

CONVERSATIONS



Home, Sweet Home

By L.E. Buchholz

Edward Buchholz and Emilia Bertsch were the first of the children to be married in January 1914. They lived in a claim shack at the homestead farm until March 1916, at which time they bought and moved on to their own farm. It was about five miles northeast of Lehr, North Dakota, in the Lauth School District, and in Logan County.

We were a family of three. My sister, Hulda (Mrs. Walter Mueller) of Wishek, North Dakota, was the first child, and the first of the grandchildren of Dad's folks. As for myself, I came along some four years later. Wesley was the youngest, born in June 1927. He was in the armed services in the 1940s, and became an auctioneer after he was discharged.

The farm consisted of a section (640 acres) of land. Three quarters and 80 acres of this was here, and 80 acres of it was on the old home farm. Later, 130 more acres were bought, and added to this in two different locations. I continued to live here until October 1949, when my wife and I moved on a farm of our own. The folks lived here until October 1951, when they moved to town.

The picture is that of a winter scene of our farm and home. In a recent past issue of *PRAIRIES Magazine*, I gave a description of our farm buildings, and have now added a few words about the land which went with the location. I still own the land and think highly about it.

My father preferred to do his driving, hauling, and field work with mules. They were mostly solid colored, medium-sized animals. Mules with well-carried ears which had good walking gaits and could trot out freely were preferred. Our mules were strong for their size. They ate less and lasted longer than horses. We also stood three different jacks at service and had two jennets.

Of all the men and women who worked for us and the school teachers who then boarded with us, Dad's favorite mule teamster was a young lady. The entire unit of mules was simply in love with her. Besides being very gentle, her success must have been due to her talking to them all day long. She called them by name. She told each mule what she liked about the

critter—and then what she did not like about it. No, I do not believe the mules understood her, but they certainly worked well for her.

Our main livestock unit was supposed to be sheep. We were never without some every year of our farm's history. We bought some of the best purebred registered rams of 10 different breeds. In most cases, they had show records. We had fine-wooled, long-wooled, medium-wooled, and a flock of karakul fur sheep.

We spent many nights out there tending new-born



Winter scene of Buchholz farm.

lambs, as well as years herding them. The annual wool harvest was always a great event. We also maintained a herd of goats, including good dairy does. Once we even had a fine pair of angoras.

As I recall it, we were never happier than when a building was painted, remodeled, or, as the case was, when a new one was built. The same was true when a new herd sire was put at the head of his kind. We always looked forward for the next crop of foals, calves, pigs, all manners of livestock, pets, and poultry. Our farm was a beehive of activity, and the animal stork was never far off.

Time was when you could have driven four miles north of Lehr, and then four miles east, and then four miles south, and then four miles west—and always be on or never far from Buchholz land. But no, the

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four brothers did not own this square block. Some of their land overlapped the west of this line; much of it overlapped the north, and some of it the east, and at least a little of it the south. We often drove that route, and so we were well-informed as to the goings-on then.

I must admit there was a time when I believed this little kingdom would never fall, but it did. It looked as if the goings-on would never end. All of those brothers and their families stood the test of the great drought years of the 1930s, as well as the Great Depression. But after they were dead and gone, no one carried on.

My folks did some traveling. They would drive to Sun Dance, Wyoming, to visit the in-laws like the Rohrbachs, and then over into Montana to see one of my mother's brothers, her sister, and the Schlabz boys. Those were at places like Great Falls and Wolf Point. I never was along because I do not like to travel or be away from home. They once got lost in trying to find Homestead, Montana. They all but drove to Homestate.

Wesley, the youngest, was the first of our family to die. He was 36, married, and on his own farm. He died in December 1963. A daughter of his was only a few days old at the time; she is Lori Ann, now liv-



Emilia
and
Edward
Buchholz of
Lehr,
North
Dakota.

ing and working in Brookings, South Dakota. Our parents were in the Manor in Edgeley, North Dakota, and then the retirement home in Wishek, North Dakota. Mother died in January 1969, and Dad in January 1973. Wesley and his wife are buried in the Fredonia cemetery, our parents in the Lehr cemetery. □