

Courtship Customs

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My husband's great uncle, a widower, left his Volhynian village around 1890 for Saskatchewan. On board the ship was a Stadel family who were also on their way to Saskatchewan. It is believed that the family met Uncle on the ship. Sometime later, around 1896, Uncle moved across the border to Montana.

Two years later, in need of companionship and a wife, Uncle sent money for train fare to Mr. Stadel, asking for one of the daughters to be his bride. The family recalls that Uncle requested and anticipated the arrival of the older, beautiful daughter, but she already had a boyfriend so the father told another daughter that she was to go instead. The father probably felt that it would be her only chance to marry because she had been quite scarred as the result of small pox. She was also blind in one eye.

Obviously Uncle was very surprised to see that he was given a less attractive daughter, rather than the lovely one he remembered and expected to be his.

They were married in 1898, shortly after her arrival in Montana: He was 51 years old and she was 22. Unfortunately, Uncle passed away in 1907 leaving three young children.