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Kennedy, Charles A. (1853 - 1916)

Dorothy Hansmann

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KENNEDY, CHARLES A.

File No. B-663

Charles A. Kennedy was born in Cambria County Pennsylvania, June 24, 1853. His parents moved to Ossian, Iowa, where he spent his childhood. He came to Minnesota in 1878 and settled on a farm west of Blue Earth.

Charles A. Kennedy married Mary Murphy of Blue Earth September 12, 1880, at Wiser's Grove and settled on a farm northwest of that city. They came to Sauk Centre in March of 1916.

Mary Murphy was born in Indiana in the year of 1853. The family moved to Ossian, Iowa where her father worked at common labor until he had saved \$1,000 when they removed to Blue Earth, immediately following the terrible Indian Massacre at New Ulm. The earlier settlers were very frightened and were leaving the country which enabled Mr. Murphy to acquire four hundred acres very reasonably. Although the Murphy family lived in constant fear of the Indians they were never molested.

The Murphy home was made of sod. These "sod shanties" were built much as the modern chicken houses, slanting almost to the ground at the rear and perhaps eight feet high at the front. Later a frame summer home was built but the sod houses were much warmer for winter. Lumber was scarce and consequently very high priced.

At the school Mary Murphy attended, reading, writing, spelling, and geography were taught and all pupils were in one class regardless of age. Mary Murphy was the oldest of a family of seven. The remaining six children were boys, and as all clothing had to be made at home, she was obliged to leave school at the age of ten years and assist her mother at home. One Christmas eve the school children gave a program and had a Christmas tree. The gifts received by the pupils were home knit socks or mittens. After the program the parents served a lunch.

One year the crops around Blue Earth were destroyed by grass hoppers

and that winter the family lived on corn meal and rutabagas. They thought they fared unusually well because most of their neighbors had only the corn meal and not sufficient of that.

The Doctor which served the community lived about fifty miles distant and served the communities within that radius, consequently there was no such thing as calling a doctor. He made his circuit as often as possible and when anyone became ill they just had to wait until the doctor arrived. Mary Murphy broke her arm at school and had to wait two days for the doctor to come and set it. One man shot himself in the hand and by the time the doctor arrived gangrene had set in and half of the hand had to be amputated.

Even though there were hard times the Murphy family prospered and finally owned eight hundred acres of land, which still remains in the family. One brother became a senator.

Charles A. Kennedy and Mary (Murphy) Kennedy had seven children: William; Daniel; Charles; Mayme; Sylvester; Florence; Beatrice; and Kathryn.

Charles A. Kennedy died August 24, 1916 at Sauk Centre. His widow makes her home with her son, Charles, on the old family farm one and one-half miles north of Sauk Centre.

Interviewed: Mary Kennedy
Date: September 22, 1936
By: Dorothy Hansmann

FROM THE RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE

FOR THE CHARLES A. KENNEDY BIOGRAPHY

DEATH RECORD BOOK I. PAGE 26 LINE 279

Charles A. Kennedy Born June 24, 1853 in Pennsylvania

Son of James Kennedy and Regina Bowers

Died August 24, 1916

Age 63 years 2 months