars built in small buildings which had open fronts beautifully decorated with flowers. We would have a procession which would proceed from one domek (as they were called in Polish, meaning small home) to the other. During the course, they would be reciting the rosary, singing the litany and other prayers. This was a beautiful custom.

The parish priest would conduct catechism classes during the summer months and they had daily sessions, just like the public school system. They had recesses and everything that goes with it. Most of the children in the area walked to school. It was nothing out of the ordinary to walk five or six miles. This system of religious education was used until 1920 when the Sisters of the Resurrection built the academy in Warsaw. Thereafter, all the children in the parish would have to attend the academy for one full year. In the early years, most of the children stayed at the Sisters. The most children they had was 68. For the love of me, I don't know how they accommodated all of them. We had a couple of students from Chicago, and at least a couple from Greenbush, Mn., one from Rhode Island (Anthony Stlosa), one from Pisek (Mathilda Lovcik) and two Sczur boys from Noonan, N.D. This made quite an impact on Warsaw.

Annual church suppers were held by the parish which drew everyone in the vicinity. Picnics were entire parish celebrations. There were a number of large celebrations that had bowery dance floors erected just special for the day, as there was no hall.

I got to know all the parishioners by their first names through their school attendance and visits to the store. In about 1924 or 1925, every farmer had an automobile. By that time, people that had autos earlier learned to drive them in the winter, and children would be transported by car pools to the academy for the year.

It was the custom for the Catholic people to gather at their neighbors homes to sing Gorzkie Zale (Bitter Sorrows), a lenten hymn. On Good Friday, there would be absolutely no music in any of the homes and all mirrors would be covered in respect to Jesus' death.

There was an old Polish tradition of Dingus or switching which was always held Easter Monday for the men and on Tuesday for the women. You would take a nice twig (usually a willow with alot of elasticity in it) and switch (hit) the opposite sex on the legs. You would do so until the victim would agree to buy out her or his switching; with that they would offer you a lunch or a drink. Most of the time it would be a drink, and by evening the switchers got pretty well organized. In my case, when we would cover Warsaw (which would take about three hours), I had enough for the season.

Christmas was a time of the year we always looked forward too. While the Sisters were teaching the school, we always celebrated St. Nicholas Day

on December 6th. We would have a short program and St. Nick would appear to present small gifts to the children. Christmas Eve supper, we would always eat together and have the sharing of the wafer (oplatki). Dad would take a large wafer and each one of us would break a small portion of it. Father would wish us the best of everything in the coming year and we would in turn wish him the same. This was an old Polish custom which is still carried out through Poland. After supper, we would all gather around the Christmas tree (which we had every year) to light up the candles. These were all wax candles which had to be lit individually by match as there was no electricity. Mothers always had a lot of them on the tree and it took quite a while to light. After they were all lit for about a minute or less, we would carefully blow them out. It was a fire hazard but we were all instructed to be careful about fire. Before we retired for the night, we would all set out plates with our names on cards so that Santa would know to give the gifts to the right party.

It was also a tradition to have from five to eight people band together as Santa Clauses and drive from home to home and sing Christmas carols. They all work masks and were dressed in various costumes. Some of them were nice while other outfits were drab. The annual tour would start about December 15th and continue up to December 25th.

On New Years, there were other groups known as the Three Kings. These had quite elaborate costumes. They would make their rounds through January 6th. They would sing Christmas and Three King songs. For years and years, the Warsaw boys had this group. My brothers, Ben and Neman, were earlier members and when they stepped out, I stepped in. The fancy costumes had alot of tinsel and sequins on the capes. The first member would walk in carrying a shining star on a pole which was battery operated. He was followed by the Three Kings, (one of them a Negro) followed by a shepherd and an accordian player. Both the Santa Clauses and the kings had a beggar as the last one in the party dressed in rags. He was the beggar and more or less a comedian. He would be begging for some alms which would come in home-made beer, moonshine, meats and sausages. It was appreciated by the families that were visited and fun for the members of the groups. Throughout the early years, the tours were made by horses and a sleigh, as the roads were not built for winter travel. Throughout the years, we only use the automobile once. One year we used a farm truck. We divided the area into six sections, covering

one section daily. We would start out right after sunset and work till about 10:30 as most people would be going to bed by that time. Sometimes we extended it a little longer, but had to have an appointment from the people.

From 1915 to 1920, John F. Curtin served the rural area with Raleigh and McConnan products. He had a wagon with a van on it. It was nicely painted with the names of the companies he was representing and a team of horses. Mr. Curtin also was known as Doc Curtin, as he was a self-educated horse doctor. During his life-time, he made numerous calls to farmers to take care of their sick animals. He had an orchestra which played at house parties and public dances. His son, John Jr., played the piano or banjo, Cosmer the trumpet or violin, Ben the drums, and old John the violin. They played Czech music as Mr. Curtin was half Czech.

Another business was the Village Blacksmith. Frank Tandeski and Sons operated the shop. In those days, the blacksmith was very essential in the community, especially in a dry year when plowing was hard. There were no throwaway self-sharpening plow shares and the smitty had to sharpen them by hand. They had a hit and miss stationary engine banging from 5 a.m. until dark. They also worked on wagons, such as tightening the steel rims around the wheels which would loosen and fall off when they dried out too much, sleigh runners, etc... They used to make parts for the sleighs and build new ones as various parts for wagons.

The older folks have told me that at one time there was a bowling alley operated by John Maszk, who also operated a blind pig in the prohibition days. No one entered the building, but there was a slot to drop in coins on the outside wall. You would drop in a quarter and out of another slot a quart of beer would slide out. If you dropped in more than a quarter, you would receive the same amount of beer and no change.

The Warsaw Hall was built in 1936. Before it was even completed, Warsaw had an independent basketball team. It's unbelievable, but it's true. Warsaw played the famous Globe Trotters of Abe Separstein, who was just organizing his team to become the biggest attraction in the game. This was in 1939, and the whole team (seven of them, plus the coach) came in one car. The same night they played the Minto Indies. They were guaranteed \$25 and 75% of the balance of the gate. They got somewhere around \$40 from Warsaw.

In the early days, there also was a feed mill which ground feed and sold some.

In the olden days, there were no vaults to store the deceased corpse until spring for burial. All graves had to be dug regardless of the frozen ground. One winter in the 30's, I helped the janitor, who at that time was the grave digger. Most of them I dug myself. There are only two graves I remember who they were for - Richard Greevers and Nick Plutowski. Roman Tandeski was the janitor and he was paid \$6 a grave in the winter and \$4 in the summertime. Since he was the office holder, he kept more of the pay and gave me \$2 for each grave. None of the corpse would be embalmed. The corpse couldn't be held too long as the odor of deterioration would be bad. They would always store the bodies and caskets in the coldest room. In the summertime, they would place tubs filled with ice under the caskets. The wakes were all held at the residence of the deceased and during the wakes they would sing various hymns.

I believe our family was one of the first to have a four seated wooden swing. We also had a tent that we would put outside for sleeping during the hot summer days, as the temperature was unbearable.

The first telephone in the area was the Warsaw line built in 1907. This extended from Minto through Warsaw and a mile east to the Joe Babinski farm now occupied by Lauren Babinski. It was owned by individual members who built it, and exchange service was provided by Northwestern Bell, for \$4.65 per year. All the parties were on one line. I believe there were only six or seven patrons to start. By 1930, just about every farm had phone service. Those living close to the Red River had their service through the Johnson Telephone Company of Oslo. They built and maintained the line for \$12 or \$15 a year. When the depression hit in the 30's, all but a handful had their phones disconnected as they couldn't afford the charges.

The Tandeski's purchased the first auto in Warsaw. It was a 1910 or 1911 Model T, which they purchased second hand in 1914 or 1915. It had the straight front fenders and hand crank. The whole town gathered to look at it. I believe they paid somewhere around \$300 and everyone in town had the same opinion of the purchase. "The Tandeski's don't know how fast to go broke". Dad bought his first car (Model T) in 1916 and paid \$400 for it. My dad, not being a mechanical man, had plenty of problems starting it. Most of the time he would flood it or not choke it enough. He would be cranking his heart out. I can just see the sweat running down his face. He had about a 25 foot pole laying by the garage and a block of wood that would fit just right to put the

pole over it and under the rear axle so that the hind wheel could be raised with the leverage of the pole. One of us kids would always sit on the far end of the pole to keep the wheel off the ground so dad could put it in gear, as that would turn the motor faster and make easier starting. Poor Roman Tandeski must have been asked over 100 times to start the Model T after dad was pooped. He would give the old jalopy a few cranks and it always started. Dad, who didn't swear much, would say, "Well, why did that S----- B---- start for him?!"

In the early days, during the summer months, we had women peddlars combing the area on foot selling different lace goods, materials for dresses, scarves and other notions. These weren't local people. We called them Arabians. Where they spent the winters, I don't know. One of them was a heavy set woman who made her trip annually. She had her nightly headquarters at a neighboring widow (Mrs. Barbara Greevers). She would carry a pack on her back and a suitcase in each arm. What a chore, but she made her living. For some reason, we kids were afraid of her. I remember she attended the Joe Shoults wedding. Although I was only four and not remembering any other activities but the one that included the action of the fat peddlar. As at any wedding, there was plenty of alcohol, and the poor lady indulged a little too heavily in the juices. As a result, she was looking for a place to rest her weary legs, which at this time were getting weak. With no chairs available, she thought she found the right spot when she spied the wood box. In those days, every kitchen had a wood box. These were about three feet high in the front with a higher back of about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet. She decided to use the wood box as a seat, not realizing that there was hardly any wood in it. As she sat into it, her behind went down to a degree where her feet were completely off the floor. The poor lady was kicking and squirming to get herself out. While she was doing her utmost to get out, a bunch of older boys would be running past her and raising her long skirt. This kind of an incident you're bound to remember regardless of age.

The gypsies would make an annual visit to Warsaw - first by horses and later by cars. We would always watch for their coming as we would lock up the store before they could get in as they would steal you blind.

Other annual visitors were the carnival and circus people. The carnivals didn't draw well, but the circus did. They would always erect their tents on the church property east of the Kiedrowski store or the southend parking lot which is now occupied by residential homes. They weren't too big, but were

great for small towns. They would always have an elephant, trained dogs, horses, and monkeys. During one of the last circuses, an elephant escaped in the night and they didn't find him until about the next afternoon. He was mired in the mud of Lake Cashel north of Oakwood. They had to get a dragline to pull him out, but the animal had no ill effects.

In the early days, the transient labor would flock to the area for harvest. They would ride the box cars on the train free of charge. As they would get off the train, the farmers would be waiting to hire them. Some of those who were left without a job, would walk to Warsaw and camp on the grounds across the street from our store in the trees around the school yard. They were called dukabors. Very few of them had any experience with farm work. It was fun to watch them try to harness a team, or better yet, drive them. However, they all learned like the rest of us.

Living on the outskirts of Warsaw was Joseph Shoults. He got world publicity with his flax exhibits, and was known as the Flax King as he won the World's Flax Championship in 1929 and 1930. In 1931, his crop suffered from drought but he came back, and in 1932, 1933 and 1934, he won the national crown. In 1935, his sample again won the world's title for the third time. The size of the sample was either a gallon or peck. Whatever it was, there were alot of kernels in it and all of it would be hand picked. Every night, the retired people would go over to the Shoults farm to kill time handpicking the flax. If you don't think it's alot of work, try handpicking a cupful. With the help of the Warsaw people, he made it pay. After three or four hours of picking, Mrs. Shoults would always have a cup of coffee and snack for lunch.

The winter of 1930 with not much to do, I went to help Harry Babinski haul wood. We hauled 19 loads from the Emmet Rivard farm, across the river from the Dick Grabanski farm about two miles east. This was standing wood. We'd leave home about 7 a.m. with two teams of horses and take our lunches. About three in the afternoon, we would be home with the two loads which we would have to chop down and load. We would unload them before dark and get ready for the next morning. This was about a 15 mile round trip, so we would spend quite a bit of time on the road. The loading and unloading wasn't bad as the timbers were long and the lift on a sleigh wasn't that high. Crossing the Red River, the bank on the Dakota side wasn't too bad as it wasn't very steep. However, on the Minnesota side, it was real sharp, and you had to have a good breeching harness to hold the load back from running over the

horses. If you had a team that wouldn't hold a load good, you had to put brakes on the sleigh, (tie a chain under the runners of the sleigh) so they wouldn't slide so fast.

It was while at Harry's that for the first and only time I saw how moonshine was made. One day Harry said to me, "I am going to mix up a batch of mash and show you how moonshine is made." When the mash was aged properly, he set it in a boiler with coils of copper tubing set in ice where the steam from the boiler would liquify into moonshine. The first boiling would give you rough tasting moonshine, but you would reboil that by the same process and would end up with a good tasting brew. Some of the people used to pour this final brew into oak charred kegs and store it that way for at least six months, which would give you as good a drink as you can get on the market.

During the early 30's, we would hurry with our field work and then go out on a job. I loaded beets on the truck with a fork at Joe Shoults for \$2 a day on my own board. While the truck was gone to town, you would either top or shake the beets, as when the lifter would lift them, they would just be loosened and you would have to pull them out, shake the dirt, and row them for hand topping.

In 1934, while Dizzy Dean was pitching the St. Louis Cardinals to the world's championship, Harry Babinski, Ben and Cosmer Curtin, and myself, got a job hand topping beets a mile north of Auburn at the Stanley Kennelly farm - 36 acres at \$5 an acre. This was on your own board. The first few days we prepared our meals in a garage and slept in the barn hay mow. A few days later, he got a cook car to prepare our meals and eat, but the sleeping quarters remained the same. In the fall of the year, the days are short. So, we would go out in the field at about 6 a.m. and came back when it would get too dark to work. I didn't mind the hard work, but didn't like to get home dog tired and then prepare your own meal. The same in the morning, prepare your breakfast, fix your dinner and lunches. This to me was poison and the hardest day of work I put in in my lifetime. This was piece work and we ended up with about \$3 a day.

In the early days, it was a tradition that while you were single and working for your folks, there would be no compensation, only board, room and clothing and a minimal amount of spending money. When I was a senior in high school, I got an allowance of 50¢ per week and I would budget my expenditures so that I was never broke. All candy bars were 5¢, ice cream cones 5¢,



sundaes 15¢, and a malted milk was 20¢. I learned to handle my money well and by the end of the school year, there were at least a dozen guys that owed me from a nickel to 15¢. Incidentally, I got all of it paid back.

There were four fires in my time in Warsaw. The first fire was Tandeski's barn. It started about ten in the evening in the early winter of 1926 and started in hay mow. At the time, they had a team of horses, a cow and some chickens in it. John Curtin's barn was right next to it and he also had a stack of hay just a few feet away from the fire. Bucket brigades were formed with water from our artesian well and with the help of the Minto Fire Department, which came with the chemical unit, using all the baking soda in both the stores, they managed to keep the fire from advancing into the Curtin property. However, Tandeski's lost the team of horses and all the chickens, saving only the cow which got badly scorched.

The next fire was an old garage or business place of some kind owned by Emil Kiedrowski. It was south of the present hall. It burned one early morning with one auto in it. This was in the early 30's.

In about 1938, Peter Narloch's home burned. It was on the west side of the street in about the middle of town.

The most disastrous fire hit Warsaw in September of 1944. It was a windy day from the south and Joe Kiedrowski's barn to the north of the store caught fire. With the strong wind and no fire protection, it was just impossible to stop the fire before it was finally brought under control. The buildings in a direct line south to north also burned -- Tandeski Blacksmith Shop, the Roman Tandeski residence and the Ben Curtin home. The Tandeski's moved to Detroit, Michigan, with their five children where the family still resides. Ben Curtin moved to a small home. John Tandeski, who was about 16 at the time of the fire, was handpicking potatoes by Oakwood the day of the fire and knew nothing of the fire until he came home for the night. In getting out of his car, he noticed their home was destroyed. What a shock, but life has to continue. Since that time, Warsaw has been without a blacksmith shop.

On July 2, 1947, a tornado hit Walsh County. It started about 6:30 p.m. north of Grafton around the Auburn area and crossed the entire county finally dying out east of Alvarado. It demolished the Frank Rogalla home in Warsaw. He was killed as the debri fell on him. A Mrs. Mishewski (an elderly woman in her 80's), was already in bed when the storm hit and carried the house and her over 100 rods scattering the debri in its path. Mrs. Mishewski landed on

the field without a scratch and walked back to town without any assistance. She was a jolly old character and used to chuckle about the incident. She would say, "People brag about riding in airplanes, but I can truly say that I got a ride in a tornado and am alive to tell the public about the experience." Other homes damaged in Warsaw were the Julian Rogalla home, Ted Gerszewski's had their addition of the kitchen torn off, and Joe Kiedrowski had the lean on the west side of the store blown off. The tornado continued east, southeast. It first took a granary at the Peter Hefta farm (owned by F.D. Slominski), then Joe Babinski's barn and 17 buildings on the Leo Ostrowski farm (which was every building in the yard). Then it crossed the road and took the barn and some other buildings on the Earl Lizakowski farm where Kenneth Slominski lives at the present time. Going east, it took most of the buildings, including the house (by Interstate 29) of Harry Plutowski. Next in line was the Victor Stoltman farm where it demolished all the buildings. Turning northeasterly, it took a couple of buildings on a vacant farm owned by Joe Cetnor, across from Ludvik Kulas. Its final blow was when it hit the Joe Kosmatka farm northeast of Kulas, where it took most of the buildings. Outside of Mr. Rogalla, no other people got killed as they all took shelter in their cellars or basements.



1946

I was always sports crazy. Since Warsaw had a baseball team, I started as a second baseman in 1927. I remember the first game like today. Oakwood would hold an annual picnic and had a fair team, uniformed and well equipped. We went to play them and as far as I know, we had only one guy in uniform and the rest were in overalls. Anyway, we got beat something like 20 to 5. In 1930, we got new uniforms and started playing regular schedules. Since the baseball diamond was located at the F.D. Slominski farm where my future wife lived, it made it very convenient to stay after practice or night game to woo my lover. I had distance from their home to the Warsaw store figured out in steps.

Throughout the years, Warsaw was always short a pitcher. So, we had the Stanislawski boys and Dom Shoults from Ardoch playing with us, then an Indian named Ervin Vanoss, from the Red Lake Reservation, then Charley Fee of Vesleyville, who in my estimation was definitely a big league prospect and later

Fritz and Dan Demars of Oakwood. After 1955, Warsaw always had an abundance of their own pitchers with Fabian Shoults, Dennis Kiedrowski, and Adolph Lizakowski. I played short, first, second and third in my lifetime plus the outfield. However, the last four years, I was catching, as my legs completely gave up. I quit playing in 1952, which was a long time after I left town (1940). My dad used to get angry at me for playing and making my wife stay home and take care of the kids and do the chores for me.

1934 Bottom Row: Ray Babinski  
Front Row: Florian Babinski, Fritz Demars, Julian Slominski, Joe Babinski, and John Curtin.  
Middle Row: Dan Demars, Ed Gudajtes, Neman Gudajtes, Ed Slominski and Ernie Grabanski.  
Top Row: Hilary Grabanski, Marion Kulas, Treasurer; John Wysocki, Manager; Ted Gerszewski, score keeper; Syl Babinski, Booking Agent.



## SCHOOL DAYS

At the time I started school, there was no such thing as kindergarten. The only briefing you received was that at the concluding terms last week, (prior to your enrollment) when you would come in for about a week for afternoon sessions. You didn't learn anything but you got the idea as to how school sessions operate.

I remember my first day of school just as if it happened yesterday. My sister Sophie took me in for the afternoon. After sitting around for about an hour and nothing exciting happening, I got real bored and put my thinking cap on how I could sneak out. I started to slide down in my seat until I was on the floor and slowly crawled to the door which was open. Upon reaching the door, I was up in a big hurry and sped for home. Gertrude Ryan was the teacher and I'm sure she got a big kick out of the episode.

The following fall, I enrolled as a first grader without the knowledge of one English word as the Polish language was used at all times. By the end of the term, I got along fairly well. What helped was that all your classmates had the same problem. This kept everyone about equal. I never really had any hard times with my studies as for some reason I was an easy learner.

We were all seated in double seats. My first partner was Joe Stanislawski Jr. Every desk had an ink well as there were no ballpoint pens. All eight grades were in one room. This I believe is the best method of education as you heard all the upper grades have their classes. Having to listen to them recite their lessons, you were bound to pick up some knowledge for your future grade.

A gal by the name of Frieda Chinka was our teacher in the third grade. When I was to be in the fourth grade, the nuns started teaching in the convent and they had the first four grades there with the four upper grades taught by a nun in the public school. I was in the fourth grade about a month and the nun promoted me to the fifth grade, so I was transferred to the public school. Until my graduation, I had the same teacher, Sister Agnes.

School was fun for me at all times. We always had an annual program put on by the school children for the benefit of the Sisters. The programs would perform in Minto and Oslo, as Warsaw had no facilities at that time. We played alot of baseball during recess and at noon hour, as we had a group that was crazy about the game.

After finishing my grade school, I enrolled in Minto High School. At that time the country children would all board in town if they lived over three miles from Minto. I stayed with my brother Ben and his wife for three years. The last year at Minto, I roomed at Mrs. Julius Risky's place, right next to the bridge before the dam. We walked to school every morning regardless of weather and walked home for dinner and back to school. During the weekend I would come home and always had to catch a ride with someone that would be in town. Dad never worried as to how I would get home. Getting back for Monday, I would always catch a ride with some of the parents of other children attending Minto school.

I spent alot of time (every spare moment) taking part in whatever sport that was in season. In the fall we played soccer, then basketball, and a lot of shinny, which is something like hockey. We played it on the street using a milkcan for the puck and a twig with a hook on the end as a hockey stick. I finished the school year with baseball.

I took part in two class plays.

After a dreary first year, I enjoyed my high school days. The country kids used to be handled rough by the Minto kids and teased all the time until they got to know you. I got my share and many a night I would cry myself to sleep, but eventually it all worked out.

Outside of Latin which I took the first year, I had no difficulty with any of the other subjects and made the honor roll constantly. There were 21 in our class and I was fortunate enough to finish high school as salutatorian.

When I finished high school, Father Maluski (who was in Warsaw at the time) came to congratulate my dad for the honors I received and told my father that he shouldn't let me stay at home and farm, but to pursue my education further. He suggested that I study for the priesthood. My dad said he wasn't about to choose a life for me. If I so desired I could go to any school I wanted, or stay at home and assist with the farming operation. The priesthood didn't appeal to me as I already had too much exposure to the opposite sex. I did enroll in a correspondence course with the Columbia Institute of Chicago. The course, if completed, would give the same credits as one year of university or college. After two-six weeks, I lost all interest and ended my education.

At the end of the 1970-71 school year, the nuns left Warsaw. Their ex-



cuse was the enrollment was too small. I didn't agree with them as they already had 72 pupils enrolled for the coming year. The problem all came about when they ran short of foreign born nuns and the American born girls didn't care about living in a remote rural area. With their departure, the teaching of the Polish language went down the drain. All the years they were in Warsaw they had daily Polish classes. While I was going to public school (when they had four upper grades) all of us would go for an additional hour after school to the convent to have Polish lessons. Among those I remember attending from Minto were: the Pete Kiedrowski children, Vincent Langowski's and Frank Slominski families. At the end of every month we would have written tests. These were usually held on Saturdays.

## MY COURTING DAYS

Everyone in the area at the time after high school to marriage days was flat broke. We were all in the same category. There were plenty of house parties during the wintertime and in the summertime there were granary and barn dances. It was a general procedure that if someone built a new barn or granary, they would have a dance. Although I never owned a car, I had no problem in latching on to someone for a ride to the event. There were girls galore and so many good looking ones. The orchestras that came out of town to play at the Warsaw Hall always would remark that Warsaw girls were prettier than any other locality. During the depression, the admission to a dance was 50¢ which was awful hard to scrape up. Later on as conditions improved, they went up to 75¢ and the ladies admission was free.



I fell in love at an early age when my dear wife was only 16 and still in high school. Despite numerous other choices, I stuck with her like glue. After courting for almost nine years, we finally got married. I still didn't own a car. Most of my courting was done on foot as my wife lived just a little over  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Warsaw. I walked that stretch not a dozen times, but hundreds of times.

We had a lot of odd incidents occurring during our courting days, but I just couldn't resist mentioning this one. One night there was some activity in town and Mamie was along. When I finally decided to take her home, we walked over to our garage where the car was parked. Instead of immediately driving her home, we decided the car in the garage was as good a place as any to smooch. After some time, we heard some noises, which happened to be the doors closing and pretty soon we heard the padlock click, leaving us locked in. After some brain busting, I finally figured out how to get out. The door was a two section rig that folded (closed to the center, but being old there was a lot of flex to it). We tried pushing it out but that was impossible, but with the pressure against it, it left an opening in the center. So, the only thing to do was to crawl out through the space. Mamie pushed at the doors and I jumped to the top and pulled myself out through the opening. I had to go to the store to wake them up and give me the key to unlock the door. They all thought I was snug in bed as it was about 2:30 a.m.

We would be fortunate that I had two younger sisters, Cecelia and Frances and both of their boyfriends, Florian Babinski and Leonard Risky. They each had a car and when there was any doing that required driving, we would catch a ride with them. I don't think there was a couple that was closer than Florian and Cecelia and us. We were always together and I would have to say that my most fun years were with them. They got married four years earlier than we did. Despite getting together real often, their life was different than ours. After their marriage, we would go with Frances and Leonard which was just as enjoyable. They got married a year earlier than we did.

After that, we were pretty much on our own. If the need required a car, I would borrow my brother Nemans, a 1926 Ford Coupe.

During those days, there were alot of people in the Warsaw area. The fall we got married there were over 10 weddings -- four of them held the week of our wedding.



## MARRIED LIFE

After over eight years of courting Mamie, we finally got married on November 21, 1939. It was a beautiful day with the temperature above average (about 60 degrees).

Mamie's parents were Frank D. Slominski and Florence Gornowicz. Marie (known throughout her life as Mamie) was born on August 26, 1915. She had three brothers, John, Julian and Edmund.



Our wedding was just a simple house wedding -- only brothers and sisters in attendance, and enjoyed by all.

My wife's parents saw to it that she should be one of the best dressed brides. With Mamie buying the necessary flowers for the occasion, we proudly marched to the altar with Mamie escorted by her father. As Father Maluski stepped to the altar to marry us, he turned to me and said, 'Wedding license please'. I was shocked. I didn't know what to expect. I told him that we did have it, but left it at home. He hesitated for quite some time and finally said, 'I will trust you, but you will be the first couple I have married without having the license before the ceremony.' After the services, I had someone run to the store and get the license before he could fill out the marriage certificate. When Father Maluski completed his duties, I graciously turned to him and asked what the charges were. He answered, 'Charges, there are no charges'. He really put me on a high horse, as being as broke as I was, this felt good, as a matter of fact, really good. This moment fast disappeared, as he continued with, 'But no one leaves me less than a \$20 bill'. I reached for my billfold and found a solitary bill of the necessary denomination. Despite being penniless, I was happy as a lark as dad promised us free groceries as long as he lived or he could afford.

I remember when mother went along with me to buy a wedding suit in Grand Forks. I was dead broke, but knew that mother would bail me out. She slipped a \$100 bill in my pocket and as a result I was dressed to kill for the occasion.

I had a shirt with one of those stiff attachable collars with the laps bent over.

We had the Gornowicz orchestra playing for us at the house dance. The Gornowicz's, a three piece outfit of violin, piano and banjo, used to play at alot of house parties in the area. The reception lasted till the wee hours of the morning.

We spent our honeymoon sleeping in Mamie's bed which was only a 3/4 (single) bed. I imagine the folks figured we would get acquainted better sleeping together. Regardless of the size of the bed, it was more than comfortable and we stayed there until the first of March when we moved into our new home on the farm.

Our home (24x40 foot structure) was started in September of 1939 with Isadore Rolczynski as head carpenter getting 35¢ an hour plus room and board. Uncle August Byzewski was his assistant who got 25¢ an hour. It had no bathroom, but did have a full basement. It was completed by our wedding day. The home cost about \$1600. The foundation was made from gravel hauled from Arvilla and the cement and lumber from Minto. Cement cost 81¢ per bag of 96 lbs. This was all mixed and poured on the farm, using a gas engined motor on the mixer. I had about \$400 saved up, which was a little more than to cover the balsam wool insulation. Insulation at the time was a rarity. Dad paid for the rest of the home.

We moved out to the farm March 1st after living at my in-laws since the wedding. I would walk to Warsaw every morning and back for the night to my wife. Sometimes it was real blustery and father would say, 'Just go to bed. You don't have to sleep with her every nite.. I'm sure you'll get tired of it'. He just couldn't convince me of that.

Dad gave me his 1926 Model T Ford to drive. Life was full of excitement when we moved in. Father-in-law Slominski bought us the necessary essentials for the home and my dad furnished the groceries. When we moved in, the floor was left to sand and paint. Have you ever tried sanding a four inch flooring by hand? We spent a heck of alot of time before we finally finished one room. I went crying to dad as to what kind of work it was. He said to go buy a cheap linoleum and cover the rest of the floor and he'd pay for it. This solved the problem.

That summer we put up a garage. In the fall, I built a hen house. As we were just completing the garage, a small tornado went through the yard one

night and flipped the garage end over end and left it in sections. I got about a dozen of the neighbors to come around and help lift the sections together. It really didn't cost too much to get back in shape. That fall, Dad Slominski put in a telephone for us as he was worried that if an emergency came up, we would have no means of contact. You couldn't depend on our Model T starting and Mamie was expecting our first child in December.

Our first child was born on December 2, 1940, an event I'll never forget. My wife started to get labor pains about midnight. I ran up to the car to get it started to go to the hospital. It was a windy night with the temp 19 below zero. The battery wouldn't turn the motor. The hand turn crank was stuck and I wouldn't be able to drive a team pulling it to start it. This was Neman's 1927 Model T Ford Coupe that I had borrowed for winter use as it started better. I got the jack out and raised one hind wheel and started turning the wheel with the motor in gear. Lo and behold, it started with a couple of pulls. This solved the immediate problem. Mamie got dressed and off we roared.

When we reached the city of Minto, the railroad crossing was blocked by a freight train. Stopping to avoid a crash, I tried to roll down the window to see how long the train was. Having the window down about a third of the way, the window crank twisted off because of the extreme cold. So, there we were with no heater, temperature 19 below and a window open. Finally the train moved and we made it to Doc Hardy's office. From there, Doc took us in his car to the hospital.

It took another 24 hours before the baby was born as Mamie had an awful time, spending 23 hours in the OB room. Mamie and our new son, James Joseph, came home on the 11th day. The total hospital bill was \$36 and the doctors bill including all her visits was \$35. It seemed like a fortune at the time.

Grandpa Slominski was really excited as it was his first grandchild. Grandpa Gudajtes was alot prouder and happier even though he already had at least a dozen grandchildren. James Joseph was the first grandson with the Gudajtes name. This assured my dad that the Gudajtes name wouldn't die out for at least another generation. When we were getting married, my dad said to me, 'Everything depends upon you to preserve the Gudajtes name'. My brother Ben and his wife had one son who died at birth and were all through, and brother Alphonso had one daughter and that was it. Neman was 39 and still single and he looked hopeless, so dad had a point of concern.

Isadore Gerszewski stayed with me while mother and Jimmy were in the hospital. One night we drove out to visit them and on the way home (about half way between Grafton and Minto) our lights went out. We drove all the way home without lights and not even close to an accident anywhere.

The following night, we drove to the Frank D. Lizakowski farm who did repair work to solder the radiator which was leaking. Driving again without lights, we got to Warsaw just fine. As we drove just out of Warsaw, our luck changed as Bennie Masck who lived a couple of miles east of Warsaw happened to be going home also without lights. We collided with our left fronts. Neither auto could be driven without considerable repairs, as the steering rods were either broken or twisted beyond operation. We walked back into Warsaw, woke up Neman telling him what happened and expected him to take us home as he had a new 1941 Ford. However, our visit wasn't very receptive. Seeing the writing on the wall that we weren't about to get a ride home, we just walked out and legged it all the way home. We did get some parts for it and repaired it to driving condition and just parked it.

Having a baby in the house made life quite different. We knew how to love but we knew very little about bringing up a baby. Everything was new and interesting. Mamie tried to breastfeed, but after about a month had to put him on formula as the poor boy would have starved, as she lacked the milk. The formula consisted of our cows milk and Karo syrup. Jimmy (as we called him) did real well despite considerable amounts of criticism for using regular farm milk which was unpasteurized and unhomegenized. People were already getting away from using this method of feeding. Grandpa Slominski bought Jimmy a Philco battery radio for Christmas, which I don't think interested him much, but was great for Mamie and me. This was our very first radio.

We had no washing machine. Mamie used to drive over to her folks once a week to do the laundry. With the baby, there was much more laundry. March or April of the following year, we went shopping for a washer. We finally bought one from Gambles for \$81.95. I emptied my billfold and came up with \$6.95 as a down payment and the balance in 15 monthly installments. We got a special deal with no finance charge added. This was the only thing I ever bought on payments my entire life. The machine had a briggs gas engine for power with a foot start. By the time we had it paid for, it would start just like the Model T. Mamie really had her kicking leg in shape. In a few months, once she got it started, she would never stop it for anything until she was all through.



Cyril Wysocki, Jimmy on Casey  
and me

We still had the Model T that wouldn't start unless you pulled it or jacked up the hind wheel and put it in gear and cranked. We had a large roan gelding that I had trained to pull the car. I didn't use any bridle or harness on him. We had a rope tied to the axle of the car and never untied it. We would just flip it inbetween the hood and fender so it was always handy. We would just lead Casey (the

big roan horse) to the front of the auto and I would tie the rope to Casey's tail. Mamie would steer the car and I would lead him. It was quite a way to start the car, but it worked.

I had four horses and two cows with the pasture in the northwest corner and no alley fenced to the pasture. Twice a day, I would lead them from the pasture to the yard to water them. To cap it off, the well went dry and I had to haul water from Warsaw. I used a four wheel trailer with four 50 gallon barrels set on it. I would bucket the water from the well and tie old blankets or burlap over them individually to avoid spillage.

Minto had a fourth of July celebration in 1940 with everyone in the area attending. We were bound to go although I was embarrassed to drive the car through town and if we drove into the park, how would I start it again. Leonard Wysocki Sr. (who lived in Minto) delivered Standard Oil products for me. He asked us to drive over to their house and we could ride with them to the park and we would go home together and he'd give us a pull to start the car to get home. This worked out to perfection and we had an enjoyable time.

That fall, I hurried with my field work so I could make a few bucks working in the potato harvest. I got a job at the Frank D. Kosmatka farm two miles from home for \$2.50 per day loading the sacks off the fields and dumping them into an underground pit where you had to climb a dirt mound about 15 feet. Anyway, I made \$22.50. When I went for my pay, Mr. Kosmatka said, 'I'm sorry, when I got through paying all the labor, I haven't got a dollar left. Don't worry, when I have the money, I'll pay.' He was honest and about two years later, he paid me without my asking.

When we used our '26 Model T (sedan), poor Casey (our horse) really got his exercise, as we wouldn't even bother cranking it. When I got to town, I'd

leave it running. In Warsaw, I'd crank myself to death almost. One night as I was cranking it for all my life, Tom Bozikowski (an old gentleman who lived in town) stopped by and said to me, "When and if you ever should get the thing started, drive over to my house. I want to speak to you." I finally got it started, and drove up to his home with no idea what he wanted. "Eddie, I don't want to see you kill yourself starting that car, so I have a proposition for you. Go buy yourself a car that will start and come back to me and I'll lend you the money without signing any note and no interest. This deal will be strictly confidential, between you and me. I know you're honest and I have the greatest of confidence in you." So, I drove up to Oslo, as Minto didn't have any good used cars on hand. Old man Dahlstrom of Dahlstrom Chevrolet, had a 1937 four door sedan (Ford) that he was asking \$400. Mr. Dahlstrom told me to take it home and drive it a few days and if I liked it, I could have it. I did and it felt great. I was so satisfied with it that the next day I stopped at Mr. Bozikowski's place and he peeled off four \$100 bills and handed them over. I drove straight to Oslo paying for the car and for the first time in my life, I felt like a millionaire. The car proved more than I bargained for. It started even in the coldest of weather. I drove the car a couple of years without a spare and God blessed us never to have a flat tire. This was during the war when tires were rationed and they wouldn't give you a permit for a spare. I drove it until 1951 when I sold it to Earl Byzewski for \$100. He made another 50,000 miles with it before he junked it.

Our farming operation was starting to make a little money. We kept adding improvements both in the home and in the farm equipment.

My oldest brother Benjamin, died in February of 1944. I spent over two weeks with his wife at Chicago before his death as he died from cancer at the Hines Hospital in Chicago.

On September 29, 1944, God blessed up with our first daughter, Mary Alice. Although Mamie didn't have as much difficulty, there were problems as Mary was born by breech. Mother came home after seven days of hospitalization and the bill was \$63. September 29th seems like an early day for snow to come, but the night Mary Alice was born, it was a real blustery day. A few days prior, we received a bit of rain and it was muddy everywhere. That night we had a pretty heavy frost, and the ground with a solid cover of snow, froze pretty stiff. We had some beets and potatoes to dig yet. This was our first year in

the sugarbeet game.

Upon the death of my father in 1946, I inherited the farm we lived on and the following year Neman and I disbanded our partnership and we farmed individually.

During these years we raised alot of chickens. Most of the chicks would be home-hatched. We always raised about 20 ducks and a couple of geese. I also did some skunk trapping, not that I liked it, but to make additional money. The most I ever had was 13 and I sold them skinned for \$3 a piece.

We also had a team of horses and about 12 head of cattle, with six of them milk cows. We kept a rotation of having to milk at least four at all times.

In addition we always raised some hogs. I started out buying a registered Poland China and raised this type for about five years, then switched to the Berkshires. I got rid of them after a couple of years as they farrowed too small litters and I went to the Yorkshire breed. The most we ever fed out for butchering was 66. In other years we would feed out only enough for our own use and sell the shoats when they were six weeks old. At one time we were breeding 12 sows twice a year.

As far as the milk cows, I twice bought two heifer calves from the Williamson Stock Farm by Grafton for \$25 a piece. He had excellent purebreds and they grew out to develop into good milkers. On two other occasions, I bought purebred Wisconsin heifers which were shipped in. Two of them were excellent producers. I always weighed the milk after every milking so that I could get accurate production of every cow. At that time, the average cow produced only 5,000 lbs. a year. However, some of the stock I developed produced over 10,000 lbs.



Louana, John on LouLou, and Loren McCann on Smokey

In addition to the livestock mentioned, we had at least one shetland pony for about seven years. The first one we got was from the Grand Forks pony ranch. Her name was LouLou and was a very gentle pony. The only bad thing about her is that you had to have a saddle on her because if you happened to slide too far on her rump, she would buck and throw you over her head. One time when John was about 10, he was riding her bareback. This was in the spring of

the year with water puddles all over. He stopped and was bragging how good he could ride her and the pony stuck her head down to drink from a puddle. This forced John to slide backward so that he wouldn't fall off. As soon as he did that, she bucked and threw him over her head right into the water puddles. He was mud from head to toe.

A couple of years later, we brought her back with her unweaned pony named Louana. Talk about a nuisance. We had milking cows and one time while milking, I sat a milk pail down, and before you knew it, the colt was in it drinking it. After that you sure had to watch her. She would follow you right to the house when you had the milk pails and I'm sure she would have walked right down in the basement if you had permitted it. The last four years or so we had a beautiful sorrel pony named Snokey and the kids really enjoyed him.

In early January of 1946, we got a pressure pump and were one of the very few homes in the area that had running water. We also had built-in cabinets installed in our kitchen. We were slowly modernizing.

We also had lightening rods installed on our home as one night lightening struck too close for comfort. It burned out the telephone and radio antenna into shreds. This was attached to the home from a pole about 50 feet away. This was an outside antenna that all radios had to have at that time. It laid in the ground in four, five inch pieces which led into the house just under the eave trough. An inch below the trough burned a hole. The lightening struck in the night when we were in bed, and Jimmy (who was small) was in a crib. When it struck it seemed like the whole house was on fire. Jimmy started crying in the crib, and I jumped out of bed to wake up our hired man, Cyril Wysocki. As I opened the door upstairs, Cyril was already at the bottom step with his pants on backwards. After that, we were sure scared of lightening until we put the rods on.

In January of 1946, we received electrical power. The only problem was that all the appliances were hard to get because of the war. The first electrical appliance we got was a two quart butter churn. In April we got an electric cream separator and so on down the line. After being signed up for almost two years at every appliance store in the area, we finally got our refrigerator -- a Sears 13.1 cubic foot which we loaded right out of the car for \$310.

Prior to the arrival of electricity, we used kerosine stoves extensive-



ly in the summers which you needed a permit to get. We got the permit because of Mamie's pregnancy with Mary Alice. Mother trusted that stove, so if she had something to bake she would just set it in the oven and leave for a couple of hours. One day she was going to roast two ducks. She lit the stove and went to visit her mother. When she came home, the kitchen was so full of smoke and soot that you could cut it with a knife. Thank God we had doors to the bedroom and front room and she had both of them closed. The dirt was confined to only the kitchen which had just been repainted. What a mess!! Never thought of reporting the damage to the fire insurance company. Every stitch of the room including everything in the cabinets had to be washed. Incidentally, the ducks were just about turned to ashes. The cause of the damage was that the burner turned up the fire too high. The stove had a tendency to do it after the burner wick was in for some time. I was out by the lake cutting hay that day, and when I came home, I didn't know what happened. Mamie ran out of the house completely black as a coon and crying herself to death. The only white shown on her body was the streak where the tears were rolling down.

On May 11, 1949, John Francis was born. Mother stayed in the hospital for five days and the total bill was \$101.60 plus \$25 for doctors services. I was planting beets at Mrs. Shoults. The weather was perfect and both mother and son were 100%.

In 1950, I got my first new car - a four door Ford. Despite its good looks and everything else, this auto didn't mean as much to me as the 1937 car we bought after our use of the Model T throughout the years.

Marjorie Mae was born on November 7, 1950. Mamie and Marjorie came home after a five day hospital stay and the bill was \$100.90 plus \$25 for the doctor.



Margie  
John  
Mary  
Jimmy

In 1953, we built our wooden quonset with Julian Rogalla and Uncle August Byzewski the carpenters. They got 40¢ an hour. In 1954, we added on 16 feet to our house to make two bedrooms. The first bedroom was changed over to a bathroom with part of the bedroom going to the enlargement of the kitchen. Julian Rogalla helped with the carpentry work and Harry Babinski did the plumbing. Before Christmas we had our hot water and an indoor bathroom. I would say that we were the second farm residence in our township to get indoor facilities. We still had no TV, but purchased one in 1955. When someone would ask me which I preferred, the bathroom or TV, it didn't take much time to answer them that it was the bathroom. We got the rotator for the antenna, which was a very poor investment as the kids kept playing around with it and finally it stuck the opposite direction. After a couple of years, I threw the darn thing off, also lowering the antenna about twenty feet, which eliminated alot of problems.

In 1963, the Warsaw School District consolidated with the Minto District and the school bussing came in. This was quite a change, as prior to that, all families had to provide their own transportation. Marjorie finished her education at Warsaw. So the following year, our schooling ended in the Warsaw Academy.



In the spring of 1967, Julian Wysocki's (who were great friends of ours) came to pick us up for a night out at Grafton. After browsing around till about midnight, we decided to hit for home on Hiway 81. As we were about to make the turn where the highway curves east to Minto, a car full of teenagers was approaching the curve. Due to the excessive speed they were traveling, they couldn't maneuver the turn and their vehicle climbed the curve into our

lane, sideswiping our car. Their car slid sideways about 200 feet before finally stopping in an upright position. All the occupants were thrown out of the vehicle with one of them (17 year old girl) pinned underneath the car with the hot muffler dropped on her hip. She was hospitalized over a year from the burns on her thigh. The accident charges were finally brought to court some two years later and the trial lasted four days. The verdict came out with both drivers equally negligent and a liability of 102,000 assessed against each. The defending attorneys and everyone else was completely shocked by the jury's verdict. None of us in the Wysocki car got hurt badly, although Mamie claims to this day that she hurt her knees and they are bothering her since that day. One of the teenagers in the car (a boy) lost one of his eyes.

In November of 1968, James married Kathy Kosobud. Rather than having them live in town, we moved out, as it would look like heck with us driving to Minto, as I was already employed at the Walsh County Mutual Insurance Company. We moved over to the John Meshewski farm just west of Warsaw, contemplating on building a new home in Minto come summer. However, by spring, we were able to find a two year old home which wasn't quite completed. This was owned by a railroad man, Neil Aase, who was being transferred. We bought the house for \$22,500 and moved into it on April 27, 1969.



I continued my employment as secretary and manager of the County Mutual until July 1, 1976. The company grew considerably during my management from 5,630,000 to approximately 43,000,000 coverages. Besides managing the company, I also sold Nodak Insurance and a complete line of other coverages through my own agency. Financially it was a success, but money isn't everything. If I had to do it throughout my life, it sure wouldn't be my choice for an occupation. What was bad about the job was that I replaced an attorney, and people would come in for legal advice and small legal jobs. I handled all of them quite well, but I was always worrying that I could make a mistake or something. I also made quite a few income tax returns which was a real headache, but I survived them all.

In the spring of 1980, I was helping the boys with field work and was moving on Interstate I29 to a farm they worked south of Highway 54. I was transporting a 70 foot harrow with an 830 four wheel drive John Deere tractor

with the harrow folded and driving on the shoulder of the road (just about off the pavement) and listening to the radio. It was a perfect spring day with hardly any traffic. All of a sudden a big crash! I glanced back and there was a large transport just sideswiping the harrow and bouncing off right into the left duals. It tore off the dual and opened up the housing and the truck bounced across the muddy ditch and across the highway fence and came to a rest in the field. The transport had a long fuel tank and had just hauled a load of anhydrates to Pembina and was returning empty. Neither the truck driver or I got hurt, but his truck was totaled out as his frame was beyond repair. The transport driver dozed off as he logged too long. His liability settled the entire claim.

While living in town, we had a crew of men rooming at our house in the basement quarters while they were working on the straightening of the Forest River. These were followed by two teachers rooming for two years and then one teacher roomed for two years. After the last one moved out, we made up our minds we would never take any more roomers, as it was a big headache without much compensation.

## EARLY FARMING

Since I was born in 1911, I don't know anything of the very first farming. I'm sure you can find alot of information on the early settlers in any library. I shall relay the information to you as to what some of the older people would discuss.

The entire area was just a wilderness in tall grass with no roads, bridges or towns. I can recall my father telling how they were breaking land with oxen pulling a walking plow. The early walking plows had oak mold boards and oak plow shares. My mother used to talk alot about the oxen they used farming and how they farmed without horses.

As time moved on, farm implements starting coming in -- first the steel plow (which had no mechanical lift and no seat) and various types of cultivators all without a seat.

I remember the first one we got was one we walked behind. Later we stuck a plank inbetween the frame to stand on, which was quite an improvement over walking. The plows were all two bottom until the twenties when triple plows came out. In my earlydays, we already had a separator (thresher) but it had no blower as the straw would come out of the machine and would have to be bucked away with a bucking pole. I remember them threshing at the Mielcarek farm just north of Warsaw and they were using the bucking pole. The whole area between Warsaw and their farm was covered with piles of straw which was later burned. I don't remember the reapers, but they had six foot binders. Due to the lack of threshing outfits, everything would be stacked so they could thresh even when the snow would come. The stacks would be put in two rows with enough room in the center for the machine. This was so they wouldn't have to reset so often. We used two binders in our operation. The two older boys, or a hired man with Neman, would do the binding and all the sisters and I would do the shocking. When we would be about ten, dad would have us out (I hate to brag) and any one of us could shock like a man. We could handle the bundles we would shock by grabbing the strings on the side of the bundle and setting them up that way, which was alot faster than taking the bundles under your arms. We were all taught how to tie a bundle if the tie was missed with straw, the way they tied all the bundles in Poland. We would sure catch hell from dad if we ever tried to sneak a loose bundle in the center of the shock.

Harrows came in both steel and iron, but very few had riding carts. If you used a cart you were considered lazy. You then had to have an extra horse to pull the excess load. We never owned a cart and I walked behind the harrow until 1937. When you walked ten miles before noon and another ten miles in the afternoon in that loose dirt, you really had your legs in shape. A lot of days I would make more miles if I wanted to finish it that day. All the grain from the separator was sacked  $1\frac{1}{2}$  bushel to a bag as it was a lot easier to unload as there were no grain elevators. The first granaries were two story with steps on the side so you could climb them and carry the grain up.

There were no cisterns or wells in homes. All the water would come from a well some distance from the house. I remember Mrs. Hefta carrying water to the house with a wooden yoke over her shoulders and she would hang a bucket on each end of it. There were no water pumps. They used a pulley type rig. They would drop the bucket in the well and pull it up by rope over the pulley. This was easier than just tugging it up by the rope. Every yard had an outside toilet which was the only facility to relieve yourself.

In later years, seven, eight and ten foot binders came in. The first combine in the area was bought by Joseph Stanislawski Sr. in 1927. He stopped in Warsaw on his way home from the dealer to show it off. I believe everyone in town turned out to get a view of it. He made a swather out of three binders to get the grain in a swath. To everyones surprise it worked and so did the combine. He bought it on payments, and due to the depression, he was unable to make the payments so the implement company picked up the combine after two years. The combines didn't come back until the late thirties and forties. Tractors really came in in the early 1930-35 era.

When farming was done by horses and our area was broken up, the area just south of us, Levant Township (in Grand Forks) remained in grass. Just about everyone in the area had to make some hay for their stock away from their tillable land and where did they go, but to Levant. Farmers would go down for a week supplied with their eats and mower repairs. Most of the farmers had about 12 to 15 miles to the meadows and it was just too far to drive daily. The area wasn't too well drained. If you wanted to see real big mosquitos, all you had to do is go to Levant. After they would cut it and stack the hay, they would leave it there until fall when they would have to haul it home and sometimes in the winter if the fall wasn't favorable.

The grain was all hauled by horses and a wagon or sleigh. There would always be loads going through town when I was in the grades. We kids would jump on the runner to get a sleigh ride. One day a load was going through and all the kids were trying to hook on. John Tandeski (a student) slipped and fell with just one of his thumbs getting caught under the runner. It sure thinned out his thumb, but outside of having a crooked nail all his life, he had no other ill effects.

There were always a couple of farmers who would own stud horses for the business of breeding the mares in the area so the farmers could raise their own replacements. John Mondry (of Ardoch Township) always took great pride in his studs. He would have them groomed to perfection. He would always have at least two and sometimes three. All of them would be a different color so that the customer would have a choice as to the color of offspring. He would cover the entire area from early spring until the end of July, driving a small pony in a road cart and holding the horse on a line behind him.

We always plowed with two gangs. Neman would have five horses and I would have four larger horses. We'd always use a strung out hitch with two horses on the lead. The horse just seemed to sense when it was the last round before noon or evening and they would hustle more. I had by back team so trained that I would use no lines on going home from the field or driving up to the plow. They would automatically go up to the plow and one would climb over the pole as if they were driven by lines. Some of the horses would be buckey (wouldn't pull when you wanted them too) and there was nothing worse than a buckey horse.

We farmed with horses up to 1937. You have to say that the horses had alot of intelligence. We had Warsaw as the headquarters where the horses would be housed the majority of the time. We then would camp for various stays on Neman's farm (south of the lake) and our farm west of Warsaw. Wherever we went, the horses would remember which stall was theirs, even after six month intervals. In the morning when you would come in to feed them, it would always be the oats first. I would ask them who wants oats and the horse that neighed first would get his first and so on down the line. It took no time to have all of them learn the habit. It was just like they would say hello to you. I also had all of them trained to shake hands with you. I'd stand by their front leg and say shake hands and they would lift their leg. Before they got used to what you were asking for, you would nudge the leg a little in the

knee and in no time they could catch on as to what shake hands meant. Here's some of the names of the horses we had at one time or another: Charley, King, Maggie, Katie, Barney, Bill, Taft, (2) Beauty, Shorty, Pat, Shine, Jeanette, Daisy, Dan, Dolly and Frank.

The biggest attraction at the early auction sales were the horses. They would be groomed to perfection so as to bring a better price. Farmers used to decorate the harness when they would be going out on the road, hanging colored tassels on the bridles and have strings of celluloid rings hanging on the hips and spreaders in the middle of the team. If you really wanted to slick up your team, you would also braid the tails. The more experienced braiders would braid them all the way from top to bottom. I could never learn to braid.

Dad was dead set about farming with horses. It seemed like where ever you looked, there was a Chalmers tractor from Harry Hewitt in Minto who had the implement dealership. He took horses in trade and provided good service. We paid \$725 for one which had a narrow front with rubber tires and extension rims in the back. These were extras that very few farmers could afford. I never drove a tractor until we bought one. After they delivered it, I was going to practice up. I got on it starting in low and then tried to shift up the gears like on an auto. After a lot of grinding and growling, when I did get it into the higher gear, I'd jerk and damn near fall off. I quickly learned that you don't drive a tractor like a car.

Leo Narloch (a neighbor) was the last one in the area to buy a tractor in 1939. Although combines were quite plentiful, we didn't buy our first combine until 1950. We had a swather about two years earlier and we would do our swathing and get the threshing done by some custom combiner.

When we bought the tractor, we really didn't use the horses much. They belonged to dad and he wouldn't part with them for any money. After I had them out on the farm without using them for two years, I got sick and tired of them. Since dad didn't come to the farm anymore to inspect, I sold one team and kept the other two for chore work. I sold them to Bert Starey from Grafton, who was planning to ship them to the Carolinas. They were a perfect looking team, which you could enter for any exhibition. It was a mother of 11 years and her daughter of five years. I got \$85 for the two and deposited the check in my dad's account. Poor dad never found out, although he lived for another year. After selling them, I happened to go to Grafton about two weeks



after the sale and thought I'd drive up to the stockyards where the horses he bought were held. It was a cold and windy March day. I peaked through the fence and noticed there were two horses there, but they sure didn't look like our team. I climbed up on the fence to take a better look, and sure enough, they were our team who were beyond recognition. They must have lost a couple hundred pounds a piece. Both of them were facing the other way and didn't see me. I hollered their names (Beauty and Daisy) and they just leaped around and galloped to my hands. I'm certain if they could have gotten out of their seven foot fence, in no time they would have been home. They kept stretching their necks so that I could pet them. I was so sorry that I went to look at them, as I cried most of the way home feeling so sorry for them.

Dad always planted a bushel of corn seed. All five or six acres would be planted by hand with a planter. Since we had no horse planter, dad had a marking mechanism for marking the rows. This was a unit of four or six 2x4's nailed to boards or a couple of planks with the proper spacing, with a hitch to it. He would stand on it and drive over the prepared field to mark the rows. Then we would cultivate it with a hand cultivator pulled by one horse. This would be used to cultivate the weeds out between the rows. There was no over the row cultivation or hilling. While just a kid, I used to ride and steer the horse between the rows.

In the fall when the corn was ready to harvest, dad would go out there and cut it by a hand sythe and we kids would pile it into bundle size and hand tie them. The tying was always done by Blanche. By the time we would get through, she would have the outside of her small fingers just raw. We would then shock it and tie the tops together. In the fall of the year, we would haul the corn to the barn and pick off the ears. We would feed the corn to the chickens, hulling the kernels off the cob by a hand-drive corn sheller. The husks would be chopped with a hand cranked corn chopper, feeding three to four stalks at a time.

The potatoes were cultivated in the same way, although you would eliminate quite a few weeds in the row as they would be hilled to a small degree. In no time we would have to be out there to hoe them. What a job! What helped is that there would always be five or six kids so you had plenty of time to visit. When we would get through with the hoeing, wild mustard would be ready to pull, since there were no chemicals to kill it. Dad bought the north 80 of

the place we live (and still own) and the field was completely yellow. Every year we would pull until the weed was going to seed and the grain was big. In about six years, we had all of the mustard cleaned out.

Not only did we hoe the potatoes and pick them by hand, but when we had only a couple of acres, dad would send us out to pick the potato bugs. Filling the can with a little kerosine, we would knock them into the can and they'd die almost instantly when they hit the kerosine. With all this work, we would still end up spraying or dusting them with a poison named, Paris Green.

The potatoes in the earlier days were dug by hand and later on we had a single row digger made like a walking plow with a shaking rod deal in the back to shake out the dirt. We would haul them in bulk to Warsaw where we had a cellar and carry them off the wagon with buckets. We would hand them down one by one to a fellow in the basement. In the olden days, there usually were some lizards in the cellars. A lot of times when mother would send us down for some potatoes to the cellar, where there was no window or light, you would pick one up with your bare hand. I can just feel how they felt -- real, real, cold.

Electricity came into the area in late 1946. It took another three years before all the area received service. This, along with the tractors, changed the whole concept of farming. Today, everything is operated with a push of the button. Tractors of over 200 horsepower pull fifteen bottom plows, sixty foot cultivators and what not.

Modern days have ruined the rural area and small town and rural churches. The early settlers were all very religious. Wherever a fairly large delegation settled, one of the first things they would have was a place to worship God. This resulted with a lot of churches being built in the country. Most of these were Lutheran. With the changing times and less people in the country, they are being phased out.

## PARTNERSHIP FARMING

My brother Neman and I, started farming in partnership in 1937, growing about 20 acres of potatoes on dad's land that was in summerfallow. Dad was still farming the rest on his own.

As was customary in those days, we would be working for the folks for food, clothing and a couple of spending dollars when we needed it. This was the tradition and no one had any complaints.

I remember the last team of horses dad bought from John Wilson by Forest River. They were four year olds named Daisy and Jeanette -- a black team that was made for fair exhibits. They had clipped manes that had to be trimmed about once a month and dad paid \$250 for the team.

In 1937, we bought our first tractor, a WC Allis Chalmers. Dad turned over the entire farming operation to us including all the machinery he owned that year. We were to give him  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the proceeds from the operation. We still continued to get room and board without pay. We did help in the operation of the store which was still operated by dad.

In 1940 Neman and I built a potato pit on the southwest corner of what was to be my farm. It was 100 feet long and 12 feet wide and six feet deep. We laid timbers on the side for a foundation and used 2x6 rafters which sold for \$40 a thousand, leaving an opening in the center for filling the pit. We covered it with net wire and flax straw. We filled the pit completely full as we had no elevator to elevate the sacks out of the pit. The potatoes sold for 15¢ a hundred in the fall. After storing them over winter, we sold them in the spring for 25¢ a hundred with no market for the B's. In the spring it started to rain. One day I looked towards the pit and it had all caved in. It was drawing ground moisture like a sieve as we went down too deep in the ground. Come summertime, we rebuilt it just west of the quonset. This time we went only four feet in the ground. We sloped the sides to avoid a cavein. About two feet farther out, we dug fence posts and covered them with slab lumber and dirt and built the roof the same way. This time we left about a ten foot alley in the center with an elevator for sack moving operated with a stationary gas engine. This one stood up until we quit growing potatoes.

In 1941 we bought a two row potato planter at a cost of \$228. By 1944 we had a total of 90 acres of spuds. The tractor we used had a two row mounted cultivator and a single row John Deere digger. The last year we added a

single row International digger. We used two diggers, as Harry Babinski (our brother-in-law) grew about 40 or 50 acres and we'd harvest together. Harry had a truck while we didn't, so we exchanged help. All the potatoes were hand picked in burlap bags. We paid the pickers 5¢ a bushel (which was actually 80 lbs.) and 6¢ if they completed the whole run. I used to pick alot and my back never bothered me, but the last year I went to hauling them off the field. It was a good job, but you always worked long hours. After the pickers finished their day, you would have about two hours of hauling left. You never left any of the sacks overnight as they would freeze or it might rain.

We quit growing potatoes in 1945. The entire potato pit was scraped with two teams of horses and two scrapers. Those scrapers were small and it took a couple of days to get it done.

The last year we stored potatoes in the pit, there was no market for them. The government would buy them for feed at somewhere around \$1 a hundred. We had no way to check the condition of the potatoes. In the spring when the government inspector inspected them for shipping, we opened the pit and about two feet across the top the full length of the pit, they were frozen like briquets. The inspector looked and didn't know what to do as they weren't suppose to be frozen even though they were shipped in open gondolas. He hesitated for awhile and said, 'You won't be hauling them for at least a week. Why don't you just leave the pit open and if a rechecker should come around, say that you left it open after I had inspected them and they froze at that time'. Everything worked to perfection, as no one came around to recheck. We got paid in full for all of them.

We sure tried to grow potatoes and get rich with the other growers, but everything looks easy until you try it. We made the mistake of quitting. The year we quit, we could have made real good money, as Uncle Sam stepped in and volunteered to buy all the potatoes you could grow at a profit making price and at the same time would borrow you money at a low rate of interest for the seed and other essentials to produce the crop. This was during World War II, and the production of food was very essential. Since that year to the present time, we haven't grown one potato plant. The time we were growing potatoes, they didn't have the high producing varieties and another important item was fertilizer, which we didn't use.

We did receive a small beet acreage of fifteen acres in 1945. We used a four row beet drill and a four row cultivator which were both horse drawn.

The beets were lifted with a single row lifter pulled by four horses.

We were also offered a half section of land in the early 30's by the Federal Land Bank. This was the John Greever land located one mile west and half a mile north of Warsaw. Mr. Greevers was foreclosed and the Federal Land Bank came over to visit Neman and me if we would take over the actual mortgage against it which was an amount of \$6650 with nothing down. At the time we were still working with horses and had no money and didn't dare go further in debt. After all his begging, we declined the offer and it finally was sold to Louie Helmowski, the present owner, for something like \$9600. It was really a shame that we declined the opportunity as he practically begged us stating that he had the highest of recommendations for us and had all the confidence in the world that we would succeed.

After our father died in 1946, we split up our operation in 1947, as we each inherited a quarter of land. Although we always got along well, my brother just about insisted that we operate as one unit. I couldn't see myself operating in a partnership, as I wanted to be my own boss. We divided our machinery to each ones satisfaction and started individually.

## FARMING INDIVIDUALLY

Starting farming on my own in 1947, I had to buy a grain drill, as when we split the partnership, Neman took the drill. I scouted around and bought an old Moline 22 disc from a Kasmierczak by Ardoch for \$25.

I was signed up for a new Model A John Deere tractor for over a year. I got my permit in about March, but instead of getting an A, it was a Model B and was the first model with an electric starter on it. It looked slick. With that I bought a beet cultivator, beet loader and a two row lifter. After I was about to lift beets, I found out that the lifter didn't fit on my tractor and I had to scout around to hire a tractor that would fit. Finally got one from Tony Osowski Sr. Since I was a young farmer, Mr. Osowski didn't charge me anything for the use of the tractor. The tractor just didn't have enough power for my use. It would only pull a two bottom plow at two miles an hour. Another thing I didn't like was the hand clutch which I couldn't get used too. In the fall of 1948, I traded the tractor and cultivator for a Model H International tractor and cultivator and a single row International topper for \$2600 to boot. The tractor pulled a three bottom plow easier than the John Deere handled the two bottom. The topper proved satisfactory as I dug some of Mrs. Shoults acreage and all of mine. What I saved in labor darn near paid for the topper the first year. In about three years, every beet grower had one of them. The thing that I didn't like was it had a blade that cut the tops (rotating) and you had to change it about four times a day. As time went on, farmers would get notches cut in them and have them hard surfaced, and with that they would run even longer than a day. It also had an apron below the elevator where the beets would drop and you had to have two men standing on either side and shove the beets in the tank. All in all, it wasn't that bad, as it sure was an improvement over hand topping and hand loading. When the tank would be full, it had an elevator underneath that would elevate the beets right into the truck.

In 1947, I bought my first truck as I needed it for beet hauling. It was a 1939 Model K. International 1½ tonner. I bought this at black market for \$1200 as there was a price control at that time. This was about \$300 over the government set price but trucks weren't available. The truck was okay, but it just wasn't made for North Dakota weather, as when the temperature dropped to 20 above, it just wouldn't start. It was a duplicate of the Model

T. In 1950, I salvaged the box and junked the rest. The truck I bought was a new blue Ford 1½ ton and cost me \$1956.

In 1948, I bought 80 acres of land from Joe Kowalski (1½ mile south of our farm) for \$4000. With the additional land that I had to work, I bought an International M tractor, a brand new row crop with duals for \$2600. This was the first tractor in our area without a magneto. It was a coil battery ignition system. I liked it so well, that within a year I converted my other two IHC H tractors to the same system.

In 1949, I started farming Mrs. Shoults beet acreage and this gave me a little better than 90 acres to take care of. This would make quite a run as there were never enough unloading cars and we would just stand around and kill time.

In 1951, I bought my first combine, a Case A6. This was a small combine but could sure do the work. In 1962, Jimmy started farming with me and he bought one which was self-propelled but the same size. By this time we already had Joe Kulas' land to work.

In 1953, I bought a new drill -- a Case 24 disc with fertilizer attachment. This was the second drill in the area with a fertilizer attachment. The first couple of years, I would leave a check strip in every field to see if the fertilizing would pay off. It sure did. After that, I tried to avoid any misses. In 1953, I bought a new three bottom plow. It was the first hydraulic plow in the area and my neighbors laughed at me for the conversion, but within two years, they all had it.

During my farming days, my best income was from growing beets because of their stable price. When a person thinks back of the hard work and headaches, you wonder if it was really worth it.

In 1955, which was a real wet summer, I had 60 acres of beets planted on the north 80 of the home place. They were up so nice, such a beautiful field. I got about 10 acres cultivated and that night we got over five inches of rain with no drainage as there was a dike ahead of me. By the time it dried out, there were about four acres left. The rest drowned. The following year, I was going to seed it into beets again, but Jimmy (who was 15) says, 'Daddy, if I were you, I wouldn't plant the whole field as the same thing might happen again.' Sure enough, it did. Thanks to Jimmy, we had only 16 acres in that field and we harvested about 11 acres out of it. The rest just rotted away as the rain came at the time that the beets were ready for harvesting. We also

left 16 acres of beets at Mrs. Shoults because of the excessive moisture.

In 1959, I bought my first diesel tractor, a Case Model 930 which would handle four or five bottom. It was a diesel fuel which at that time diesel sold for 15.1¢ a gallon.

In 1959, we had a farewell party for Father Maluski on October 25th. This was another wet year and could only dig when the ground was slightly frozen. We still had 90 acres to go. Thank God Ted Slominski came to help me with his topper. Before it finally froze up on November 4th (freezing so we couldn't get the lifters in the ground) we lost only 14 acres that we couldn't get out. Other farmers lost a heck of a lot more. The labor was another problem, as you had to furnish them with housing and all of the essential furniture and appliances, plus water and electricity. At the present time, they use six row toppers, 12 row cultivators and very little labor, as they have mechanical thinners and all kinds of chemicals to kill the weeds.

By the time I retired from farming in 1968 and James and John took over, I had a complete line of above average farm equipment. For a few years, I was getting a share of the crop, starting with 50%, then 40, 30, 10, and finally none. In 1978, I sold all of the land for contract of deed to my sons as they were doing a terrific job.

As I look back at my farming days (which concluded on a profitable basis), I often wonder how much richer I would be had I not have had to fight water throughout the years and taken advantage of the opportunities that were offered.

In 1943, I was hauling bundles and we were threshing at the John Glanner place, west of the Narloch farm where Dennis Slominski is presently living. This tract of land consisted of 400 acres and was owned by Con Hankey of Grafton, an elderly man who at one time operated a butcher shop in Minto. He had secured the land by foreclosure of the previous owner for a little less than \$12,000. Somehow, he got a liking to me and one day as I came in with a load and was resting by the engine visiting with Mr. Hankey, he said to me, 'Ed, I would love to see you succeed and I'm willing to give you a special deal. I'll turn over the entire 400 acres to you for the investment I have in it, roughly \$12,000.' I replied, 'I thank you, but how in the world could I handle it when I haven't got \$100 to my name?' He replied, 'That should be no problem as I don't want a penny down, as I am more than confident that you'll handle it.' Remembering the depression days too well, I didn't grasp the opportunity.



On the northeast corner of our farm, we have a drain (ravine) through which all water would drain to the east. My neighbor, Henry Stoltman, put up a dike across his coulee and our water had no place to go. In 1942, there was a normal flood and it flooded section after section behind the dike. So, 19 farmers including myself, took Mr. Stoltman into court. He did open it up, but only to the extent that we wouldn't be drowning. Year after year, before the north 80 would be fit to seed, it would be September. I was so disgusted that I didn't know what to do. I was going to put it in grass, but this wouldn't solve the problem. Grass won't grow in water, and rice needs continuous moisture. Finally in 1957, four of the neighbors and myself forgot about draining it east and dug a ditch a half mile north, hence two miles east and then 3/4 mile south. This solved the problem, but it took about five years to get the water logged land into normal production. This drain requires a watchful eye every year, requiring some cleaning, but we were assured not to be drowned out.

Farming in my last years with all of the larger machinery, was so much faster and easier. This was especially true when the combines came in and there would be no binding, shocking or threshing by separator. I always hauled bundles. Most of the machines were gas powered and they would have eight teams hauling bundles and two grainmen hauling the grain to the granary. This was plus a separator man and an engineer. The twelve men would all be served their meals at the place they would be threshing. The threshing would start at 6 a.m. with one hour for noon and quit at 7 p.m. Breakfast would be between 4:30 and 5:00 as the first team would have to be ready with his load by the machine by 6 a.m. I remember one year we were threshing for Martin Riske, who farmed four miles south of Warsaw. We were threshing there on Saturday, so I drove home for the weekend. With seven miles to travel on Monday morning and start threshing by six, I started from home a little before three in the morning. Mamie always did the milking alone during the harvest. Thank God for an obliging wife.

In addition to my farming, I also sold memorial markers and monuments for Salaski Granite Works of St. Cloud, Mn. This position was handed down to me from my father-in-law, as he was their representative for many years. When he lost his leg in the late 40's, he wasn't able to handle the job any more. I would help Mr. Salaski sell them, put in the foundations, and help set them up. There must be at least 50 monuments in Minto and Warsaw cemeteries that I sold and helped set up.

## DEPRESSION

Hard times started coming on in the late 20's. By 1929, we had the stock market collapse and thousands of banks went broke. Since the deposits weren't insured, a lot of people lost money. When President Roosevelt was elected, he immediately closed all the banks in the country for a week and reorganized the entire operation under strict federal government regulations. It also provided federal depositors insurance for a nominal fee based on amounts of deposits, so that no one could ever lose a dime in any bank in the future. Every little town prior to the reorganization had a bank, even Voss, Ardoch, and Oslo. They all went broke. Minto had the First State Bank and the Bank of Minto. The First State Bank went down the drain with the rest of them.

When Roosevelt got elected, he started various relief programs. He also started a program which I believe was called the Agricultural Adjustment Act, better known as the AAA. This act paid you money for not growing the crop. As far as livestock, they went around and bought the surplus cattle for \$8 to \$15 (depending on size), kill them and gave meat to the needy. Most of those were the labor people. If you had a newborn calf or young pigs, they would pay you a small amount to kill them at birth.

Every farmer had every imaginable loan. They had farm loans, seed loans, a loan for everything -- even barnyard loans. The WPA was started which meant Workman's Public Act. This was later changed to PWA, Public Work Act. Both of these provided the labor with some work. This was work on public projects where the unemployed got some relief even though the wages were very low.

There was an awful lot of money spent on Lake Ardoch, where they built islands around the lake for water fowl and also constructed a dam to hold the water level in the lake higher. They hauled thousands of tons of rock riprap-ping the full length of the dam with rock.

Hiway 81 was regraded between Minto and Grafton. It was surfaced with clay that was loaded by hand and spread as a sealer under the blacktop surface. All of the slopes on the road were hand-sloped with spades and hand rakes.

Outside toilets were built by a carpenter crew. They had all the same style. I'm sure a lot of them are still in the area as relics.

With all of these programs, the welfare came in and this program in my estimation ruined our people, as they all want something for nothing.

The people in rural areas were fortunate. They could survive and kept well fed as they used wood for heating (which was plentiful), and they always raised some kind of poultry, beef and pork. Some products they had to buy, like coffee, salt, sugar, flour, etc... We had the Russell Milling Co. in Grand Forks which would trade wheat for flour. This solved that problem. Coffee which was about 25¢ a pound, was a luxury alot of people couldn't afford. They would roast barley in the oven and make coffee out of it.

For water in the wintertime, every house would have a barrel in the kitchen filled with snow or ice, which would keep melting enough water for the house. There was always enough humidity in the house.

All farm produce was just about worthless. I remember when the Altendorf boys brought dress hogs to Warsaw and were selling them for 5¢ a pound. Live choice beef sold for 4¢ a pound. Wheat came down to as low as 26¢ per bushel; barley was 11¢; oats 6¢; eggs 6¢ a dozen. Cream, which the farmers used to sell, would bring about \$1.25 a five gallon can if you had about 35 test.

During the thirties until 1936, hardly any crops were grown because of the drought. At one time you could jump across the Red River without too much effort. People used to cross the river from one side to the other with their cars by the John Osowski farm two miles south of the Warsaw road. They had a couple of planks thrown over a V ditch in the river that handled the flow.

In 1936 when the rains started to come, all the crops rusted so there was very little harvested. It was either burned or plowed under. Thousands of tons of good fertile soil was blown away because of severe dust storms. I remember when Hilary Shoults (living about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile north) left for home after school in a dust storm. He was about 10 years old and got lost. He found his way to the Leroy Kamrowski farm over  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from his home on the opposite side of the road. When someone speaks to you of the dirty thirties, they were just that.

The wheat in the 1936 rust year that was harvested, weighed only 32 to 38 pounds and was worth 26¢. If you screened it out to make 40 lbs., you would get 40¢ a bushel. We cleaned all of ours with a hand cranking fanning mill and it made 40 and 41 lbs.

The following year the U.S. Agriculturists all asked the farmers to refrain from using the light weight seed. We had some old wheat on hand so we used all good wheat. Everyone else used the light weight and that grew just

as well as ours.

Before the market collapsed, dad had 3,000 bushels of wheat at the elevator which we were storing with the market hovering around \$1.04. He wanted to sell it as soon as it would reach \$1.50. It did reach \$1.49 and he said, 'Tomorrow it will reach what I want and we will sell it.' What happened was the bottom dropped out and it kept going down to 26¢. He held it for over four years and the price had gone up to about 60¢. The elevator gave him a special discount on the storage so he ended up receiving 40¢ per bushel. In between time, Mike Byrnes was selling his quarter just west of ours that John bought a couple of years ago for \$900 per acre. Mr. Byrnes was begging dad to take it for \$3,000. Without money, it couldn't be done. What he lost on storing the grain would more than have paid for the quarter. After that, he kept pounding it into Neman and me that under no circumstances should we ever store any grain. Haul it out and sell it as you need the money and you will always get an average price.

Since there was no refrigeration, everybody cured their pork in brine to use during the summer months. The beef would all be eaten during the winter months when the frost would keep it from spoiling. There were no recipes for canning. That came later, just before electricity was available. The pork was cured in brine and then smoked. For the best of summer storage, you would wrap it in burlap and dig it in an oat bin. Just about every farm had their own smoke house. I used to cure our own meat for quite a number of years. The bacons were easy to cure but the hams and shoulders were not, as sometimes they could come out spoiled and you would have to dump them. For some reason, I loved to fool around with the meat. In preparing the brine, you would always check it with a raw egg. If you dropped the egg in the brine and it would float on the top, you had enough salt. If the egg would stay on the bottom, you would just keep adding the salt until the egg would float.

Every farmer did his own butchering. After butchering the pork, you always made home-made head cheese, blood sausage and liver sausage. Every farm yard had ducks, turkeys and geese. We would catch the duck and goose blood and use it for blood soup (Czarnina). You'd use a little blood and all the trims, such as necks, gizzards, wings and add some prunes and raisins to make a delicious soup. About the only fresh meat you'd get in the summertime would be poultry. People also made Kiszki. These were made out of ground meat scraps and buckwheat grits. We used to sell buckwheat grits which came in large burlap bags, which are almost impossible to find them marketed anywhere now.

## INCIDENTS I'LL NEVER FORGET

I'll never forget the hand cranking days of the 1926 Model T -- especially the day that I had to take Mamie to the hospital for the birth of our first son, James Joseph.

In 1926, the Warsaw priest, Rev. Kupka, had gone for a visit to Poland. We had a substitute priest from Winnipeg serving the parish. After about six months in our service, one night the housekeeper, Martha Warczak, ran into the store (where a group of men were playing cards) hollering to come to the rectory as the priest was dying. As the group ran there, I was inquisitive and followed them to take a peak. What a sight!! He was laying in bed with his eyes half open and mouth fully open. I had his picture before me for over two years. For over a year, I wouldn't stay alone in any room or walk into a dark room. The priest had been married in his early life and had a couple of children living in Winnipeg. They came to Warsaw and took the body to Winnipeg for burial.

When I was about 16 and my sister Cecelia was about 14, we drove from Warsaw with a team of horses and a hayrack to pick up the hay along the roadside. I was loading it from the bucked bunches and she was tramping or stacking the load. As we were loading, the horses would always reach over to the pile of hay ahead of them. I kept hollering at them to get out. When we had a good basket full, the horses reached over again and I swung my fork towards the head of the horse nearest me. This scared the horses so that they took off like a shot gun and me trying to catch up. One of the horses was alot faster, and in no time started to gain on the other causing them to run in a circle. This took them off the road which was a fairly high grade and into the grain field. As they continued to increase speed in a circle, the load tipped on its side with all of it dumping out and covering poor Cecelia. The rack didn't fall out of the wagon as the reach was too tight, so the rack was digging into the ground and making the pull for the team very heavy. I didn't know if I should chase the horses or dig after my sister, but in no time I saw her crawling out of the hay. So, I went after the horses and stopped them. The two of us couldn't set the wagon upright again. We saw a farmer coming with a load of grain to town. It was Isadore Feltman and he helped us get going.

It was a blustery January day in 1930, when I was helping my brother-in-law, Harry Babinski, saw wood. This was truly a day I'll never forget as I came so close to death. A stationary engine and a circle saw were used for the job. The two rigs weren't lined up to perfection and the drive belt kept slipping off the pulley. Since we had no belt dressing around, we were using molasses. During the process, the belt flew off the pulley again. I stooped down to push the belt over the pulley. In a flick of the eye, the belt slipped off the pulley, stuck together and wrapped itself on the engine pulley. In the same momentum, the end of the belt slapped me just below the temple and knocked me unconscious for 45 minutes. When I regained consciousness on the couch in the Babinski home, I had no idea as to what happened. All I could see was the entire Babinski family standing around me in shock. During my unconsciousness, they tried to open my mouth to revive me, as I had it clenched solid. In the process, they chipped out parts of my two large front teeth. It was a frightening experience, but all ended well. I ended up with only a swollen cheek and a slight headache. That particular winter, all the roads were blocked since early fall, and the Babinski's had no telephone to call for help. To this day, I hope that when the time comes to die, it will be as easy as it would have been that day had I not regained consciousness.

July 4, 1937, is another date to remember as I was sick with pluerisy. Although I have been hospitalized and sick numerous times the remainder of my life, I have never been that sick. It was one day I was seriously thinking of leaving all of you for good. I spent hours thinking of death and praying for the saving of my soul. Doc Hardy came over at nine in the evening and tapped me, draining two full quarts of fluid from my lung cavity. I immediately felt relief.

On March 15, 1941, (which started out as a beautiful day with the temp around 30 above), I decided to let our chickens out for the first time since fall. About four in the afternoon, it was still warm with absolutely no wind. We were grading potatoes in the potato pit all day. We quit at about five and when I came to the yard I noticed that most of the chickens were roosting on the trees. My hired man, Richard Czapiewski and I, had the job of knocking all them off and into the chicken coop. We managed to get all of them but the rooster who got away under the grainary. By this time, it was starting to get dark. We proceeded to do the chores and milk the cows. I took the milk to the house to separate and had to go back to feed the calves the skim milk. As

I opened the door, a wind of about 60 miles an hour came up. With all the loose snow, you couldn't see a thing as I struck out for the barn which was less than 200 feet away. I soon found out I missed it as I hit a stack of hay about 20 feet away from the barn, which helped me find my way to the barn. I found my way back to the house, but talk about a storm!! It continued all night. Although it slackened some by morning, it didn't die out until the following afternoon. Dozens of people lost their lives as they got caught on the road in the storm and abandoned their vehicles to reach shelter. There was so much static in the air that no radio or telephone would work.

We were keeping three turkey hens and a gobbler for turkey hatching in the spring. They would always roost on the roof of the granary. As we were catching the chickens, I know that they were all there. After the storm subsided, they were gone with the wind. We found the hens southeast of the yard close to the Warsaw road. The gobbler couldn't be found anywhere and the drifts around the trees were at least ten feet deep. As the spring weather came and the snowbanks were melting away, one day I noticed a part of the gobbler sticking out from the snow. I went up there and dug him out and you would swear he was alive. His eyes were open and his waddles were a bright red. There were dozens of similar instances in the area. This has gone down in all weather records as the blizzard of the century.

## POSITIONS AND AWARDS

I was always interested in politics. It seems to me that the children during my school days (starting in the grades) would be discussing and arguing politics. Throughout my life, I was also interested in all community activities so the jobs came quite easily.

The first elected jobs I had were as treasurer of the Junior class and Vice-President of our graduating class in 1928.

During the thirties, I was always the secretary of the Warsaw baseball team and its news reporter. We did get publicity as in those days both the Grand Forks Herald and the Fargo Forum would edit complete box scores. I would see to it they received them as early as possible. I also took my stint in managing the team a couple of years in the 40's and coaching the independent basketball team. In the early 1950's, Walsh County had 12 baseball teams and had an amateur baseball league. This was divided into eastern and western Walsh leagues. I served as their secretary for four years. This was a very strong amateur team -- one of the strongest in the state.

After moving to the farm with a years time, I was elected as Director of our school district (McCann School District) and served in that capacity for six years until the district was dissolved and added to the Minto district. The school of the district was only a half mile from our farm and at one time had 28 children enrolled.

In 1945, our township accessor died. The coming election, I was nominated and elected as his replacement. I served six years, or three two-year terms. The first four years, I was paid \$50 a year. At that time, the township was quite populated and the times also required assessment of personal property, where you had to list all the livestock, machinery and household contents and put a separate valuation on each. The first year was real miserable for me. As in any other accounting, you have to balance your books. It took me about three days to get everything in proper prospectus. After that, I had no problem. I could get through in four full days. After serving three years, they were going to cut my wages to \$35 a year, as they had someone willing to do it for a cut rate. I told them to shove it, and the following year I asked for \$75 at which rate I worked for two more years and then resigned.

In 1945, I was elected as financial secretary of the newly organized Polish National Alliance Lodge of Warsaw. This was a real interesting job,



as well as had some compensation. I remained at the job for 35 years when I retired.

In 1948, I was elected as the lodges official delegate to the annual convention which was held at the Nicollet Hotel at Minneapolis. Other people attending the three day affair were Isadore Rolczynski, John Wysocki, Frank Stoltman, Dan Borowicz and William Szczapanski.

In 1951, I was again elected as a delegate to the convention, which was held at Buffalo, New York. This was a good deal again, as we once more got a well deserved vacation, and got paid well besides. While at Buffalo, we also got a sightseeing trip to Niagara Falls, which we just stared at in awe.

The 1955 P.N.A. convention held at the Nicollet Hotel in Minneapolis was a humdinger. It was the largest of any other P.N.A. national convention with 587 official delegates. In addition, there were at least 500 guests. It was really too large a group to accommodate at the Nicollet. Besides Mamie, there were at least five other couples in attendance from the Warsaw area, who were all guests, because of the proximity of the event to Warsaw. Like all other conventions, this one too started with a kick-off banquet with numerous dignitaries speaking, among them U.S. Senator Thye of Minnesota, Governor Freeman and U.S. Senator Humphrey. Senator Humphrey was the last speaker and by the time he got to speak, he learned a few words in Polish so he could welcome the delegates in Polish. This really went over with the delegates. After the conclusion, all the delegates lined up to greet the speakers with at least 90% in line to greet Humphrey. I stood in line for about five minutes and got tired. I remarked to the people around me, 'You can stand in line, but I'm going to my room, as I'll have breakfast with him tomorrow morning.' This was all in a joke. However, the next morning when I walked into the hotel dining room, the place was completely full, with the exception of a couple of seats by the serving bar, of which I took one. As I was looking around sizing up the crowd, someone sat next to me. What a shock! Sure enough, it was Senator Humphrey. So, I had my breakfast with the biggest wheel, not only at the convention, but the state of Minnesota.

In 1959, we went to another convention for the PNA at Pittsburgh. That was the year the Pirates won the pennant. We took in a game and the only player I got a good look at was Clemente, now a Hall of Famer.

Although I could have taken in just about every one of the conventions, I declined to be a candidate again, as I felt the honor should be spread to

other members as well.

In 1950, I was president (and already a five year director) of the Walsh County Farm Bureau.

It was also in 1950 that I decided to run for the position of House of Representatives from our district. Having been a Republican all my life and a member of the Non-Partisan League, I received the endorsement from them. I ran against Ralph Adamson of Grafton. I hardly did any campaigning, with everyone expecting me to win, but things didn't work quite that way. I was defeated by three votes.

During the years that followed, I remained loyal to the Non-Partisan's. In the late 50's, when they switched to filing in the Democratic column, I went along with them, and in later years served as member of the executive board, and secretary for three years.

In 1965, I was again endorsed to run for the same position. In the primary, I had no opposition. After a strong campaign (where I covered just about the entire district with Marjorie's assistance in the city of Grafton), I got elected by a majority of about 150 votes. The position was educational and the hours were long. During the session, we passed a very controversial tax package which eliminated the personal property tax. This was referred to the public and the tax went down the drain. During this session, we also had to reapportion the district according to population. This resulted with the cities of Park River and Hoople added to our district. In 1967 (when I ran against my wishes and putting less effort into getting re-elected), I got beat by 100 votes. Without Park River and Grafton, I would have won by 94.

The salary for the position was \$5 a day, with \$25 expense allowance a day. During the intern (between sessions), you would receive \$35 per month to compensate for the numerous meetings you had to attend.

I got to meet many high dignitaries, among them Governor Guy, Art Link (who was Speaker of the House), Edward Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, Senator McCarty and many others. The most known and controversial politician North Dakota ever had, was the honorable William Langer, who served as our Attorney General, Governor and U.S. Senator from North Dakota. He got to be my personal friend, as we had him speaking at a couple of celebrations in Warsaw, and it was my job to secure his presence. I ended up as the liason man for our area. I remember one time he came over to our farm before an election and I happened to be cultivating beets. I stopped and he jumped on the hitch and hol-

lers, 'Keep on going. I know you have no time to waste.' He made one round with me on the draw bar, which was enough time to inform him as to how his political status was in our area. This incident is something a person never forgets, as very few farmers can say they ever cultivated beets with a U.S. Senator. Running for his last term in the senate, he didn't have to do any leg work, and he got elected by a large majority. However, he was still concerned about the outcome the last few days before election, and one day while he was flying into Bismarck, he had to change planes in Fargo. Having a few minutes between flights, he called me to check how everything was shaping up in our precincts. I assured him that he had no worry, which was correct. He managed to serve only a couple of years of his six year term, as the poor soul passed away after lingering with poor health.

The interest in politics still is in me. I follow it to the last dot. Even during the past year, I took an active part in the campaign, but once again am vowing that this was my last year.

After World War II, a Walsh County Veterans Rehabilitation board of 11 members was appointed to assist the vets. We also held an honorary celebration for them. This was held in Park River with 17 bands present and all kinds of entertainment.

A year or two later, I served on the Vets Agricultural Assistance program as director. This was a program where you selected vets for the vo-ag course. Minto had a vo-ag instructor with 22 members. Most of the members that participated are still active farmers in the area.

From 1951 through 1953, I served on the Walsh County draft board. This was during the Korean conflict. There was no pay for the job (only mileage fees for which they paid 6¢ a mile to be figured on the closest mileage possible). I received \$1.44 for each meeting. After listening to the parents ailments for two years, I resigned. All the boys were anxious to go and fight for their country, however, it was a different story for the parents. Among the local boys that were drafted that I remember, were: Ed Gonsorowski's son, Max Schuster's son, George Knaus, Richard Miller and Earl Mondry.

In 1958, I bought 11% interest in the Bank of Minto. William Suda and Leo Mondry purchased the same amount and all three of us with the president and secretary constituted the Board of Directors. The bank investment was good as long as it was run honestly. However, after about three years, the president and secretary altered the minutes, declaring themselves bonuses of

all the profits. This amounted to approximately \$9,500.00. The bank examiner found the embezzlement and they were taken to Federal Court. The examiner was a crook himself and the Minto bankers came out free with the only requirement to put the money back into the profit reserve. During all this commotion, Suda, Mondry and myself tried to sell our interest to the president and secretary, but they were unable to secure the financing and could buy only one individual share at the time. Mr. Suda sold his share first. Since all of us were trying to get out, there was no annual meeting until after the trial and when Mr. Suda was paid off. So, the undivided profits were on hand for an additional years operation. Since the president and secretary had the majority of the stock, they had the power to elect a majority of the board. They used it to full advantage, leaving Mondry and myself with the president, secretary and one of their wives. At the annual meeting, one of them made a motion to declare all the earnings into bonuses for the president and secretary, and of course the vote ended three to two. Once again we got robbed legally. Mondry and I stayed on the board for an additional two years at which time they accumulated enough money to buy our shares. The entire episode was worth a couple of years of university education as we all learned how a corporation operates. The investment still paid off about 10% (which wasn't bad for those days), but the education was worth a lot more. Never, never, buy minority stock into a corporation this size, as you will be sucking the hind tit which is always dry.

I was elected and served as director and president of the Minto Coop Oil Co. for 15 years. I served 18 years as director, president and secretary of the Minto Farmers Elevator. It was during these years of service that the present elevator proper and the fertilizer plant was built. Another important product that was brought in during my tenure was the anhydrous plant and equipment which throughout the years has proved most beneficial.

In the 1960's, I served for seven years on the Board of Directors of the Pembina-Walsh Counties Farmers Home Administration, through which numerous farm loans were processed and also home residences.

I have served as director and president of the Walsh County Crop Improvement Association for nine years (a longer term than any other individual). I was highly instrumental in organizing the group which was organized by the Walsh County Extension Service with the assistance of some of the farmers in the county. While serving as president of the association, I was elected as

Walsh Counties official delegate to the newly organized National Malting Growers Association, a position I held for six years. I also served as vice-president for the full six years. Upon completion of my sixth year, I resigned because of the numerous implications I had to carry.

Every year the Soil Conservation of Walsh County selects a farmer for practicing of conservation. In 1959, I was selected as the Soil Conservationist of the year. In 1965, I was selected as the Outstanding Man in Agriculture in Walsh County. This honor is bestowed by the Walsh County Crop Improvement annually to some worthy individual. Since its inception in the early 50's, Chris Midgarden of Hoople, and I, have been the only individuals living within the realms of the county to receive it. The other years, the awards have gone to higher up extension men or some agricultural doctor at North Dakota State University.

Due to my interest in the Future Farmers Association at Minto High School, I was voted in as Honorary Chapter Farmer in 1959. In 1975, I received the NDSU Alumni Association Agriculturalist Award for service to agriculture.

Although the Walsh County Fair had existed for about 25 years, it never was incorporated until in the late 40's, when some 15 farmers (including myself) filed for the incorporation. After it was approved, I served as fair director for 15 years and in 1965 was manager of the fair. Always interested in the best, I took interest in the annual fair at the outset of my farming career. The fair at the early stages was very crowded for space, as all they had was the old gym for exhibits. For a number of years, we fair enthusiasts would rent large tents and house the livestock under the tents.

My first exhibits were a couple of registered Poland China gilts I raised. To me they were perfect, and I thought were winners. However, I ran into a well known exhibitor, whose name was already enshrined in the N.D. State Agriculture Hall of Fame, in Aaron Legg Sr. of Forest River. He was showing a Berkshire gilt and took the purple ribbon.

A few years later, the fair association decided to build a large structure for livestock exhibits. I hauled a couple loads of concrete blocks for the structure from Grand Forks to Park River. All the blocks for the building were hauled in free by the farmers and most of the labor was donated. This was enlarged by a pole barn a few years after, which was built to the west of the main building. I again spent considerable amount of charity work. A couple of years after, a room to the front of the building was added for ad-

ditional exhibits. This was built by a contractor with the funds necessary for construction solicited throughout the county. I donated \$100 towards the project.

I was a good friend of all the extension agents as they would pass along valuable information to you. If some new varieties of grain were to be released, I had the inside track.

Throughout the years, I was an annual exhibitor of the fair and tried to solicit as many exhibits from the area as possible. Our children were all members of 4-H clubs as soon as they were old enough. The fair was a big event for the entire family.

In 1958, we had a bumper grain crop with wheat yields averaging over 40 bushels. This was unheard of in prior years. For the first time, I entered an exhibit of Selkirk wheat (a new rust resistant variety). Lo and behold, I walked out as the sweepstakes winner. In the following years, I kept handpicking my wheat samples for the show but had no luck. I then switched to handpicking barley samples which was a lot easier as the kernels are larger. Finally in 1963 and 1964, I was the winner. The competition was very, very tough. For five years in a row, I finished as runner up. It was the same farmer (Lawrence Jorgenson from around Grafton) that always beat me. He retired in 1968, and after that I breezed in as champ in 1969, 1970 and 1971. I won the North Dakota state barley championship in 1969. After the 1971 show, I retired from exhibition. The Walsh County Fair was one of the outstanding agricultural fairs in the state at that time.

In the early 60's, a group of township residents called on me to persuade me to run for the job of supervisor of the township. This was run by one family since its origin and no one could beat them. I accepted the challenge and won the election without any campaigning with a vote of 64 to 29. During my two terms, we had plenty of problems to straighten out, as there were many grievances from many people on the previous operations. During the correcting process of grievances, the township was sued three times to stop us from correcting the situations. The township board was victorious in all cases and all problems were corrected. Since those days, the township has been operating in complete harmony.

While living on the farm, our family belonged to the St. Stanislaus parish in Warsaw where Mamie was a member of the choir for 15 years and I served nine years on the Parish Advisory Board.

1967 was the greatest change in my living habits and working conditions,

as I accepted the position as manager and secretary of the Walsh County Mutual Insurance Company. The changeover from physical labor to all mental work was hard. I had heartburn continuously and was certain I had stomach ulcers. However, a medical checkup found that I only had a nervous stomach caused by stress. The company was just existing when I took over having a volume of fire and EC coverages of about 6½ million dollars. I kept working hard and when I retired after nine years, we had a volume of \$43,600,000. Financially, it was a good venture for me as I made out well. If I had my life to live over again, I would just stick to farming. While in the insurance business, I sold all lines. The biggest headache with the least compensation was the auto line. The most nerve wracking was the income tax work.

While I was in office, we completely revised our constitution and by-laws. We were the first County Mutual Insurance Company in the state of North Dakota to do so. For years following, other county mutuals revised theirs and the State Commissioner would use ours as a model and guide line. I had to make a couple of trips to meet with the insurance commissioner to complete the revision.

In revising our by-laws, we enacted an article limiting the age of the director to be elected. Since we had nothing to that affect in our original by-laws, it was customary to have the elected director serve pretty much until his death. This would result in having a group of elderly individuals on the board. The revised article states that no individual reaching the age of 70 is eligible to be elected to serve on the Board of Directors. When my last term expired, I was 71. The assembly at the annual policyholders meeting were going to change the article with the restriction that I could continue to serve on the board. I however refused to go along with their wishes, as I always felt that younger people should have a voice. I already served 24 years on the board, which to me was long enough.

In 1967, the Minto City Assessor (Frank Ronkowski) died unexpectedly and the city council appointed me to complete the assessing for the year. This followed with annual appointments. After completing the assessing for 1984, I handed in my resignation to be effective as of July 1, 1984. During my tenure as assessor, the State Legislature passed a law that all assessors had to be certified to hold the position. I attended schooling for ten days and then wrote a test which I had to pass in order to continue the work. I passed the test and received certification to act as assessor and appraiser of all property. There were 42 people who took the test at the same time and seven

didn't pass and had to retake it, with two of them still not passing. They had to take it three times, so it wasn't easy.

In 1969, Dennis Kiedrowski was selected as the Amateur Athlete of the Year by the North Dakota sportswriters and Warsaw held an appreciation banquet for him. Various sports writers were in attendance with Ken Hunt (who was playing with the New York Yankees at the time) as the main speaker. I had the job emceeding the event.

After moving to Minto, I was elected as director of the Minto Development Corporation in 1969, serving six years at that position with the last two years as president.

In 1973, I was elected as Municipal Judge, a position I held for eight years. The office was discontinued, as the city went under county policing in 1975, and all cases would be handled by the Judge of the Court of Higher Jurisdiction in Grafton. My first year as judge was a busy one, as I handled 237 cases. Most of these were traffic violations. This was a record for this size of city in North Dakota. I also had a rare opportunity to marry a couple. They were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kilichowski of Warsaw, who asked me to perform the ceremony. After calling the States Attorney if I had the authority to marry a couple, I was informed that our court did not allow such actions, as it has to be a Court of Record. This was a disappointment, as I was even going to buy a new robe and have the photographer present.

I am a charter member of the Walsh County Historical Society, which was incorporated in 1967. In 1973, I was elected as vice-president and in 1974 as president. During my term, the first newsletter of the society was published and has been issued annually. It was also during this year, that Volumes 1 and 2 of the Walsh Heritage was published. I resigned the position after one year, as it required too much work and no pay. I however accepted the position of vice-president in 1977, and served in that capacity until the fall of 1983 when our president (Henry Lundene) passed away. I had finished the term and was elected in 1984 to continue the position and was re-elected for the year of 1985.

I have been a member of the Walsh County Senior Citizens council since its origin in 1975, having served as chairman of the Senior Citizens Transportation committee since its beginning in 1976. I directed the Minto Golden Age Nutrition Program in 1978, the only town in the county having the program. In 1979, Walsh County organized under one group and when our local grant expired, we were transferred to that group. In 1981, I was elected vice-presi-



dent of the Walsh County Council and elected as president in 1985.

In 1980, I took a position with NASA, a crop reporting service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This was a part-time position where you would checkspot a few farmers scattered through five counties. Some of the farms I visited were over 100 miles from home, past Devils Lake. The fall of the year was the busiest, as I would have to take samples of numerous potato fields, digging a specified amount of hills so that the government could predict the yields. Throughout the winter, I would be reporting on the sales and amounts on hand in storage.

In 1981, the city of Minto and the Minto School held its centennial with a three day celebration with about 10,000 in attendance. The school reunion was held at the Minto gym, where after a couple hour program (which I emceed), closed with a banquet. The gym was filled to capacity with over 1,000 present.

The position with the Polish National Alliance was an inspiring position toward all the rest of my achievements. All of the positions I've held were great experiences, but in my early days I just couldn't get up in front of a crowd to speak. This was a severe handicap, as if you can't express your thinking, you really aren't fulfilling your duties. My first toughest assignment was when the new Florian, Minnesota, P.N.A. was holding their installation ceremonies. Our P.N.A. president (Isadore Rolczynski) and myself went to the occasion and as expected, we were seated on the stage with the dignitaries. It didn't take long and the emcee called on me as the financial secretary from the neighboring group. I rose to speak, but I was so stunned by the large crowd, I couldn't even get a word out. Finally, the Florian parish priest, who was seated behind me, told me to tell the crowd that I was only a secretary and use my pen only. This I did and was happy to sit down.

## MY AILMENTS

I had surgery to remove my tonsils when I was real young (possibly eight or nine years of age). My mother came with me to Minto and we stayed at the Walter Wosick home which used to be across the street from the Catholic Church. Next morning, Dr. Bolek (who was the practicing physician in Minto at the time) operated on me and my cousin Frank Byzewski. The kitchen was the operating room and the kitchen table was the operating table. John M. Slominski, the town druggest, was the nurse or assistant. I can remember them placing a cheese cloth over our noses and spraying ether over it and asking us to inhale. I can just taste the ether and feel how sore the throat was. That day we rested at the Wosick home, and the following day we drove home in a single wagon box and a team. The road was very rough, as there were all kinds of ruts in the road. It took another three or four days for us to recover.



In 1926 while I was in high school, an epidemic of mumps hit the school. The first one that got it was Leonard Risky (my roommate) and I followed. Within six weeks, everybody in school got a load of them. I was sick for about two weeks with a real good dose. I puffed up on both sides of my face like a balloon, but came out of them in good shape, as they didn't go down on me.

Up to 1937, I was in perfect health, outside of all the common diseases young children have such as measles and chickenpox.

In 1936, the Warsaw hall was built and before it was completed, we were playing basketball. Living in town made it convenient to run up to the hall and practice daily. However, the hall was unheated and towards spring I got a cold that I just couldn't shake. Finally on July 1st, we were stacking hay by the lake and I really got sick, but worked all day. We came home with a load of hay and when we got it unloaded, I just crawled into the house and went right to bed without eating. Next day, Neman drove me into Minto to Dr. Hardy (who was practicing at the time) and he informed me that I had pleurisy with alot of fluid on my lungs. He told me to go right to bed. By July 4th, I was so sick that I figured it would be the last day of my life. My chest was so full of fluid that I couldn't get my breath. He came sometime in the evening and tapped me by the right shoulder blade and drained two quarts of



of fluid. What a relief! I felt like a new man. It was far from over, as he had to tap me two more times since he couldn't drain all of it. I had to lay in bed for a full year until the fluid worked out by itself.

During my illness, my right lung collapsed completely, and dad would watch me as I lay in bed and only one side of the chest would expand. Dad would say, 'Ed, you may get well, but you will never be able to do a man's job'.

One thing that kept my spirits up in bed, were the enormous amounts of visitors I'd have. If they were in the store and had some spare time, they would come upstairs and visit me. A regular visitor, which meant more to me than all the rest, was my sweetheart Mamie. She sure remembered me.

Then for a year, I couldn't do any work, so I just took care of the store which didn't require any physical work. When I got sick, I lost 30 lbs. in one week, going down to 120 from 150. However, after I recuperated, I could eat like a horse, and I ballooned to 195. When I got married and was declared fit to work, within six months I went down to my normal weight of 155. So, I can tell you how hard married life was on me.

After I got well, I wanted to be back playing ball, but dad didn't let me. So, on the out of town games, I'd sneak my uniform and dress up in the car so that he wouldn't know my actions.

God blessed me with a full recovery, but every spring of the year, I can still feel where they tapped me.

Sometime in the early 1940's, I hurt my right ankle which has caused me continuous problems all my life. My hired man and I were raking potato vines and burning them, with the hired hand on the rake. We finished on the far end of the field, and when we were through, he asked if I wanted a ride home. I jumped on his lap and rode along. Pretty soon the rake was full of vines and he asked me, 'What should I do with it?' I replied to dump it, not realizing that I had my foot on the frame where the dumping frame closes. As he dumped it, my ankle got squeezed between the two frames, throwing me under the horses

as it locked the wheels. It cut my eight inch shoe and injured my ankle. It seemed to jump out of joint every now and then, and Mamie would twist it a certain way and it would jump into place. However, in 1953, while we were topping beets, it popped out and despite how much we tried, Dr. Hardy and Dr. Blanchard (a chiropractor at Grafton) just couldn't repair it. It was so sore, I couldn't even hold the covers on my feet. I finally went to Rochester with Harry Babinski's, and Harry navigated me around in a wheel chair. Nine doctors in that department examined it and took about a dozen x-rays and couldn't find anything wrong. They were going to operate, but would make no guarantee of recovery. This was just before Christmas, so being I wanted to be with the family for the holidays, I asked to go home and think it over. I went up to Dr. Hardy to ask for his advice and he asked me if it was any better. I said yes. He said, 'If I were you, I'd forget about the surgery, as a slight slip of the knife, you could end up with a stiff leg or they may even amputate it for you. Remember, time heals all wounds'. I took his advice and in about two years it was near normal. In the meantime, I visited every chiropractor in the area and all quacks, even going to Canistota, S.D. for a weeks cure. None of them helped, but like Dr. Hardy said, 'Time heals all wounds'. I still have my ankle intact and getting along fairly well, although I have to favor it at all times.

In 1949, I had my first surgery, for hemorrhoids, which was in the old St. Michaels Hospital in Grand Forks. I didn't get home until the 11th day and did I suffer. I have had numerous surgeries since that time, but none of them were as painful. I spent most of the days at the hospital in the bath-tub, as the hot water would relieve the pain. A problem I had after the surgery was I couldn't pass any water and would have to be catheterized twice daily. The ninth day of my stay, the doctor came in and asked me if I had any luck. I said no. He then asked me if I ever drink beer. I said yes. He asked if I knew anyone in town that could get me some beer. I gave him the name of John Prondzinski, a former Warsaw man who now operated Duffy's Tavern in Grand Forks. He brought me a six pack in a short time. The nurse brought it over and said, 'help yourself'. I drank one and almost the second, and felt like going to the bathroom. So, I walked over and sure enough, it started to work. It was a slow dribble, but it worked. I stayed two more days in the hospital hoping it would improve, but it never recovered to its prior pace. It took me about six weeks to recover. My bottom was so sore I couldn't even

release any gas without pain. I am sorry to this day that I had the surgery, as I could have lived with the piles. All I would have to watch would be that I'd have an easy bowel movement.

While living in Minto and doing some wind adjusting at Frankie Ebertowski's place, he gave me a package of fish (sheephead). The next day was Friday so Mamie prepared them for dinner. Always in a hurry, I was eating the fish fast and swallowed a large bone. I felt it get lodged in my throat and tried to loosen it with bread, crackers and what not with no result. Mamie insisted that I go to the doctor immediately. I didn't, and the next day my voice was not clear and Mamie insisted on me going to the doctor at Grafton. Since their offices were closed on Saturday, we had to call for an emergency appointment. He couldn't see any bone, but gave me some penicillin to avoid infection. By Sunday, my voice was a lot harsher. On Monday, I had lost my voice almost completely. Mamie said, 'I am not taking you to Grafton, but to a throat specialist in Grand Forks. The doctor looked down my throat and couldn't see anything either, but said I'd have to stay in the hospital as an infection was there. Mamie and my daughter-in-law brought me in, but when they were ready to leave, he took them into his office and informed them that this could be very serious. If the infection would hit the lungs, I would be a goner. The following day I lost my voice completely and then for two days, I couldn't even swallow my saliva. Finally the doctor decided to get at it, as he couldn't get the infection down. It was a large bone from the tail part of the fish that had punctured the larynx into the voice box. My stay at the hospital was five days and the total bill was \$931. I have since learned to eat fish carefully.

In 1970, I had my first hernia operation performed by Dr. Eaton at the Grafton Hospital. I came home after seven days still quite sore, but went right to work at the office. I remember good and well as to how I got ruptured. It was during harvest time and I was helping Jimmy move the grain elevator. Actually, all I was doing was holding the front end and steering. As I dropped the hitch, I felt a jerk in my abdomen and remarked I thought I got ruptured. Jimmy remarked, 'How could you, without lifting or carrying anything?', but I did.

In 1975, my prostate started bothering me. In the next couple of years, I would be in the hospital for a couple of days each time so they could enlarge my urinating channel as I had difficulty passing water. Finally in 1976,

I had to have surgery. The surgery wasn't as bad as I had anticipated. I was home within a week and went right back to work. In less than a year, I was back in the hospital as the incision for the surgery had ruptured. The doctor put in a screen to strengthen the opening. Recovery was fast and I came home the fifth day.

In 1981, my real problems started, as I would occasionally pass blood. I called Dr. Doce and he informed me that anytime an individual passes blood, there is something wrong. He ordered me to check in to the hospital so that they could take a biopsy of my prostate. I just stayed in the hospital for one day and it took about ten days to get the results of the biopsy. Finally on February 10th, he informed me that I had a malignant tumor (cancer) on the prostate. What news! My wife and I were present to hear the news and both of us got pretty shook up with some tears shed. Dr. Doce had encouraging words, saying that we can take care of the malignancy for quite some time and I'd be able to continue living a normal life. The following year, I took 35 radiation treatments and six months later, the x-rays showed that the tumor was in remission. I have been taking a couple pills daily.

Early in 1984, I started passing blood once more, which resulted in another hospital stay, as they performed a cystoscopy and found a small tumor in my bladder which they removed. When brought out to my room, I had a breathing lapse of a heart seizure. This extended my stay for about three days and I came home after seven days. Less than two months later, I got the seizure again at home. I was transported to the hospital by ambulance. I stayed three days in the intensive care unit and two additional days, coming home after five days.

In June, I had to go in again for a checkup to see if the tumor in the bladder was drying up. This was only a one day stay, but it was my third visit to the hospital within six months. Since then, I have had to go to the doctors office for a liquid treatment similar to chemo-therapy. The doctor pours in about one fluid ounce of acid-like medicine through a catheter in your bladder. You then lay on your back, each side, and tummy for fifteen minutes each, pass it out and you are all through for the month.

On March 19, 1985, I entered the hospital in Grand Forks for my 11th stay. My stay was very short, as I got discharged the following day. The bill amounted to \$1833.44. I had a cystoscopy on my bladder which they were checking for tumors. They found everything in perfect condition. This was

done as a preventative. I still take my bladder treatments, but every other month, instead of monthly.

My stomach was bothering me and I had a doctors appointment on April 1st. After a checkup, he came to the conclusion that I had a touch of ulcers, and recommended that I quit drinking coffee, elevate my bed in the front, and gave me some tagamet pills to take twice a day. This prescription seemed to help, as I have gotten rid of the heartburn.

In my lifetime, I have had 11 stays in the hospital, so I have had some experience with operations. Of all my problems, the hemorrhoid surgery was the most painful. Despite all of my problems, I feel great and as of now expect to be around for some time.

## TRAVELS

In my early life, there wasn't much traveling. When I reached my adulthood, I never dreamed I would do as much traveling as Mamie and I have.

The first big trip which really excited me was made in 1927, when my brother Alphonso came over for a visit from St. Paul. He took mother and me, along with his wife, on a trip to Winnipeg. We left in his 1925 Ford Model T for Winnipeg about six in the morning. We got there in about three hours. After shopping around for a couple of hours and sightseeing the balance of the time, we left for home at about four, making the trip both ways in one day. Boy did I feel proud about the trip. Now I could tell the kids when I would get back to school I visited Winnipeg.

In 1929, I went on a big four day trip with Harry Babinski's in their 1924 Ford Model T to Greenbush, Mn. where Harry has alot of relatives. Dick Byzewski, my cousin, went along. While there we also visited Roseau and Badger. We visited the Gonsorowski's, Mrs. Kowalczyk's folks, Joe Zabrocki's, Kalinowski's, and about a dozen Stanislawski's.

Harry's old Ford was ready to fall apart and I was skeptical that it would make it. The trip with all the visits would amount to at least 200 miles. We made it there alright, but as we were reaching home (a mile and a half east of Warsaw), the connecting rods went out and we had to get towed in. This gave Harry a big laugh, as he was always jolly.

We were all broke in the Warsaw area, but in Greenbush, they were financially worse. I remember when we visited the Gonsorowski family. I was shocked when I walked into their home, as they had no furniture. They just had a stove, dining table, a couple chairs and alot of wooden apple boxes to use for seats around the table. There were eight healthy children and all happy as larks. They had a couple of girls aged 17 and 19 named Frances and Helen and were they good looking. I immediately got a liking to them, especially when the younger one (Frances) made the remark that she would try any thing once. Years later, they came to Warsaw a couple of times to visit the Kowalczyk's, who lived a little better than a mile from Warsaw, and would always stop to visit me.

In 1938, when I was recuperating from my pleurisy, my brother Ben was making a business trip to St. Paul. His car was a 1931 Ford V8, which was something special in those days. He asked me to go along. He had to come



home in a day or two, but I stayed for a week at my brother Alphonso's place. During the week, I had the opportunity to tour the city; visiting the stockyards, the breweries and visited the large grocery wholesalers (Griggs, Cooper & Co.) with whom dad did most of his grocery business. I left after alot of knowledge on city life. While walking the streets one night with a couple of friends, I ran into Fido Purpur, the professional hockey player who at that time was playing with the Minnesota Millers. He asked Ed Kalinowski (who was along) and me to come to his hotel a couple of hours before their next game and we could ride along with him and the other players to the game. We surely didn't miss that opportunity. He also provided us with good seats right in the center of the arena. After the game, we spent some time in the teams dressing room and the rest of the night with them guzzling a few beers. This is an event I will always remember. I went home by train on the Northern Pacific. The ticket from St. Paul to Voss was \$6.37. I remember how sharp I was when we went to Purpur's room. He had told us that he was staying in Room 232 and I stopped at the hotel desk to ask which floor Room 232 was on. This was my first visit in a hotel. From that day on, I knew what floor 232 would be on.

Getting married in 1939, completely shut off all travels, as there definitely were more places to spend the money. After I was elected financial secretary of the PNA in 1945, other avenues opened up. In 1946, I was a delegate to the district convention in Minneapolis and it continued annually, with the biggest trips being to the national conventions that I attended in Buffalo in 1951, Minneapolis in 1955, and Pittsburgh in 1959. All of these were week long events which Mamie would always attend with me.

The trip to Buffalo was my first beyond St. Paul. We took the train from Voss to Chicago, for which the ticket cost \$13.28. We were then suppose to catch a special train for the delegates the following morning. When we got off the train, there were dozens of taxis, but we were only able to catch the last one which had a negro driver. We were rather reluctant to drive with a colored man, but had no choice. When we got in, he asked, 'Where to?' We had never thought of that and were completely unfamiliar with Chicago, but I happened to think of Hotel Sherman as I saw some advertising in the local papers about it. So, I said Hotel Sherman. We got the shock of our lives when we arrived there, as the lobby was full of PNA delegates, as this was the headquarters. This put us at ease as we wouldn't have any trouble after that.

The next morning we boarded the train with 576 delegates. I forget how many coaches they had hooked on the train. I'm sure they knew they had enough. The delegates were all worried they would end up without a seat. So, everyone was pushing and shoving to get on. When we were all seated comfortably, I walked through the train to see if all the seats were filled and found 27 vacant ones. The train had a club car and a dining car. In the club car, they had an orchestra playing. As the trip started, Mr. Wrobel (who was a candidate for treasurer) walked through all the cars and stuck a pint of good whiskey in each delegates pocket. The trip was certainly entertaining, as was the convention. The only bad part, was that Mr. Wrobel didn't get elected. As a special treat for the delegates, we were taken on a tour of Niagara Falls. When you see it for the first time, it is really thrilling.

In 1971 I was elected as 2nd Vice-President of the North Dakota Fraternal's and in 1972 moved up to 1st Vice-President and in 1973 as president. In 1974, I represented the N.D. State Fraternal's as their official delegate to the national convention at Las Vegas. This was a four day affair. While in attendance, I got elected to the National Secretaries Board and attended the next convention in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1975. Since there was no financial remuneration for the position, I did not accept any further nomination for the position.

Of all the conventions that I attended, the Vegas one was the least enjoyable. When we got there with 800 other delegates (all strangers to us), we had no one to associate with, and they all scattered to various gambling places and we'd end up in our room. We did take in a show by Liberacie one night and it was beautiful -- one of the best shows we've ever seen. He had a troupe of at least 40 entertainers who put on a marvelous show.

During the years, I made numerous business trips to Minneapolis and Chicago. I was at my brothers bedside when he died on February 4, 1944, at Hines Hospital in Chicago. I spent 10 or 11 days with him before he passed away from cancer. I was the only one with him when he died. The evening before his death, his wife Mary, brother Alphonso, and myself, visited him. He was already in a coma and looked just awful. Mary and Alphonso couldn't take it and left for their rooms full of tears. I sat with him all night and was so scared and nervous. I kept saying the rosary. I don't know how many times I recited it, but I do know that the rosary had black beads and by the time Ben died, they were colorless, as the paint off them was all on my fingers.

In 1970, after being in the insurance business for about three years without a vacation, we decided to take a two week vacation. Taking Ludger and Elaine Kadlec with us, we traveled by car. Stopping for three days in McAllen, Texas (which is right on the border) we went to Monteray in Mexico and took in a bullfight. We were all disappointed in the facilities. We were expecting a fancy arena and all it was is like the old railroad stockyards -- rough plank seating and one outside toilet for both men and women where there would be a continuous line waiting their turn. We had oodles of fun and saw a few bulls killed. This was the first bull fight we attended, and no doubt our last.

From there we proceeded to the Karlsbad Caverns. These are the deepest and largest caverns in America -- very beautiful and located in New Mexico.

From there we moved to Yuma, Arizona. We took in an interesting dog race. We didn't make any money on the bets. They operate on the same betting system as the horse races. While there, we also visited some vegetable farms watching them harvest lettuce, cabbage, and some irrigation projects. Since Walsh County sends alot of new grain varieties for increase in that immediate area, we tried to find the field to see what they looked like. This was a top secret and we could get no information from the officials as to the location.

We moved on to Vegas for a couple of days and then on to Phoenix. We had a good time there as we got light housekeeping quarters in the Red Rose Motel where Frank Paschke of Oslo was caretaker of the grounds. John Grabanski came around and we had a Polish party of bologna, crackers and some beer, and just reminisced about old times. We also visited with Jim and Lucille Utz.

After there, I just don't know where we stopped, but before we got home we stopped at the Black Hills and visited Mount Rushmore, then on for home. I kept an accurate mileage check on the fuel consumption, and we averaged only 14.5 miles per gallon.

Frank Narloch took care of the insurance office while I was gone. When I got back I asked if there was anything important to take care of. He said, 'No, but you had a couple of calls from Minneapolis from a guy who wanted to speak to you personally'. The following morning, there were quite a few people in the office when the telephone rang and was the guy fired up. First, I better tell you what happened. I was trying to get the coverage on the Vesleyville church and rectory. I wrote a letter asking for the coverages and explaining how much more convenient it would be for them to insure it locally

instead of with the Churches Mutual Insurance Company that was covering them. I quoted him the premium and deducted \$200 from it which was just about all my commission. I informed him that they would have to issue me a check for the full amount and I in turn would make the \$200 donation to them. Everything would have worked out, but Father Tomanek (the Vesleyville priest) wanted the same deal from the agent of Church Mutual - a donation from his commission, and he sent him my letter. Naturally this is completely against insurance regulations. So, when the guy jumped me over the phone, I just didn't know what to say and his voice was coming in so clear, that you could hear almost across the room. I kept stretching the cord to its fullest so that the customers on the other side of the desk wouldn't hear. Finally he came with an ultimatum, 'You withdraw your bid and all further solicitations for the business immediately, or I will report you to the State Insurance Commissioner.' Hesitating for words, I finally answered, 'I will withdraw'. With that, he hung up. As soon as the customers left, I called an attorney in Grafton for advice, explaining the situation. He informed me to send a notice of withdrawal to the Vesleyville priest by certified mail, and upon receiving the receipt, forward a photostatic copy of the receipt to the complaining agent. The attorney said, 'As far as losing your license, I don't think you would for a first offense, but you would have to attend a hearing at Bismarck to fight the case and have an attorney represent you. This would cost you roughly three to four hundred dollars.' I followed his instructions to a T and was just on edge for the next couple of weeks.

The next trip was in 1971 to Laramie, Wyoming where Mary Alice and her family were living. We made the trip in one day going up and one day getting home. What a ride. Marjorie and Paul and their son Chris rode along. It was approximately 1000 miles and it took us 16 hours. This was before they came out with the 55 mile speed limit. We averaged 15.1 gallons per mile. That's the last place I would ever want to live. It's real Indian country.

In 1972, we took a weeks trip to Washington, D.C. visiting all the historical sites, such as: George Washington's home; Kennedy's grave and the church where he got married; Bobby Kennedy's home; Kennedy Institute; the theatre where President Lincoln was assassinated; White House; State Capitol and what not. We visited with Senator Burdick and Congressman Link. Representative Link took us on a tour of the city one night and for lunch to his apartment. We also visited both the house and senate chambers. We flew there and

back.

In 1974, we took a ten day trip to Mexico City, Texas and Acapulco. We traveled by plane to Mexico City, then by bus to Texas and Acapulco.

It was in Mexico City that a shoe shine cost me \$20. We were visiting a park and there were boys standing around asking to give shoe shines. Ludger (who was along with Elaine on the trip) said, 'I think I'll get my shoes shined'. I said I thought I would too. A couple of boys took Ludger a few steps to the right and the other two asked them to go with them behind a board fence. When they got through, I took my billfold out to give them two bits. However, they insisted on the biggest bill in my billfold, now out in the open. I looked around and there was no one in sight within a couple of hundred feet, so I felt happy to give them the twenty. They could have grabbed the whole billfold and taken it, which had at least \$300 in it.

We went to Taxco by bus and the roads were very winding around the mountains. In Taxco we were dropped off at a nice restaurant where we had a group serenading immediately. The music was nice, but we didn't offer much in payment. The city was clean. What surprised us was that there were loose chickens and hogs promenading on all streets. When we went to sleep, the dogs started barking, which our guide warned about. I don't know how many dogs they have in the city, but the way they howled all night, it sounded like more than a million.

The next morning we moved along into Acapulco. Nice town, but I soon got tired of the bartering business, as you couldn't take a step anywhere without someone trying to sell you something. I just couldn't wait to get the hell out of there. The only factory in town was a 7-Up plant owned by a movie star, Joan Davis. Frank Sinatra owned alot of empty lots around the city and there are oodles of homes owned by the Hollywood movie stars around the bay on the mountain hills. Most of them have steel fences around the property and have armed guards at the gates. I got hungry for lobster the last day. We went to a special place with the restaurant on a boat on the bay. However, as good as it was suppose to be (for \$22.50 a plate) I couldn't eat it. They brought it out broiled with all of its legs or feet on it, and the sight of this, plus the steam odor, took away my appetite. We then flew directly home from Acapulco.

While in Mexico City, we visited the world known Shrine of Guadalupe. This is a church that's hundreds of years old. There is a long history as to

why it was constructed. It was because of a miracle that would take too long to explain. It's a huge ediface with a concrete parking lot. I would estimate that it covers at least two city blocks. Once a year, they hold mission services and over a million people congregate annually. The statue of Holy Mary stands on the middle of the altar, and thousands of people come daily to pray before her for special intentions -- most of which are healing of the crippled and sick. There is a concrete sidewalk about a block long which is the entrance to the church, and the people go on their knees praying until they reach the Guadalupe statue. Just try crawling on your knees on concrete. What they would actually do, is crawl a short distance, then stop and say a short prayer, and so on, until they would reach the miracle spot. We didn't see any miracle, but I guess there have been plenty occurring. In Mexico, whatever auto, bus, or cab you get into, all have a medal of Guadalupe pinned somewhere visible in the vehicle. They have strong faith in Mary.

In 1974, '75 and '76, we took annual trips to Manhattan, Kansas, to visit Mary, Larry and the children.

In July of 1976, I retired from my business, and on July 27th, we left for a 21 day tour of Poland. This is one trip that I always wanted and probably enjoyed more than any other. We went by car to Detroit along with Ernie and Evelyn Lizakowski. We stayed overnight with Mr. and Mrs. Chester Lizakowski and the following morning, we three couples left with a tour group. It was a bargain rate, as the entire trip cost us \$1721 per couple. This included the fare both ways, and a 15 day bus tour in Poland, which included all meals and hotel accommodations.

On our arrival in Poland, the first thing they showed us was a movie of the conditions in Poland after World War II. The city was 90% destroyed by the extensive bombing. It was now completely rebuilt with a section of the town rebuilt in its original architecture. After the movie, they took us for a lunch and a program put on by the Kujawiaki International dancing group dressed in perfect dancing outfits.

Poland was just in the midst of harvest, and we would see fields covered with people. The men (sometimes as many as a dozen in a line) would be cutting the grain with hand sythes, and the women and children would be following tying the grain into bundles and shocking it. Talk about physical work!

Poland was beautiful, but the living standards were way below our country's, especially in the rural areas where there is no running water or

indoor toilets. There are no automobiles or trucks on the farms, but they have rural transportation. They have government owned bus lines which have regular routes through the country and pickup stations every mile. The transportation is real cheap. For a nickel, you could get a ride to town and back.

Farms are all small, from two to three acres to a maximum of 15. We did see a couple of grain binders. These were six foot right hand cut and had no bundle carriers. Every farm had a cow or two which would be pastured on the roadsides tied to a stake. There are absolutely no wire fences. There are some fences made of tree poles around the barns. Every farmer had a few geese, and at least two hives of bee for honey.

Our headquarters for the tour was Warsaw, a city about the size of Detroit, Michigan. While in a city of this size, you really don't know if you are in Poland or the USA. There is a lot of traffic there, but most of it is old trucks like salvages from the World War. One thing I liked about Warsaw, was that in the busy business section, all pedestrians crossed under the street, so there is no interference with traffic. All cars are compacts, and 90% of them were Poland made.

Among the cities the tour took us were: Poznan, Krakow, Gdansk, Wroclaw and Czersk. Czersk is a place where a lot of the people came to North Dakota from. While there, we visited the Grabanski's, Glinski's, Duray's and Czubas. The Czubas were Mamie's relatives from the Gornowicz side. We spent one day with them and did we have a grand time. They had about 30 relatives at the house and we sure got kissed plenty. In Poland, when you are introduced to someone, the custom is that you kiss their hand and each cheek and then the lips. While there, we also visited the Auszwich Prison Camp which is beyond description. It's just unbelievable what torture the prisoners had before they were finally killed.

It was a fun trip with the Lizakowski families. The part we liked the best was changing our money on the black market. The international rate of exchange was 32 zloty for an American dollar, but on black market we got as much as 200 zloty. With this high exchange rate, we could buy everything at bargain prices. The only problem was that they were out of stock by noon, so the people would again stand in line the next morning finally succeeding.

Their beer was good, but served only warm, as there was no refrigeration. All the time we were there, we didn't see a lawn mower. All lawns were cut with hand cythes and then hay raked and hauled. I would say that 95% of the

women smoke regardless of age. Another problem is alcoholism. These habits are built in with the living conditions, as there is absolutely no incentive to work, as they know they can't get ahead. It's life on a survivorship.

Another difference I noticed in Poland was they had no fire hydrants above ground. All hydrants are level with the ground, so dogs are out of luck. In the Hotel Fargo (where we stayed), they have two full time interpreters in various languages. Their schools teach five different languages with Polish and Russian compulsory. Their telephone service is a lot less than desired. This is probably caused by the small number of people having a phone. After being there for about a week, I decided to make a phone call home. This required a reservation and took about 30 hours to finally get the connection. I don't know exactly how long I talked, but I do remember the call cost \$62.50 in American money.

While touring the country, we also visited an abandoned salt mine which was 700 + feet below ground. They had no elevator to get down. I don't remember exactly how many steps there were, but it was in the neighborhood of 900. Going up, we got a lift on a freight elevator, which took quite a group at one time. The mine had a carving of a regular church with statues and altar, communion rail, pulpit, stations of the cross, and all other church furnishings. All of these were carved out of salt in the mine.

While staying at a Holiday Inn in Krakow, we did run into something that we never saw any other place. This was a beer dispensing machine, like we have in America for various soft drinks. The machine was placed in the hallway of the hotel. In order to get your beer, you would have to change your money at the desk for slugs that would work. These slugs cost 20¢ in American money. You would drop this slug in, and out came a pint bottle of beer. This beer was room temperature, as they had no cooling system in the machine.

We also saw a number of communist farms where they had tractors and combines. None of the fields were too large. I would say the maximum size was about 100 acres. The tractors were old, named Robus. These were all Russian made. Due to their size, the farms didn't have as good crops and were a lot weedier. In Poland they save all the straw. What they don't use for feed or bedding, they keep wetting down to rot into manure which they use in place of fertilizer. Every farmer had a four wheel trailer with side racks to mount on the sides for hauling hay. It seems that this was a must for everyone.

The experience with all the clerks in various stores was they just didn't



give a darn to satisfy the customer. I'm sure none of them would hold a job in America for over an hour. Regardless of the size of the store, none of them had escalators. The window fronts were ordinary home windows which didn't display any merchandise and none had hanging signs to be lit up at night. The same goes for all large factories. The city is all dark, except for weak street lights. All this is to conserve energy.

A couple of days before we were to leave, we got a phone call from home that my brother-in-law, Julian Slominski, had died unexpectedly. The children had made all the arrangements for the funeral, and transportation from Poland to Grand Forks by air.

After a three week stay, we were all happy to depart for home. It was a very fascinating and educational trip.

We left from Warsaw and landed in Detroit and there we changed planes for Grand Forks. The following day we took in the funeral. The Warsaw airport is very old and all the attendants must be members of the communist party. They are very rude and not a bit accommodating.

Our flight to Poland took about nine hours from Detroit. We took the northern course flying over Greenland, Norway and Sweden. Going home, we went directly across and stopped to refuel in Ireland. Looking at the map, this looked a lot shorter, but the flight took a little over 11 hours. In visiting with the pilot, I found out why the shorter distance took longer. In going the northern route, you follow the trade winds which make for easier flying.

In a few weeks after getting home, Mamie and Mary Alice went to Phoenix to check on Julian's bank account, as Mamie was appointed as administrator of the estate.

In 1978, the wife and I went on a Caribbean Cruise for seven days. There were six local couples on the trip which made it real homey. We visited five islands which included Haiti, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic. We would cruise during the night and stop at the islands for the day. We got a good view as to what the tropics are like. While on ship, they kept you entertained at all times with a dance every evening. They had various card tournaments and I won the bridge championship trophy. They also had a heated swimming pool and miniature golfing. Four people would be seated at each table throughout the tour (same four) and you would have the same waiter. They sure stuffed you with everything you could possibly get down. At the end of the tour, you

were to leave a tip for the weeks service with an amount of gratuity for the entire week.

I didn't care for the islands, as you just couldn't move anywhere without someone trying to sell you some junk and you had to barter for everything. Not having any Jewish blood, it hurt me, as I always got the short end in a bartering transaction. The ship also had slot machines, and when the boat got a certain distance from the shore, they would open up the gambling.

None of us got seasick, even though a couple of nights the sea got quite rough. From Miami we flew home. Mamie got seasick after we got home and I had to take her to a doctor who gave her dramamines until recovered. It took all of ten days before she got normal.

On May 12, 1979, we took another trip to Europe with my daughter Mary Alice, and her husband Larry. We visited the Netherlands, Switzerland, Western Germany, Poland and Austria. We landed in Munich and departed from Amsterdam. While there, we rented a four-door Opal car to do our traveling. It gave us a different view than a tour bus, as we'd take alot of back roads and would stay in rooming houses instead of hotels. We would try to stay in a smaller town, as the rates would be lower. We drove along the Rhine River considerably and on their autobahns which have no speed limits. I believe that all the super highways in America are designed after them.

Holland to me proved very interesting, as the tulips were just in bloom, and we saw large fields with nothing but tulips -- some of them almost 100 acres in size. We also saw their extensive ditching, as their entire country is nine feet below sea level. We stopped to see how the old stult wooden mills pump the water from one ditch to the other.

While in Switzerland, we went right to the tops of the Alps which provide the greatest skiing in the world. The day after we visited them, they received 12 inches of snow and opened up the skiing for an additional 30 days. We also visited the county where the Brown Swiss cattle originated, and stopped to look at some of the herds.

When you visit these free countries in Europe, it's just like in America. They have everything, plus some goods that we don't have. Of all the countries we visited, Switzerland is something to see for cleanliness. Everything is just spic and span. When you cross the borders into Austria, Poland, or Czechoslovakia, it's as if you've entered another world. The countries are not clean and the buildings aren't kept up.

Larry left for home four days earlier, so Mary Alice, Mamie and I traveled to Poland alone. We flew into Warsaw and then took a train to Gdansk, where Mamie's cousin lives, and stayed at her place a couple days.

The one thing we'll always remember was the train ride. It was awfully slow and was packed like sardines in a car. Wherever they would stop to pick up passengers, they would be pushing and climbing over each other to get on.

From there we went to visit her other relatives and they found a taxi for us to take back to Warsaw. Over at the relatives we changed a lot of American money for zlotys. When we were ready to go home, I still had 4,000 zloty on hand. Not knowing what to do with it, I stuck it in my sock and brought it home, which is illegal to take money out of their country.

In April of 1980, we took a 14 day River Tour with the Senior Citizens bus out of Fargo. It started in Itasca Park in Minnesota and ended at New Orleans. We traveled on one side of the Mississippi River all the way down and came back on the other side.

New Orleans was the main attraction. The city itself is five feet below sea level. They have dikes around the city and drain water out with huge pumps, pumping the water over the dikes into the ocean. Their graves are all like vaults, completely above ground. Bourbon Street is something a person just has to visit, as it's something special. It's a narrow street which operates like Vegas on a 24 hour basis. They have continuous entertainment with dance bands and people dancing as you stroll along. Restaurants and night clubs cover all the business places. The trip, as all of our others, was very interesting.

In May of 1981, we took a Senior Citizen 21 day trip to the Pacific states. We went out to Portland, where we stopped and visited Dianne Molde, and visited the Mountain Shrine which is a tourist attraction. We then followed the Pacific shore highway all the way to Tijuana, Mexico.

In California, we visited Knoxberry Farms, Disneyland, Universal Studios, etc... California in my estimation, is one state a person can find a place to live to their liking, as they have about everything. They have mountains, the ocean beaches, level land, desert, oil wells and farming areas. You name it and they have it. While traveling through the area, we stopped to visit a couple of wineries and the Hershey's Chocolate factory.

We spent only about four hours in Mexico, having supper there and doing a little shopping.

We took the southern trip home and stopped in Las Vegas for one night. Since this was our third visit to the city, it was interesting to see how much the city had grown over the four years since our last visit.

We were home about ten days and were again on the road for Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Red China. Mamie and I flew to Chicago where we met our daughter, Mary Alice, and from there departed for San Francisco, where we left to Tokyo, Japan. We flew to Alaska first, and stopped at Fairbanks to refuel. While taking off, one of the tires blew out, but we continued the flight and would try landing on one wheel. This was on a 747 by Transworld Airlines.

We landed safely in Tokyo, although we had warnings to be prepared for an emergency. As we landed, we saw all kinds of fire trucks lined up.

We stayed at the Hotel Hilton, and everything was so expensive, as this was the place where all foreign buyers stay since their companies pay all the expenses. They did have a good brunch they served until 11 in the morning for \$6 per plate. This had just about everything you desired. We'd have that as our full meal, and then have a light lunch in the evening.

Of special interest was their market street, which they have a special name for. It's a place where if you want to see people, you will sure see them there.

While there, we also took a ride on their Bullet Train. Up to that time, it was the fastest train in the world. Since then, the French have built one that's a little faster. Outside of the hotel, there were very few people that understood English. To us, the Japanese as a whole didn't seem very friendly.

From there we went to Hong Kong, the most thickly populated city in the world. Talk about traffic - no place in the world like it. These are all taxis and trucks. I saw only two privately owned cars while there. All vehicles were of diesel.

The city is built on an island extending into the ocean from Red China. The bay around it has over 100,000 people living in their boats year round. Some of them spend their entire lives on the boats.

Another feature you will notice is the city has more high rises than any other city. I was wondering what kind of businesses were in them and found they were all housing units. Since the area is so small, they have no place to build, but up.

There are fabulous homes on the surrounding mountain range. This is

where the rich magnets of the city live. Our guide told us the richer they get, the higher up the mountain they build.

From there we took a days trip into Red China. Chinese people seem alot friendlier than the Japs. We saw oodles of water buffaloes working out in the rice fields. The rice fields are in water logged areas with water standing in the fields. They cultivate these fields with buffalo drawn cultivators, with men walking barefoot behind. The plows are of wood mold boards and are like our old walking plows. The harvested rice is cut by hand and carried from muddy fields to dry roads where it is stacked on back parts of the bicycles and hauled to farmyards where it is hung on lines to dry. It is then threshed on concrete slabs and the seed is left on the slab in a thin layer to dry.

The daily temperature is between 90-100, and the humidity is in the same range.

While there, the Chinese treated the tour group to dinner. They served rainbow trout and a Chinese dinner. I had the trout and it was the best I've eaten anywhere. Before the meal, they also had beer or wine for appetizers.

All the roadwork is done by hand with a shovel. They were patching the blacktop and were handmixing it.

We drove through a city of 50,000 population that had 200,000 bicycles.

While there we were taken to a kindergarten school where the children put on a program for us. They even sang Jingle Bells. The school had no air conditioning and how the children could take it, was beyond me.

After returning to Hong Kong, we left the following day to Taiwan. The last night we went to McDonalds Restaurant and had good American food.

Taiwan was alot more advanced in technology, as they were already using small tractors to do the work of the buffaloes. These were small tractors with spiderlike wheels and long studs.

While there we visited a clay factory which handpainted vases. What a tedious job!

The people in Taiwan were very friendly and we enjoyed it.

One item of expense that we had in Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, was the surcharge at the airports of \$5.00 every time you would board a plane. The fee is suppose to cover the cost of the airports.

We went home on a Chinese airline back to Frisco. Going over we had 475 passengers, which made an overload of about 75 passengers.

In August of 1982, we took a bus tour to the World's Fair in Knoxville,

Tn. We covered quite an area, visiting the Dayton 500 Race Track making a circle around the track. We then visited Churchill Downs (famous horserace track) and proceeded to the fair, which was a huge disappointment. We then went to Nashville and took in a performance. This was our second visit to Nashville. (On the first visit in 1980, we visited Memphis, the home of Elvis Presley. We visited his grave and home. The whole town is nothing but Elvis.) On the way home, we visited the towering gate at St. Louis, Mo. We also visited Bush Stadium and other points of interest.

The following Christmas, we flew to Bozeman, Montana to visit Mary Alice, Larry, and family. While there they took us to the Big Sky Ski resort. Montana wouldn't be my type of country to live in, probably because of the mountains, which I hate. There is an awful lot of desolate country in the state. We again flew home.

In 1983, we took an eight day Senior Citizen bus tour to the Calgary Stampede. We went straight west into the western edge of Montana, and then followed the Glacier National Park in Calgary. This trip was very scenic with plenty of snowcapped mountains. On the way, we saw many wild animals along the roadside.

While in Calgary, we took in the stampede for a whole day. We got there on Sunday when they had 120,000 people in attendance. We all enjoyed the rodeo and chuck wagon races, but the best part was the fireworks at the conclusion of their daily program. It was by far the greatest fireworks exhibition I have ever seen.

Their midway, with rides, was out of this world. I don't think a fellow would get through taking a ride on every different machine they had in any 15 hour day.

While there, we were taken to the top of a mountain around Jasper. Although the temperature was 90 above, they were giving snowcat rides on the top.

After a week of living in the mountains, I couldn't wait to get out into the open prairie. Our trip home took us across the vast grain farms in to Saskatchewan. This was great country, just like being home. We entered the western part of North Dakota, going south into Bismarck, and home to Fargo.

In 1984, we took a 15 day tour to the New England states. Going east, we went through the states crossing Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, the state of Pennsylvania, into New Jersey and New York. We stopped for two days in New York

and visited the United Nations and Yankee Stadium.

We took in an opera one night and although the tickets were cut price at \$22 a piece, I didn't enjoy the performance very much.

We went to the 100th floor of the Empire State Building. From that point you can't see any of the pedestrians on the street and the buildings, and the autos look like toys. We crossed and traveled on 5th Avenue a couple of times and also visited Times Square.

We had a boat tour around Manhattan Island, which showed us that the entire city is built on an island.

From there we traveled through all the New England states. We stopped at Boston for a day visiting the historical Plymouth Rock where the first settlers settled -- not much to it, but a lot of historical value. We visited the national capitol of cranberry growing and got a full tour as to how they are grown and harvested.

While in New York, we also visited St. Patrick's Church where John and Jackie Kennedy were married. We then visited Concord and the beautiful falls in the White Mountains.

We drove on to Newport, Rhode Island and made a tour of the coast where all the original aristocrats from England settled in the early days. They had large homes of special beauty on the coastline. That's where the Kennedy's have their relaxation home and where Jackie and her children still come for short stays of rest. Vice-President Bush also has a home there.

After completing the rest of the states, we crossed into Canada and stopped at Montreal and visited the Notre Dame Basilica, one of the largest and most beautiful churches in the world.

We then traveled to Niagara Falls. While there we visited the falls and had a boat ride up to the falls. To us, the falls were of no special interest, as we had been there before. The country around Niagara, especially on the Canadian side, is just out of this world. It's known as the fruit capitol of the world as all kinds of fruits are grown there.

We also went to see how the ships cross the channel in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway. This is very interesting as the sea level drops something like 20 feet between the lakes and the ocean, so they have locks to control or hold the water to a navigable level.

From there we went to Toronto and kept on the Canadian side until Detroit, and then took the scenic road around the lake into Duluth. This is very pretty

but definitely not for winter travel.

We stopped overnight in Saginaw, Michigan, then Minneapolis and home.

This was one of our most enjoyable trips, as we saw twice as many sites of interest as on any other trip.

During Thanksgiving of 1984, we rode with Paul, Marjorie and family to Manhattan, Kansas to spend a few days with Mary Alice, Larry and their family.

On February 28, 1985, Mamie and I embarked on a two week trip to Phoenix, Mesa, Scottsdale and surrounding area. We went by air on Northwest Central. The cost of the tickets was only \$436 round trip for the both of us. The trip was made especially to visit our friends, Ludger and Elaine Kadlec, who were spending the winter months there. We received a nice welcome and special treatment during the entire time we were there. They showed us just about everything of interest in the area, even some of the surrounding points of interest.

We took a trip to Raw Hide (an old Indian town), Care Free (where all the homes are built on mountainous rocks), Flag Staff (where we visited with Jim and Lucille Utz), and drove to Loughlin, Nevada (a new gambling town that's just being built up). So far they have only four casinos, but they are as large as anything in Las Vegas. We stayed there one night and the lodging cost us \$53.50 per room.

While there, we attended an annual banquet for former North Dakota legislatures. This to me was the most enjoyable part of the trip, as there were 107 old friends present, and it sure was nice to rehash old times with old friends.

We also took in two exhibition ball games while there, as the Chicago Cubs have their training grounds in Mesa. We got to see them play the Milwaukee Brewers and the San Diego Padres. It was nice to see stars like Craig Nettles, Ron Cey, Garvey, Jody Davis, Ron Sandberg, plus all the rest.

Another highlight of the tour was the annual North Dakota picnic where we must have met over 50 people that we knew well. The first couple we ran into was Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Berg, who now reside in Valley City. He used to edit the Grafton Record for quite a number of years.

In May of 1985, my sisters Blanche and Frances went along with Mamie and me on a seven day trip to Hudson, New York, to visit our relatives, the Beynarts. We traveled by North Central Airlines and the round trip ticket was \$199 a piece. Mr. Beynart is a son of my dad's sister, whom my father spon-



sored to this country.

John and his wife Arlene really showed us a grand time welcoming us with open arms. We stayed at their house during our visit and he chauffeured us around to various sites during our stay. He showed us where his father Justin Beynart worked during his lifetime and where he lived during his life. One of the surprises he informed us about was that he never knew his father had any Polish blood in him, as his mother was Lithuanian and his folks always spoke that language at home.

While there we visited with his daughter, Claudia, who is married and has three children and toured the area within a radius of 100 miles. We visited Stotsville, Albany, West Point Academy, and the Norman Rockwell Museum. The New York area we toured was acceptable for me, as there were no mountains or deserts.

John and Arlene visited our area about seven years ago, and assured us that in their lifetime, they want to make at least one more trip to North Dakota.

We've completed our coverage of the United States, having covered every state in the union except Hawaii. In recollecting the conditions of all the states, there are a number of states that I feel I could make my home and adjust to quickly. They are: certain areas of California (especially where Dennis Risky, my nephew, lives), parts of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and the Niagara Falls area. Of course all of these would have to be in the rural area.

The world is so small and you can cover so much of it without much effort. I never even dreamed 20 years ago that I would see so much. It's all interesting to see, especially in foreign countries as to how people live under completely different conditions.

The five or six countries we covered in Europe, a person could get around nicely if you could speak German. Another interesting situation that's normal in all the countries we visited, was the studying of at least two languages is compulsory. I hope this country soon realizes how valuable knowing more than one language is. We met quite a few young people in Japan, China, Cambodia, and the European countries that strive to learn the English language, as then they have their life made.

I don't know how many more tours God will grant us, as when you age, it's from a day to day living. I am however confident that we will still do more.

## MY RETIREMENT

We moved into Minto on April 27, 1969, and I continued working at the insurance business until July 1, 1976.

The pressure of the insurance business was such that I was beginning to worry about having a nervous breakdown. I sold my business to James Schanilec (a young married man) in whom I had the greatest of confidence. I sold it for \$9,200, without a penny down, spreading his payments over a five year period with the first payment due six months after the purchase. He sure appreciated the payment schedule. He gave me a promissary note without any other co-signor. He wanted to get his father to co-sign the note, but I told him I had complete faith in him, and didn't want any co-signors. He paid off the note a year and a half before it matured, and has done real well.

I don't have much leisure time, as I am still president of the Walsh County Historical Society, President of the Senior Citizens Nutrition program, and chairman of the Walsh County Senior Citizens Transportation Committee. Eight years ago, we organized a local Senior Citizens Club in which I have been very active, and spend alot of time at the club playing cards with other members.

In the summertime, we have the trees and lawn to putter around with and I spend alot of time on the farm. In the spring, I do alot of harrowing and some cultivating. Come harvest, I have operated one of their swathers annually. In the fall, I get a chance to do some plowing and operate the sugar-beet rotobearer on a when-needed basis. All of these jobs have been without any compensation, as I never wanted any. The farm work is the most enjoyable part of my retired life.

I haven't lost my love for sports, and never miss any baseball or basketball games in town. I also shoot a few baskets when I get out on the farm, and when the grandchildren come around, I enjoy playing catch with them.

Despite my retirement, I still can't shake my interest in politics. I attend every political function in the county and every executive committee meeting. I have made a resolution which I hope I can hold up to, and that is, I will quit my involvement in politics from now on.

As I look back at the changes that have taken place in what seems to me like a short life, it's just beyond imagination. From oxen to horses, then tractors. From walking to buggies, then the poor cars, and now the limousines and airplanes. From hand sythes to reapers, and now combines. From letter

communication to telephone, then telegraph to radio and TV. From times that everyone watched his pennies and a means of surviving, to the outlandish living conditions of the present time. When a dollar was a dollar, and everyone appreciated its value, as it was all hard-earned, to the present waste, and times where no one really knows the value of a hard-earned buck, except the people that lived through the thirties. The early days had no welfare or poor relief. First came the poor relief, then the welfare programs of every description which have made life so easy to live without work. Married couples stayed married -- there were no divorces. Large families promoted the growth of small towns, school districts and churches. Yes, life has changed beyond imagination. From the candle to the kerosine lamp, to gas lamps and to electricity. From wood heating to electricity, oil and gas.

You hear alot of comments, "The good old days". I don't think anyone living through them, would care to relive them. I often wonder if the next generation will live through so many changes. No doubt they will, as the changes are coming so rapidly.

A person is often times asked, "If you had your life to live over again, how would you live it?" My answer would be, 'Just the way I lived it before - most of the time doing the same kind of work.' Whatever you do, do something you like to do. Never look at the monetary aspect, as money isn't everything. Happiness means alot more.

I feel I have lived an interesting life. I've had a marvelous wife without whom I would never have accomplished near as much. We both worked hard, but with love, nothing comes hard.

We raised four lovely children -- two sons and two daughters. All of them have grown up and married, and throughout the years they have all brought thousands of hours of happiness to us. We now have 14 grandchildren which makes life worth living, and spending joyous hours with them. Both my wife and I are extremely proud of all of our family. They have been great not only to us, but to the entire community, where they are all well respected.

James married Kathryn Kosobud on November 16, 1968. They are the parents of Lisa Marie, Kimberly Kay and Anton Edward. They live  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of Warsaw.

Mary Alice married Larry Corah on October 24, 1964. They are the parents of Michelle Lynn, Thomas James, Chad Michael, and Mark David. They live in Manhattan, Kansas.

John married Susan Barta on September 11, 1971. They are the parents of Jay Michael, Jody Suzanne, Andrew John and Lee Daniel. They are living at the farm place, 2½ miles west of Warsaw.

Marjorie married Paul Gourde on July 11, 1970. They are the parents of Christopher Paul, Matthew Todd and Sara Jo. They reside in Harwood, N.D.



Standing left to right: Larry Corah, Tom Corah, Paul Gourde, Lisa Gudajtes, Kathy Gudajtes and Susan Gudajtes. Second Row: Chad Corah, Michelle Corah, Matthew Gourde, Christopher Gourde, Kim Gudajtes and Jay Gudajtes. Front Row: Mary Corah holding Mark Corah, Sara Gourde, Marge Gourde, Ed Gudajtes, Marie Gudajtes, Jim Gudajtes with Anton Gudajtes, Jody Gudajtes, John Gudajtes holding Lee and Andy Gudajtes.

Death eventually comes to all, and I see no reason not to think about the inevitable. The interval between birth and death is called "Life". For some, this period is short, only a few hours. For most, the life span is measured in years, sometimes beyond the three score and ten promised. When the end does come, I have decided that my leave-taking should be noticed as much as my arrival.

In conclusion, I hope that my words will give you some memories as to my life and of the early living conditions. I set my goal early in life as to what I wanted to be, and what I wanted to accomplish. I feel that I was short changed, as I didn't set my goals far enough, as I have already reached all my goals and accomplishments. Won't you please follow my advice, "SET YOUR GOALS FOR LIFE EARLY AND HIGH ENOUGH". There is nothing you can't accomplish if you so desire.

GOOD LUCK AND GOD BLESS YOU!!

## OMISSIONS AND ADDITIONS

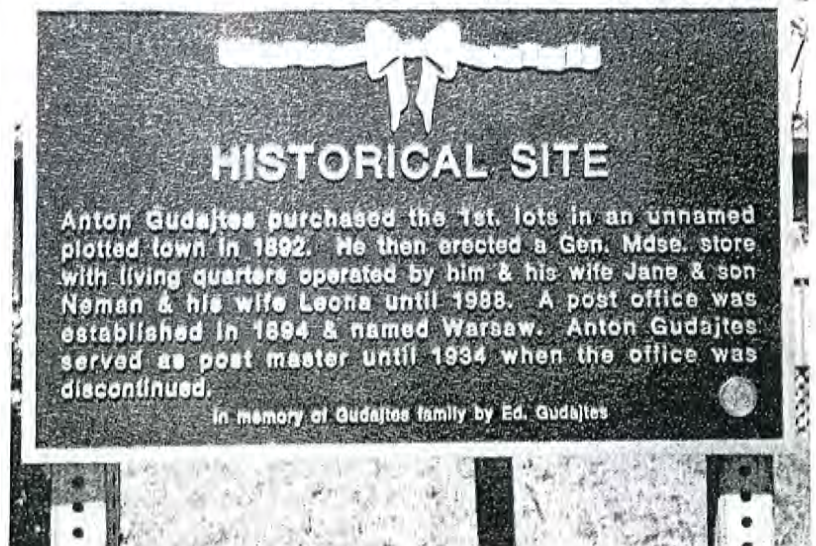


May 1989

Approximately four years have gone by since the completion of my original memoirs. At 78, I feel just as sound mentally as ever, so I will continue with my life of the past four years. There were incidents of joy and happiness, as well as sorrow.

First of all, I lost my last brother on Christmas Day of 1987. He passed away quietly after a lengthy in-and-out of the hospital stay in the past year. He finally ended up with his right leg amputated below the knee. He was doing real well, but the grim reaper came around unexpectedly. It was with Neman that I spent more of my life than any other member of my family. We lived with mother and dad for almost 29 years, farmed in partnership for 16 years, and operated a beer tavern for eight years. After we split up our partnership, he helped me with our farm operation until my sons grew up. Not only was his departure hard, but less than four months after his death, the store around which our entire lives twined, closed its doors. Two months later it was demolished, and a mobile home was moved on the site where Neman's wife, Leona, now resides with her son Wayne.

For six months I kept thinking something should be done to remember the great history of my parents and the store. Finally I decided to get the site approved by the Walsh County Historical Society as a "Historical Site". I also got it approved as a Historical Site by the North Dakota State Historical Society. It is after this that I decided on placing a cast bronze plaque on the location with the following wording: "Anton Gudajtes purchased the first lots in an unnamed plotted town in 1892. He then erected a general merchandise store with living quarters operated by him and his wife Jane, and son Neman and his wife Leona until 1988."



The plaque has a bronze North Dakota Centennial Coin imbedded in the right hand corner. It is attached to a 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  galvanized square tubing with a two inch square tubing inside for double strength. It is embedded three feet in the ground in concrete for exceptional strength. The County Highway Department has added signs as you enter Warsaw from the east or west designating the historical site. Hundreds of people stop by to read it, and it is my hope that it will remain erect on the site for many, many years in the future.

The passing away of my brother, Neman, elevated my rank in the Gudajtes clan to the senior man member living in America, as to our family knowledge we are the only Gudajtes family in America, as our father had no brother.

#### POSITIONS AND AWARDS

In 1971 I was elected as third Vice-President of the North Dakota Fraternal Congress, composed of 31 fraternal companies selling insurance in the state. In 1982 I was elevated to first Vice-President, and in 1973 to the presidency which is limited to a one year term. In 1974 I was their official delegate to the National Fraternal Convention at Las Vegas, Nevada, and was elected as director to the National Secretarial Board. In 1975 I attended their national convention at Cleveland, Ohio, at which time I resigned my position, as it required too much travel with no compensation.

In 1983 I took over the presidency of the Walsh County Historical Society and served in that capacity until January 1989 when I resigned. In 1986 I was elected as president of the Walsh County Senior Citizens Council which I still hold. The county has 12 communities with Senior Citizen groups and is the most organized county in the state of North Dakota.

In 1988 I was elected as secretary of the Minto Development Corporation for a term of three years. In 1989 I was appointed to the Special Assessment committee for the City of Minto.

The year 1989 has been a year of receiving recognition plaques. In April I received a plaque from P.N.A. Council 195 for over 40 years of dedicated service. In May I received a plaque for many years of dedicated service from the Walsh County Senior Citizens Council. In July I received one from the Walsh County Museum.

## TRAVELS

In February of 1986, we took a 14 day bus tour to the southwestern corner of the United States, ending in California and a part of Mexico. On the way home we took a different route so that we covered most of the western states. We also flew to Manhattan for the Thanksgiving holiday.

In 1987 we took a seven day tour to the Ozarks. There we witnessed the largest Passion Play in America.

In 1988 we took a four day bus tour to Minneapolis to see the Minnesota Twins in action, and take in the Minnesota State Fair. For Thanksgiving we drove by car to Manhattan to spend a few days with our daughter Mary Alice, and her family. Chris Gourde, our grandson, did most of the driving.

In 1989 it looks like our traveling has come to an end because of my health conditions. We do take an occasional ride to Fargo to spend time with our youngest daughter Marjorie and her family.

## GUDAJTES NAME

Gudajtes, Gudajtes, Gudajtes. How many times have you been asked by strangers what nationality you are? I always answer them that I am an American, as it really is hard to figure out where we belong. First of all my dad was born in the vicinity of Vilno, Poland. He went to school for three years. The first year the area was under control by Lithuania, so he studied under that language. The second year it was under Russia, so he studied Russian. The third year he had to study Polish. That, plus the fact that Poland had 90% of Jews at the time, makes me wonder if we don't have some Jewish blood in us, as there were four of us brothers and we were all inclined towards business.

Getting to the name takes me back to how many times have you been introduced to a total stranger and 99 times out of 100 they will come back with the question, 'would you please repeat that?' I always tease these people that I have such a beautiful name that they love to hear the sweet tone of it. When I served as president of the North Dakota Fraternal Congress in 1973 and was emceeding the annual convention, a gentleman from the crowd walked up to me at the podium after the conclusion of the program and said, "Hi, Mr. Gudajtes" with perfect pronunciation, and asked me "Where did you get your name?" Naturally I answered 'from my father, where else would I get it?' "No, no" he replied.

"You have the speech and all actions of a pure blooded Polak and a 100% Lithuanian name". Then he introduced himself as a professor at North Dakota State University who emigrated to this country 18 years previously from approximately the same area as where dad was born. He told me how the boundary of Poland would change almost annually with all of the invaders having similar rules for the citizens in the area taken over to follow. They gave the people three choices which were: 1) They would change your name to their nationality. 2) Ship you out to Siberia to freeze and starve. 3) Stand before a firing squad. "Evidently one of your ancestors must have taken the first choice", he stated. Whether it is true I do not know, but it sounds logical and convincing.

#### HEALTH PROBLEMS

In April of 1987, I entered the hospital for the 12th time for another cystoscopy of my bladder for any tumors that might be appearing. It was just a two day stay, and the news was real good, as they informed me that they had finally killed all the cancer cells and that I need not come back again unless I would feel something different. After about two months of aches and pains in my hips and legs (which I had diagnosed as either arthritis or rheumatism), I went to visit a doctor. After numerous x-rays and finally a bone scan, they came to the conclusion without any doubt that I had bone cancer. There were four or five spots on the spine, spots on both hips, and one rib. A report of this kind certainly is not easy to swallow. Mamie and I both took it pretty hard, and especially Mamie, which really made me feel more sorry for her than myself. After hearing this news from the orthopedic doctor, I immediately went to my past cancer doctor, Dr. Doce. He immediately ordered me to have an orchiectomy surgery. This was now my 13th hospital visit. This time it was to be as an out-patient. I came back the same day and felt quite well, but for the next two days I was in such pain that I didn't know what to do with myself. Finally in about a week the pain started easing and I started to regain my strength.

At the present I feel pretty good, outside of my lower back and hips. I can get around pretty good, but I have a hard time climbing or descending steps. If conditions remain as they are, I expect to be around for quite awhile. The thing that I miss the most is doing field work, as anytime I got



bored with city life, I'd go out on the farm and the boys would give me an easy job as harrowing, cultivating or plowing, although I did do alot of their swathing and rotobeating of beets. To me these jobs were truly a vacation which I enjoyed more than any trip we'd take.

#### DROUGHT OF 1988

In the year 1988 we went through the worst drought in the history of our country. It was real hot from early spring with really no rain to amount to anything. The weathermen said that according to their past records, the drought was worse than in the dirty 30's. My estimation was that the 30's were worse, but the records show different. The farmers got about 25% of their normal yields, but what kept them afloat is that Uncle Sam came across and paid out millions in disaster relief. This, plus Federal Crop Insurance payments (coverages most of the farmers carried) made it a break even year. The beet crop (despite low tonnage) paid record prices, as the sugar content because of the drought was very high and the growers are paid on the basis of sugar content. My sons averaged about 11 ton per acre.

#### CENTENNIAL YEAR - 1989

As a result of North Dakota celebrating its centennial year, there was plenty of activity throughout the state. Every town had a centennial project plus a big celebration. The city of Minto built a new ball park grandstand, and a Centennial Flower Garden which cost over \$25,000. The city celebrated the event with a three day celebration on July 2nd, 3rd, and with a huge parade on the 4th. I didn't get to see much of the parade, as I was one of the dignitaries riding in the front seat of a Lincoln representing the Walsh County Senior Citizens as its president. Riding in the back seat was my sister Sophie and her husband, George M. Wsocki, as the longest married couple in Minto - a term of 63 years. All the activities went over perfect without an accident.

As previously mentioned, we got married on November 21, 1939, and for years we were wondering if we would live to our 50th anniversary. Well, the years past rapidly and before we knew it 1989 was here. Our children met with us and informed us that they would put an anniversary celebration on for us. The hardest and first thing we had to do was set the date. First we settled on Labor Day weekend. However, a conflict came up as Chris Gourde, our grandson, was to leave

for the Air Force Reserve on August 10th, and naturally he wanted to attend, as well as the rest of the grandchildren. So, we finally settled on June 24th, despite the fact that there was a wedding in Warsaw, and Grafton was celebrating its Centennial Days.

June 24th turned out perfect. It was a cloudy day with the temperature in the 70's. Our Thanksgiving mass was set for 5:00 p.m. An hour before the services, the entire clan gathered around the church and a photographer took pictures of us, our children, and grandchildren.

The church was all decorated with flowers and was filled to capacity with some chairs set in the aisles to accommodate all in attendance. Father Lubas (local pastor) conducted the services and had the sermon. He really treated us special. The singing of the parish choir and James Costello's solo was just out of this world. The children and their families processed to the front, and we were led behind them by the priest. On the way out we followed the same pattern - the children and their families, and us with the priest. At the exit, everyone in attendance was handed a balloon. When we left for the Legion Hall for the rest of the celebration, the balloons were all released, creating a beautiful picture in the sky. We had our new Oldsmobile 88 parked by the church to drive to the hall, but our children surprised us with a special mode of transportation, as we were chauffeured in a horse drawn buggy.

The Legion was beautifully decorated with peach and champagne colored balloons. Despite using a helium tank for blowing balloons, it was quite a chore for all the children blowing up 800 of them.

At the hall, we had the bar open for an hour before our meal. We served 324 meals, with all guests being seated at one time, except for two of our neighbors, as the entire two floors were full. The "Royal Fork" food caterers from Grand Forks served the meal which consisted of roast beef, ham, potatoes, two vegetables and salad. Mamie baked a beautiful mountain cake which served as our four tiered wedding cake. The entire serving was arranged to such perfection, that in less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour, everyone was served.

After the meal we had a short program with Gary Babinski, my nephew, as emcee. He was great! After giving a short history of our lives, he introduced our children who in turn introduced their spouses and children. This was followed by a break in the program which the emcee called the "Champagne Break". After the break and a toast, my wife and I said a few words of thanks and appreciation. After the program, the bar served again until 10:00 p.m.

The whole affair was so outstanding that everyone in attendance remarked that they had never attended as beautiful an anniversary celebration and which



June 24, 1989

was organized so well. All the credit for the great event goes to our children who did so much to make it a perfect day for us. If there ever was a day that I was really, really, proud of my children, this was it! So many in attendance congratulated us on our children putting on such an elaborate affair, and stated how they wished they had families that could present themselves in such distinctive taste. We got over 250 beautiful congratulatory cards from all our good friends throughout the United States.

Now that we have attained and past the long awaited, we look back when our friends surprised us with a nice 25th anniversary party. We think back and think of the wonderful people we have spent our lives with. We've always been treated so well that I don't think if we had our lives to live over, we would want any thing different.

Today, as through our lives, we still enjoy each others company. We are free to do as we please and buy what we want -- if we don't get carried away. We don't worry any more about keeping up with the Jones's, and we notice the Jones's aren't going very fast anyway.

My wife and I have traveled a lot. We have lots of experience. Sometimes we have all the answers too. But we notice not too many ask the questions. Yes, we do look back, but mostly we are trying to keep up.

Reaching the twilight zone, this is the final chapter. I sincerely hope you enjoy reading my life as I enjoyed writing it. The only way I know of closing is with blessings to all -- our friends, children, and grandchildren -- "MAY GOD BLESS YOU" and remember God the Supreme, as He is the Master of all.



Standing left to right: Matthew Gourde, Tom Corah, Kim Gudajtes, Marge Gourde, Paul Gourde, John Gudajtes, Susan Gudajtes, Lisa Gudajtes, Chad Corah and Chris Gourde. Middle Row left to right: Anton Gudajtes, Michelle Corah, Larry Corah, Mary Corah, Marnie Gudajtes, Ed Gudajtes, Kathy Gudajtes, Jim Gudajtes and Jay Gudajtes. Front Row left to right: Jody Gudajtes, Andy Gudjates, Lee Gudajtes, Mark Corah and Sara Gourde.

Taken June 24, 1989

*Love*

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY  
MAMIE AND ED GUDAJTES  
SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1989  
CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART - MINTO, N.D.

Prelude "Hail Mary, Gentle Woman"  
"Abba Father"

Processional "Sing a New Song"

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

1st Reading: Zechariah 12:10-11  
2nd Reading: Galatians 3:26-29  
Gospel: Luke 9:18-24

Homily

Prayers of the Faithful

Presentation of Gifts "On Eagles Wings"

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Sign of Peace "Prayer of St. Francis"  
"Immaculate Mary"

Communion "All That I Am"  
"Only a Shadow"  
"Peace is Flowing Like a River"

Communion Psalm "Blest Be the Lord"

Closing Prayer

Final Blessing

Recessional "Glory and Praise to Our God"

*bears all things,*



*believes all things,*

*hopes all things,*

*endures all things.*

President

Father Feliks Lubas

Music Ministers

Marlene Hagen  
Church Choir

Hospitality Ministers

Thomas Corah  
Christopher Gourde  
Chad Corah  
Matthew Gourde

Acolytes

Jay Gudajtes  
Anton Gudajtes

Proclaimers

Kathryn Gudajtes  
Marjorie Gourde  
Michelle Corah

Gift Bearers

James Gudajtes  
Mary Corah  
John Gudajtes  
Marjorie Gourde

Eucharistic Minister

Paul Gourde

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RECEPTION AND DINNER FOLLOWING

MINTO AMERICAN LEGION

\*\*\*\*\*

Bridal Party

for

Mamie and Ed Gudajtes

November 21, 1939

Church of St. Stanislaus - Warsaw, N.D.

Edmund Slominski  
Harry Byzewski

Helen Slominski  
Delores Pfeiffer

\*\*\*\*\*

Master of Ceremonies

Gary Babinski

Guest Book

Kimberly Gudajtes

Anniversary Times

Andrew Gudajtes  
Lee Gudajtes  
Mark Corah

Punch Bowl

Sara Gourde  
Jody Gudajtes

Cake Cutters

Michelle Corah  
Lisa Gudajtes

\*\*\*\*\*

Reception and Dinner hosted by the children  
and grandchildren of Mamie and Ed

Jim, Kathy, Lisa, Kim and Tony

Mary, Larry, Michelle, Tom, Chad and Mark

John, Susan, Jay, Jody, Andy and Lee

Marge, Paul, Chris, Manny and Sara

We would like to thank all of you for joining us today to celebrate and pray with us on the occasion of our 50th wedding anniversary. May God Bless You Always!

Mamie and Ed

