

100-YEAR-OLD FARM

George Klipfel, Sr. was born in Bergdorf, South Russia, on January 21, 1859. He grew up there, and in 1880 he married Magdalena Rau. The wedding service was conducted by Rev. Bernbach, a Lutheran pastor.

At that time, conditions for advancement were not encouraging in South Russia. There was much talk about opportunities in North America, especially of free land in the west. In 1884, George and Magdalena decided to emigrate to Dakota Territory. Joining them were their sons, George C. and John, the Jacob Weis family, and Klipfel's father, George, and brother, John.

On their arrival in New York, arrangements were made to go to McIntosh County. They made the trip as far as possible by train, completing the remainder of the journey with an ox team and wagon which they purchased. They also had a cow and a few other small articles.

Some bedding and clothing was brought from the old home and was indeed useful in the little sod house which they built on land southeast of the present site of Ashley.

At the time they came, there was no Hoskins, Ashley, or Eureka. The closest trading posts for sup-

plies were Ellendale and Ipswich.

Klipfel filed on land located in Section 27, Township 129, Range 69, which was about seven and one-half miles southeast of Ashley. Their home was a sod house. In the early years there, George used a hand plow pulled by oxen to break the sod. In 1892-93, a drought greatly damaged farm produce. Despite low prices for crops, progress was made. New machinery

took the place of the old, horses replaced oxen, the sod house was discarded for a frame building, and more land was acquired.

Their children were: George G. (who later farmed near Ashley until his death on July 15, 1937); John (1), died as an infant; Christina (who married Fred Walz and lived in Jerome, Idaho) was born on October 10, 1884, and was the first white child born in McIntosh County; Fredericka (1) and Jacob (1) both died as infants; Magdalena



Klipfel's farm is 100 years old this year.

(who married John Walz and farmed near Ashley); Christian and John (who both farmed near Merri-court, North Dakota); Fredericka (who married John Malhoff, farming near Tuttle, North Dakota); Jacob G. and Fred farmed near Ashley; Eva (who married John Merkel, farming east of Ashley); Gottlieb was in business in Ashley; and Emil.

George Sr. retired from farming in 1919 and moved to Ashley. He served six years as a member of the Ashley city council, and was also a county commissioner from 1903 to 1915.

Klipfel explained some of the situations his family experienced during their first years in McIntosh County. No schools or churches had yet been established, and so his family and others gathered to listen as he read passages from the family Bible.

Trips for supplies were difficult. Oxen had to be driven, or led, to Ellendale, and, later, to Eureka. Winter trips were especially burdensome when temperatures dropped to 20 and 30 below zero fahrenheit.

Shoes were a luxury in the early days, he said. Many times they went barefoot.

George Sr. died on April 23, 1928. Magdalena died on March 26, 1933. Both are buried in the Lutheran cemetery south of Ashley.

Fred G. Klipfel married Lydia Bender in March 1921, and they farmed on the homestead until October 2, 1954, when they moved to Ashley. Lydia died on July 8, 1968, and Fred G. died on May 27, 1978.

Raymond, their son, and his wife, Huldina (Fischer) have farmed the homestead for 30 years.

Their children are James, who farms near Ashley, and is married to Cheryl Meidinger; Jocelyn is married to Charles Kraemer, and they live in Washburn, North Dakota; Bryan married Bonnie Helfenstein, and they live in Williston; Janet is married to Allan Vossler, and their home is in Palm Desert, California; and Tammie, Mark, and Michele of Ashley. □