

*Frank and Katie Skrypetz and their family, 1940.*

Travelling westward from Halifax, they arrived at the immigration office at East Selkirk. They then travelled by ox-cart to his Uncle John Skrypetz' homestead in Libau.

Their first home was settled on a forty acre farm on N.W. 1/4 of 32-15-6E, where five more children were born. Frank attended the Libau East School, the same school also attended by his children.

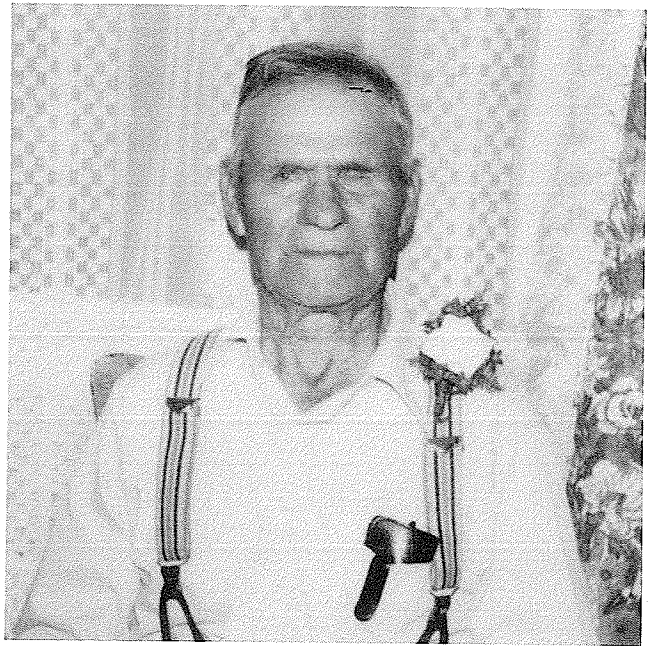
Frank at the age of eighteen, went to work for the C.N. putting up the grade for the railway to Grand Beach. His wage was sixteen cents per hour. Later he helped to build the Grand Beach Dance Hall, which has since been destroyed by fire. He worked in Northern Ontario in bush camps, sawmills, nickle mines in Sudbury and on the C.N. Railway. He then went west to work on the C.P. Railway building branch lines, also helped harvest crops in the west.

Returning to Libau, he purchased his own land, 1/4 section at S.E. 23-15-6E, which was all bush. With lots of hard work, he cleared some land and built a home.

In 1929, he married Katherine Kurazinski in Wpg. Frank with his bride arrived by train at the Libau Station, where his cousin Bert met and drove them to their farmhouse by horse and wagon.

Together they worked the land, brushed and grubbed and picked stones and roots. The first ten acres of land were broke by a breaking plough pulled by four horses, the rest of the land was later broke by tractor and breaking plow.

Frank and Katie worked on a mixed farm, raising cattle, pigs and chickens, and growing wheat, oats and barley. The price of cream in 1930 was \$2.47 for a large can. Frank also cut cordwood, and in winter he hauled the cordwood by sleigh and horses to Selkirk where it was sold for \$3.50 a cord. He would leave in the early morning darkness to return home late in the dark of night. During this time away his wife would take over all farm chores.



*Frank Skrypetz's 85th birthday, Aug. 8, 1982.*

Of this Union, three children were born; Bernice (Mrs. Frank Payonk), Minnie (Mrs. John Komish), and son Carl married to (nee Nettie Wishnowski).

Residing all their lives in Libau, Frank and Katie were active in St. Joseph's Polish National Catholic Church in Libau. Together, they enjoyed spending time with their five grandchildren; Kathy and Valerie Komish; Brian, Karen, and Russell Skrypec.

Mrs. Katie Skrypetz passed away in July 1973, and at the present, Frank still enjoys good health at the age of eighty-five and lives in the same house he built fifty-five years ago.

## **THOMAS AND IRENE SKRYPNYK**

*submitted by Helen Skrypnyk*

Tymko (Thomas) Skrypnyk, son of Pankiw and Teklia was born in the Ukraine, February 2nd, 1904. He met and married Yarena (Irene) Petryschak, daughter of Hnaut and Naschia, born October 28th, 1908. This marriage took place in Capowci, Ukraine on October 17th, 1926. They had three children in the Ukraine - Maria (Mary), Wasyl (Bill), and Wlodomirko (Walter). To complete their family, two more children, Doris in 1941 and Bohdan (Don) in 1944, were born in Canada.

In 1938 their venture to Canada began. Pulled by two horses and a wagon, they packed a few belongings and left Capowci, Zaleszczyki on July 11th arriving at Czortkowie, then by train to Warszawy (Warsaw) arriving on the 15th. From Warsaw, arrived at Gdynia Port July 21st, boarded a ship to London, England arriving July 25th. Then their fourteen day voyage on the Empress of Australia to Quebec, arriving on the 4th of August. Finally by train to Winnipeg settling in the municipality of St. Clements at Lockport.

With what little money they were able to bring with



*Left to Right: Irene (Yarena) Skrypnyk, Thomas (Timko), Thomas's sister. Bottom Row: Bill (Wasy), Walter (Wlodomirko), Mary (Maria) and their cousin.*

them, they purchased fifty-five acres of land (at \$35 an acre), one cow and two horses. A one-room log house was built the following year. Twenty acres of land was cleared, five acres by hand and fifteen by hiring a caterpillar. Vegetables and grain were grown. Bill and Mary recall loading a wagon and selling vegetables door to door. In 1940 a democrat was purchased and vegetables were transported to Selkirk. Tom started working at the Manitoba Rolling Mill for 35 cents an hour and with the sale of vegetables, saved enough to buy their first truck in 1947 and a tractor in 1951.

Later Bill started working for the Manitoba Rolling Mills and married the former Betty Babisky. They have



*Left to Right: Bill Skrypnyk, Don Skrypnyk, Mary Petaski, Irene and Thomas Skrypnyk, Doris Merriman, Walter Skrypnyk.*

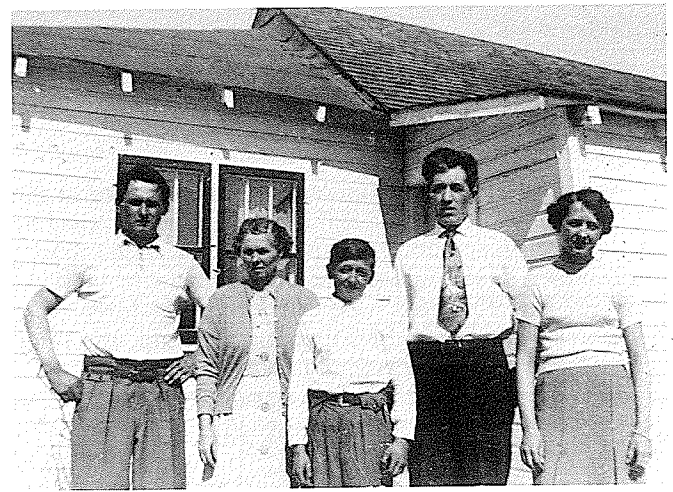
three children. Bill and Betty are living at the homeplace at Lockport.

Mary married Casimir Petaski, they have two boys and are living at Lockport.

In 1963, Doris married Joe Merriman. They, with their two sons are living in Regina.

Walter stayed and worked on the farm while his dad continued at the mill. In 1954 they purchased 220 acres of land in the municipality of St. Andrews. A potato storage was built and potato farming was their main farming enterprise along with a small beef herd. A house, garage and a hog farm was added in 1959 and hogs were added to their farming enterprise.

Tom and Irene celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1976 with many friends and relatives consisting of their five children, husbands and wives; twelve grandchildren; and one great grandson.



*Left to Right: Walter (Mother), Irene, Donny, Father Thomas and Doris.*

Tom lived to see another great grandchild born and later that year in February, 1977 he passed away. Shortly after his death, Irene moved to Selkirk leaving her home to your youngest son Don, his wife and three children.

Walter Skrypnyk - Working on his potato farm, meant a lot of manual labor. On one of his visits to the Lab and



*Four generations; Helen Skrypnyk (mother) Dora Smoley (Great-grandmother) Billy Skrypnyk, Mary Chura (grandmother).*



*Left to Right: Angela, Patrick, Billy, Cynthia, Helen and Walter.*

X-ray he noticed the receptionist. This gal was Helen, daughter of Mike and Mary Chura. They dated and on October 24th, 1959 (on her parent's 26th anniversary) they married.

Walter and Helen moved to the home in St. Andrews, later were joined by his parents brother and sister. After four years, and the birth of their sons Bill, Patrick and a daughter Cynthia, they moved to the home of Oscar Wickets which they purchased along with 180 acres. With some renovations and a bedroom built in the basement and waterworks installed, they had their first real home.

Four years later, another daughter Angela was born. More alterations to accomodate a bigger family. As the children grew, as did the farming enterprize, a new house was built to house the growing family and a machine shed to house the added equipment.

With the type of heavy soil near the river, Walter decided to diversify more into beef and finally in 1974 gave up the potatoes. Also due to inconvenience, hogs were also given up.

Walter served as chairman on the school board at a time when one of his teachers (Myrtle Barnett) taught his children. Billy, Patrick and Cynthia attended school at Margaret Hayworth until its closure, later were bussed to Selkirk. Each had completed their 12th grade. Angela is presently attending high school. Billy is presently following his grandfather's and Uncle Bill's footsteps by working at the Manitoba Rolling Mill. Cynthia is employed with the Selkirk Mental Health Centre and contemplating nurses training. Patrick ventured into University for his Diploma Course in Agriculture, finding more effort was needed. He is now toying with the idea of going back, or going into full-time farming. With his dad, they now farm about 500 acres and have a beef herd of one hundred and some.

Helen's input towards the farming enterprize is in working as secretary at the Agricultural Office since 1972. Through her job she, with the help of her husband, had started a 4-H club in their area called the Red River Squatters 4-H Club. They are especially pleased with their previous floats which won awards at the Selkirk Fair and with the carolling which they do in English as well as

some German and Ukranian. This carolling is done to 4-H families in their immediate area as well as shut-ins. Helen is also a member of the Selkirk Community Choir. Walter is chairman of the Manitoba Pool Elevator for the Selkirk district as well as director on the P.F.R.A. pasture advisory board.

In conclusion, we all hope that our economic conditions improve so that our children and their children can enjoy a fruitful and busy life as we have.

## **HNAT (HARRY) AND FESKA SLIPEC**

*submitted by Mary Lefteruk/slh*

Hnat Slipec married Feska Michalchuk. Feska had come from Europe as a young lady with one child. Her husband had died in the War and she wanted a new life for herself as well as that of her child. So, Feska and her baby daughter, Mary, left by ship for Canada, arriving in about 1912, to Winnipeg, first by C.P.R. She remained in the City for awhile, and then later, staying at Gonor, Man. In Gonor, Feska had a cousin (Mr. Kaminski), who opened his home to Feska and young Mary.

Feska had met Hnat Slipec earlier in Winnipeg, where he was working and earning a living. Hnat had one child, Nettie, a young girl. They soon met again and after a short courtship, they were married. Their first homestead was in Riverton, Man., where they cleared the land and built a home. Soon Andrew was born (1914) followed by Harry (1915) and Anne (1917).

Then they moved from Riverton with their growing family and settled on the North end of St. Peters Parish on the east side of the Red River. (Nettie Hnat's daughter from the previous marriage remained in Riverton). After about 2 years in this location they then moved across the river (St. Andrews Munc.) and lived for awhile until they bought lot 201, St. Peters Road. It was at this location that Steve was born in 1929, on the east side of the River.

Mary, the first born, married John Lefteruk.

Andrew married Grace Louise McQueen and they had no children. Grace died in 1980 at age 62. Andrew and Grace had spent all of their married years living in B.C., where Andrew worked at iron and steel work as well as the Corporation of Surrey Public Works. Andrew retired from the Surrey Corp. in 1978 after spending 15 years



*Hnat and Feska Slipec*



*Hnat and Feska Slipec, 1955.*



*Nettie (August) Hallwas, daughter of Hnat Slipec.*



*Steve Slipec and wife Elsie.*



*Ann and Nick Boyko, 1979.*

with the Public Works Dept. Andrew travelled to Manitoba, in 1983 and spent over a month visiting his Mother and his sisters and looking over the old stomping grounds.

Harry, at age 18 years, disappeared from home and was never seen again. No amount of searching ever turned up a clue as to his whereabouts. He had left for a dance being held over on the West side, and then disappeared, having never made an appearance at the dance. This was a very tragic happening and caused much grief to the Slipec family. It is the "not knowing" that affected the family, and like all living parents, it is to be sincerely hoped that "whatever happened" that Harry was not allowed to suffer. At any rate it appears that the life of a young man was snuffed out just on the eve of manhood.

Joseph married Marion and they have four children, Ronnie, Shirley, Douglas and Sharon. Joseph died in a very tragic accident.

Anne married Nick Boyko and they have two children, Stephanie and Robert.

Steve married Elsie Steves and they have two children, Naomi and Garry. Elsie is deceased, she died in her 29th year from a rare illness resulting in sleeping sickness. This was a tragic event mourned by all the family. In 1983 Steve visited Manitoba, and spent an enjoyable few weeks with Mary, Andrew and his Mother Feska, on St. Peters Road. During his visit Steve worked the land he loved as a boy.

Hnat worked for the C.P.R. when he was stationed at Riverton to supply an income for his family. Once he moved back to St. Peters, he mainly worked the land and engaged in mixed farming and market gardening. Hnat passed away in 1956 at the age of 72 years.

Feska turned 93 years on her last birthday (May 15, 1983) and lives in her own house and cares for herself and her home. She did much sewing and needlework for many years and now gets great pleasure from her flowers and garden as well as enjoying her television. Feska is loved and respected greatly by her family.

## THE SMILEY FAMILY

*submitted by J.A. Smiley*

John Smiley was born, May 6, 1894 in Dublin, Ireland. Approximately 1905 he boarded a ship, with his older sister Florrie and immigrated to Canada. Docking on the East coast of Canada he travelled by train to Western Manitoba (Brandon, Minto, etc.) where he worked on several farms before coming to the Van Horne Farms in East Selkirk. At the Van Horne Farms he worked as a cattleman's helper, showing purebred cattle on the fair circuit at Calgary, Regina, Brandon and Toronto. (Behind in Ireland he left his father Samuel, his step-mother, a brother Samuel, sister Lizzie, step-brother Victor, and step-sister Violet. His mother Elizabeth, died November 8, 1897. Brother Samuel later immigrated to Canada after the First World War.)

With World War 1 breaking out in 1914, John enlisted with the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles. He saw action in both Belgium and France in the Battles of Mons, Ypres, and Vimy Ridge. John returned to East Selkirk in 1919 and worked on the Van Horne Farms until through the Soldiers Settlement Board Act, he was able to settle on his own farm 3 miles NE of East Selkirk in 1920. (This land was previously owned by J.R. Oastler, who was manager of the Van Horne Farms at the time.) On April 6, 1920 he married Lily Larson, daughter of Hans and Bergitte Larson, originally from Olso, Norway. Hans Larson was a section foreman for the CPR at East Selkirk. Lily was born December 12, 1895 and had been raised in East Selkirk. Together John and Lily farmed and raised five sons.

In the late 1920's, while working as a steam engineers helper on a thrashing machine owned by J.R. Oastler, John lost the four fingers on his left hand while oiling the thrasher on one of the neighboring farms. At the time he simply wrapped his hand up in a bandage, pulled on a glove and then drove himself into the Selkirk Hospital in a horse and buggy, where a doctor removed his four dangling fingers.



*John Smiley, Post  
Master, East Selkirk.*



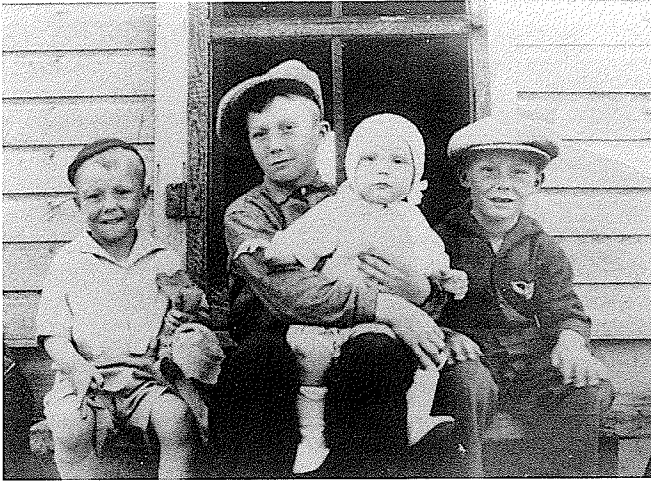
*Left to Right: Ann  
(Larson)  
Welch-Coutts, Lily  
(Larson) Smiley.*

On a hot summer afternoon in 1931 the Smileys' original home was burnt to the ground with none of their possessions being saved. For the next four months, they lived with bachelor Jimmy Allen (who lived directly north of them), while their new home was being built. John continued to farm his land and his sons returned home each day to feed and milk their cows. Their new home was built by Mr. Harrison, a carpenter, who also made them a kitchen table and a bench for the boys. A number of other pieces of furniture were donated by neighbors.

During the summer of 1934, Lily was admitted to the hospital with a serious case of blood poisoning which was contacted from a washing board. Approximately a month later John also entered the hospital with blood poisoning contacted from the same washing board. Lily was in such serious condition that it was almost three weeks later that they informed her that her husband was also in the hospital. Due to her weakened condition the



*John and Lily Smiley.*

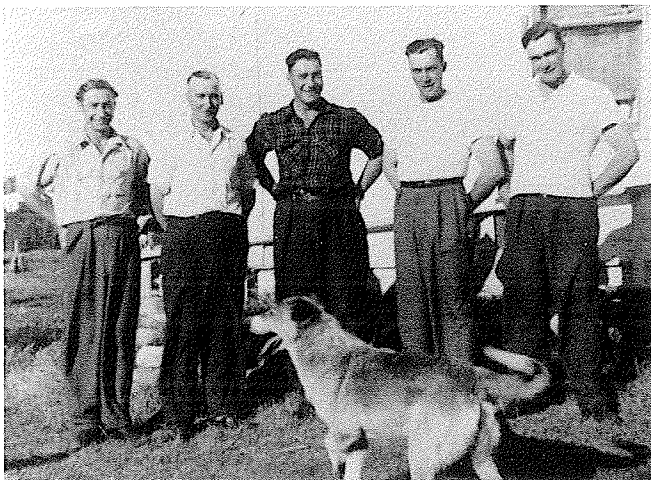


*Left to Right: Ross, Alvin, Jack, and Baby Roy.*

doctor had to lance the middle finger of her right hand at least five times without any anaesthetic. This finger was to remain stiff for the rest of her life after having been opened so many times to remove the blood poisoning. With the seriousness of her condition, and the belief on the part of the doctor that Lily would not survive, Lily's sister Anna, made arrangements for each of their five sons to be adopted into different homes in Winnipeg. However, due to sheer willpower on Lily's part to live and take care of her sons, these arrangements were never completed. Both Lily and John remained in the hospital for about three months.

All during the 1930's John served as secretary for the Mayfield School Board, where he reviewed hundreds of applications from teachers wishing to apply for a teaching position that paid \$600.00 per year. In 1938, John became postmaster at East Selkirk and Lily was his assistant. They looked after the post office until 1957 when they retired.

During 1941-1943, Jimmy Kenny was hired to break more of their land on a Share Crop basis. Jimmy was allowed to clear the brush, break the land and then harvest the first two crops as payment.



*Left to Right: Jim, Alvin, Ross, Jack and Roy, 1950's.*

After retiring from the post office, John and Lily continued farming until John's death November 12, 1966. Sons, Jack and Roy helped their mother with the farming until her death, January 20, 1980. John can also be remembered as a fine horseman, who won many red and blue ribbons while showing his Black Percheron Horses.

The five sons, Alvin born in 1922, Jack in 1926, Ross in 1929, Roy in 1931 and Jim in 1933, were raised on the farm and educated at Mayfield and Happy Thought Schools. Alvin joined the Royal Canadian Airforce in 1940 and trained in Eastern Canada before leaving for England. After the war, Alvin joined the Manitoba Power Commission and was followed by Jack, Ross and Roy. They made careers of line work, graduating from lineman to foreman and then Supervisors. Alvin and Roy are still employed with the Manitoba Hydro, Jack retired in 1981 and Ross died in 1975. Jack and Roy still own and operate the family farm. Jim became a car salesman in Winnipeg and is now selling heavy construction equipment.



*John and Dora Smoley in front of barn on farm in Walkleyburg, Kathy and Archie Hicks on horses.*

## **DORA (EWDOKIA) SMOLEY**

*submitted by Doreen Chura and Helen Skrypnyk*

Dora was born in the Village of Kolodiyevka, District of Skulot, in the Ukraine on March 14, 1897. She arrived by boat in Canada in 1912, at the age of 15, with her mother, Ann Kutchuba and brother Max and 2 sisters, Nellie and Anne. They arrived in Montreal, from there they took a train to Beausejour, Man. From Beausejour, they walked to Ladywood where they had an Aunt and Uncle. They settled in Ladywood where she met and married her husband John Smoley, in 1913. John Smoley was born in Nowashulka, Austria. Dora and John had six children while living in the Ladywood area, Bill, Mary, Nellie, one infant daughter who died, Peter and Anne.

In 1926, they bought a farm in the Walkleyburg area where their seventh child (Teenie) Tina was born.

John Smoley passed away in 1950, the family then moved to Wpg. Mrs. Smoley will be 86 in 1983 and has 13



*Left to Right: Teenie Wiens, Anne Wally, Dora Smoley, Mary Chura and Nellie Hicks.*



*Left to Right: Mary Chura, Anne Wally, Bill Smoley, Dora Smoley, Pete Smoley and Tina Wiens.*



*Left to Right: Patrick, Cynthia, Great-grandmother Smoley, Angela and Billy.*

grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.

On June 13, 1983 a daughter was born to Christine Kuz (Sara Courtney). Christine is the daughter of Mary Chura. The five generation photo shows: Mrs. Christine Kuz (mother) Mrs. Anne Mamchur (grandmother), Mrs. Mary Chura (great-grandmother) and Mrs. Dora Smoley (great-great-grandmother) who is in her 86th year.



*Five Generations, Mrs. Dora Smoley, Mary Chura, Mrs. Anne Mamchur, Christine Kuz and baby Sara Courtney.*

## JOE AND FLORENCE SMOLINSKI

*submitted by Joe Smolinski*

Joe and Florence Smolinski (nee; Bretchka) were married in 1943 and lived in Ladywood for one year. They then moved to Wpg., in 1944 and they were both employed at Burns.

Their son Ralph was born in 1945. He is now living with his wife and two girls on St. Peters Road in the RM of St. Clements. He plays in the band "Yours Truly".

Joe and Florence bought 280 acres of farmland in St. Clements in 1947. This land had belonged to Mr. Streick. The prairie land was stoney and had to be broken by horses and with a Rumley tractor. In the fall of 1947, the house burned down. Joe went to work again at Burns in 1948, and also looked after the farm. Joe and Florence lived in a shanty until 1950 when they built a new house.

Their second child, Diane was born in 1949. She is presently married and has one son and they are living in British Columbia.

Joe and Florence had a mixed farm, but always kept over 200 pigs. From the time they started farming, until they retired in 1975, hog prices would range from a low of 18 cents a lb. to 75 cents a lb., at its best.

Joe built a lot of machinery himself. Some examples were, a discer, hay stacker, hand welder, chain drive toboggan, and propelled snow machine. He also built a pile driver for John Bunio, for building bridges. Joe and Florence went to many barn dances on Saturday nights, either at Kolmatiski's or Tony Kostinuk's. Barn dances were very popular from 1949 to 1962. Mr. Smolinski served as a school trustee for Lilydale S.D. No. 1285 and is very community minded.

## MIKE SMORANG

Mike and Mary Smorang, nee Kwaitkowsik, came to Canada from Austria in the year 1900. They settled in East Selkirk. Mike was employed by Garson Quarries. In 1917 the family moved to Libau where he farmed until his death in 1940, at the age of 67. Mary stayed on the farm with her sons Peter and Joe for a number of years. Later she moved to a nursing home in Selkirk. She passed away in 1964 at the age of 85. They had two daughters, Jean and Marie. Six sons, John, Frank, Nick, Mike, Peter and Joe.

John married Mary Kaliski. They farmed in Libau all their lives. Mary passed away in March, 1963. John in December 1974. They are survived by three daughters, Olga, Sally and Elsie and one son Walter.

Olga presently resides at the Tudor Home in Selkirk.

Norman and Elsie Jasper live in North Kildonan and have three children Shelley, Helen and Allan.

Walter and his wife Irene also live in North Kildonan.

Joe and Sally Hryhorko live in Libau. They have two daughters, Pamela-Sue and Sherri-Lynn.

Frank married Tillie Greening. They have two children Eddie and Ruby. Frank passed away in 1941. Tillie presently lives with her daughter in Winnipeg.

Nick married Rose Kush. Nick is now retired from the Pine Falls Paper Mill and they still reside in Pine Falls.



*Back Row: Mr. and Mrs. Kwiatkowski's sons ? and?, Mike Smorang. Middle Row: Mr. and Mrs. Kwiatkowski, daughter Mary, Mary Smorang, Mike's wife. Front Row: Mike and Mary Smorang's children, John, Frank, Nick and a cousin Joe Plichta, 1906.*

They have three sons, Carl, Kenneth and Donald.

Jean married George Ming. They had four children, George, Lillian, Jimmy and Robert. Jean later remarried Tom Domanski, now deceased. Jean lives in Hudson, Ont. She has one son, Bill.

Marie married Frank Quane. They lived in Sioux Lookout, Ont. Both are now deceased. They are survived by two daughters, Mona and Frances.

Mike married Anne Miresky from Meleb, Man. Mike was employed by CNR until his death in July 1972. They have two sons, Lawrence and Terrence.

Pete Smorang married Rose Kolodziejchuk. They are still farming in Libau. They have twins, Joan and Robert.

Robert is married and farms in Brokenhead area. They have two children.

Joan lives and works in Winnipeg.

Joe married Lena Miresky. They farmed for a few years on the family farm and now reside in Winnipeg. Joe works for the Winnipeg Post Office. They have three children, Patsy, Sharon and Barry.

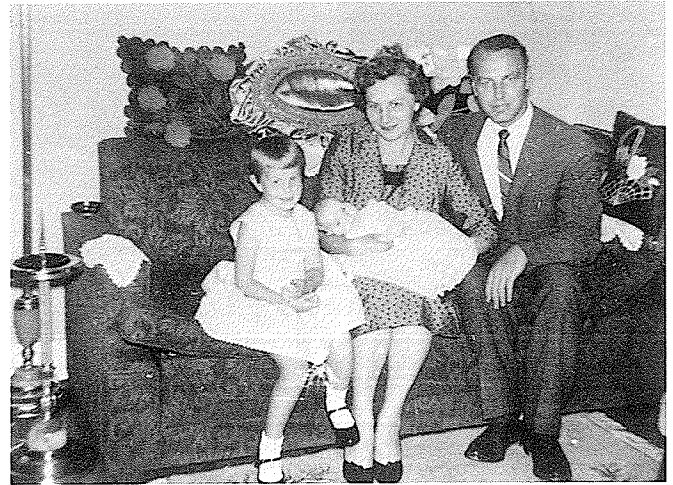
## **WILLIAM AND JEAN SOKOLOWSKI**

*submitted by Jean Sokolowski*

William Sokolowski, son of Alex and Taciana born December 1917 in Winnipeg. Spent his early childhood in Sidney, Man. and received his schooling in Rosser where his father was Canadian Pacific Railway section foreman. Bill's first municipal position was in 1937 as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer of the Rural Municipality of Rosser.

After serving 4 years with the Royal Canadian Air Force as Radar Technician in England and Egypt, he was discharged with rank of Sergeant in 1945.

In February 1946 he was appointed Secretary-Treasurer of the Rural Municipality of St. Clements, which position he held until retirement in November, 1982.



*Jean and Bill Sokolowski and their children Janine and baby Eric, 1959.*

Bill married Jean, daughter of Luke and Polly Lyzun (former resident of East Selkirk) in September 1951. Jean and Bill lived in East Selkirk near the Old Happy Thought School until November 1967 and then moved to Selkirk.

While residing in the district Jean taught school off and on and was also Secretary-Treasurer of the Consolidated School District of Happy Thought from 1958-1965. Bill will be remembered as auditor for some of the smaller surrounding school districts.

The Sokolowskis have two children, Janine and Eric who received their early education at Happy Thought School. Janine graduated in Fine Arts from the University of Victoria in Victoria, B.C. She resides there married to Don Beckner. They have one son Luke.

Eric graduated in Arts from the University of Manitoba. He is enrolled in the Psychiatric Nursing Program at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

## **SAM AND MARINA SOLNIK**

*submitted by Stella Sul*

Sam and Marina Solnik were one of the early pioneers of this district, when Colville Road was only a mud road. They arrived from Yabloniw, Poland, in the early 1900 and settled for a time in Winnipeg. They had four children, Alex, Annie, and Jim from her two previous marriages, and Nick (John) Solnik from this marriage.

Marina Solnik might still be remembered by some of the old-timers as being a Cook at most of the weddings, should they be in Libau, Walkleyburg, East Selkirk or the surrounding area. She loved to cook and sing wedding songs at these weddings.

Sam Solnik had two brothers, Alex and Nick who lived in this district also. Sam was born in 1875 and died in 1963 at the age of 88 years. Marina was born in 1863 and died in 1953 at the age of 90 years. Their old home on Colville Road is still being lived in, and a reminder of days gone by.





*Left to Right: Anna and Wasyl Kologinski, Alex Shastko, Jim, Simon, Nick and Marina Solnik.*



*Mary Maksymowicz, mother of Stanley Sopko.*



*Simon (Sam) Solnik and Marina about 1948.*

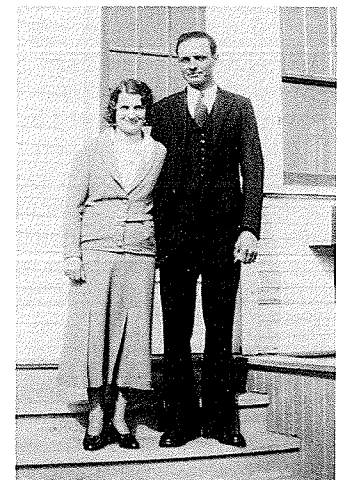
## **SOPKO FAMILY**

*as narrated by Stanley Sopko*

My grandfather, Michael Sopko came to this country from Poland in 1904 with his wife Agnes and 3 sons, Anton, John, and Joseph. Anton, my father, his wife Mary and daughter Annie, age 2 also came at this time. They landed at East Selkirk immigration hall. They began to look for land to settle on and start farming. They chose section SW 23-16-6E in St. Clements mainly for the sake of the wood. Here they could cut logs for their new home and have unlimited firewood. In Poland, firewood was at a premium. They could only gather dead wood and branches that was scarce and expensive. They bought this land from a real estate agent and settled on the South West 1/4 Sec 23-Twp 15-R8E6E. This 1/4 section was divided into 3 parcels of land running North to South. My father got the Easterly 50 acres, Uncle John the central 50, grandfather the West 50 acres. Uncle Joseph bought elsewhere. A log house and barn were

built for grandfather first. All lived together until father built his own house. These houses were built of hewed poplar logs which were dovetailed at the corners. The bottom ring, or first log and joist was red tamarac. This wood was very resistant to decay, and was on fieldstone at the corners and intermediate places along the wall. The walls were plastered with clay and white-washed. The roof was rough sawed boards nailed clap board fashion as they had no money to buy shingles. The floors were rough sawed planks. The beds were wooden frames with a jute bag filled with hay for a mattress. Every time it rained mother tied the bedding into a bundle and placed it in a spot where the roof didn't leak. The windows were frosted all over, single glazed and leaked every time there was a thaw. At the insistence of my Mother, father built our house at the north end of the farm instead of near the road allowance so that she would be close to the neighbours while father was away working.

This section of land was unique in itself, being settled by nine family farms: 2 Skrypetz, 2 Gurski, 1 Sitar, 1 Zalusky, and 3 Sopko families. They all raised large families and survived by living off the land and garden, building railroads, and berry picking. Picking native or wild berries like high bush cranberries and black currants supplied necessary foods and also provided recreation.



*Stan and Eva Sopko on their wedding day.*



*Eva and Stan Sopko  
and their children  
Larry and Barbara.*

### **SOPKO FAMILY (I REMEMBER)**

Born on this farm in 1908, I remember how the land was cleared, that is the bush was removed and burned, trees were grubbed out with a mattock or grub hoe and axe, land was broken with a walking plow and oxen. Seed grain was broadcast by hand, cut with a sickle and scythe with a cradle, sheaves were tied by hand with a band made from the same grain, threshed with a flail on a platform made of rough hand sawn planks.

My father died in 1912, leaving mother with 4 children, Annie, myself, Mary, and Rose, who was born the day before father died. The following winter, mother hauled cordwood to Selkirk with ox team to trade for food and necessities for survival. When the time came to send the children to school, mother was hard up for clothes so she made them from hand me downs from city cousins. She made pants for me for my first day of school from an old navy blue serge suit, but could not get enough cloth without patches so she put the patched parts to the back, that way the front looked presentable. I went to school barefoot as I had no shoes. The lunch was mostly bread and butter sandwiches. There was no wrapping paper so we had to reuse it until it was worn out. We walked to school along wagon trails over ridge of higher land as the road allowances were not cleared of bush at that time. I could not speak a word of English at this time and used slate and slate pencil to write. One day the teacher had a class of beginners and was teaching them the sounds of the alphabet. I mimicked and he came for me with his pointer, a piece of buggy horsewhip, and asked me to hold out my hand. As he brought it down to hit my hand I drew it back and the pointer broke when it hit my desk. My cousin, who sat next to me, laughed and was left with swollen welts across his hands for a few days.

In 1913, Mother married Geoge Maksymowicz. They had 7 children all born at Libau. In spite of all the hardships, mother lived to age 92 and passed away in 1977.

### **THE DEPRESSION YEARS**

In 1934 I married Eva Samagalski who lived on a farm at Walkleyburg (Brookside School District). The priest at

Selkirk asked for \$15 to marry us, I had only \$10 so we went to Winnipeg to a priest who I had done some carpenter work for on his church. I had worked without pay, so he agreed to marry us. We left Eva's home the day before our marriage. Eva's brother John drove us with a team of horses and sleigh to the railroad. We walked down the railroad from mile 32 South of Libau to East Selkirk, then to Selkirk, stayed overnight at her sisters, and next day went to Winnipeg by streetcar. We bought a marriage licence for \$5 and a gold wedding ring for Eva for \$3 at Mitchell-Copp, Portage and Donald. After the marriage we went to Eva's friend's house for tea. We lived in a one-room log house for 14 years on N.W. 1/4 section 13-15-6E. The winter of 1934-35, I walked 4 to 5 miles to cut cordwood in the Brokenhead Indian Reseve at \$1 per cord for hardwood. This bush had been previously cut, just stray trees were left. I cut 100 cords that were hauled to the C.N. Railroad, known as Mile 38 Spur, then shipped to Winnipeg for firewood. We raised hogs during the war years to feed the armed forces overseas.

### **THE GOLDEN YEARS**

In 1948, we built our new modern house with plumbing and electricity. I went back to carpenter work, mostly heavy construction, locally at East Selkirk Generating Station and St. Clements Municipal office. Also, the restoration crew at Lower Fort Garry. In 1934, I was elected School Trustee to the Libau School District No. 1231 on which I served for 25 years. I also served on the St. Clements planning Commission from its inception until it's demise. I helped to organize the Libau Community Club in 1939.

We raised 2 children, son, Larry, and daughter, Barbara. Both are married and live in Winnipeg. I have five grandchildren. Larry married Lynn (Alexander) Thompson and they have 2 children, Wayne and Sherri. Barbara married Robert Butler and they have 3 children, Judi, David and Kenneth.

Eva and I lived a full and happy life in St. Clements. Eva passed away April 6, 1982.



*Loading hogs for shipment 1940's Sopko's farm.*