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Platz, Charles (1854 -)

Walter B. Haupt

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PLATZ, CHARLES

File No. B-1048

Charles Platz was born in Wisconsin, on June 29, 1854. Charles Platz is the son of John and Theresa (Platz) Platz.

John and Theresa Platz were born in Germany. Dissatisfied with farming conditions in Germany, they sold their small farm and sailed for America in about the year 1849, landing in New York. The trip was made on a sailing vessel, a trip that took sixty-five days. From New York they at once came west as far as Wisconsin, when they settled on a farm. After a few years in Wisconsin, Theresa (Platz) Platz died, and was buried there. She was the mother of six children: Wenzel, Ignatius, Joseph, Anna, Genavieve, and Charles.

Due to poor crops and low prices received for their farm products, John Platz lost everything including \$700.00 which he had brought with him from Germany. This did not discourage him, as he again tried farming at Watertown, Wisconsin, but after a few years this venture proved to be no more successful than in his former location, and moved to Appelton, Wisconsin where he rented a few acres and worked in the lumber camps. Here he made enough so that he was able to buy a team of oxen and a cow. Now that he had a start again he decided to try farming on a larger scale again and having heard of the homesteads available in Minnesota, he migrated there in 1863.

The trip, which took four weeks, was made with oxen. Since they were able to take along only a limited supply of provisions and no money, the family was forced to beg food along the way. On the trip they also encountered many Indians, who, after inquiring where they were going, told them of the horrors of the Indian massacre and told them to turn back. This advise, however, was unheeded by the family and they continued their trip to Two River Settlement, (now Albany Stearns County, Minnesota) where

John Platz filed on a homestead in Section 27, two miles south of where the village of Albany now stands.

During the first few months on this homestead, the family experienced hard times, because they had no money nor a gun. A log house was erected and a few acres cleared. After John Platz had made a few trips to New Munich he won the confidence of Mr. Bohmer, a store-keeper at that place, and Mr. Bohmer loaned him a gun.

Now that they had a gun they were assured meat, because deer were plentiful. After the first harvest of the few acres of wheat they had planted, it was cut with a cradle and threshed with the aid of a flail. The mother then ground the wheat in a coffee grinder, to be used for flour and mush. During the following winter they fared quite well because they now had plenty to eat.

The next summer a son, Ignatius, secured work from the government driving a supply wagon. With the money he earned and the rest of the family clearing and cultivating the homestead the family progressed rapidly.

During the first five years they did their own threshing with the flail. The next year the first threshing machine made its appearance. It was owned and operated by Martin Rieder of St. Joseph, Minnesota. Although a crude machine, power for which was furnished by a horse, it was then considered a great improvement over the old method of threshing with the flail. As new farm machinery and implements made their appearances on the market John Platz took advantage of them and replaced them on the farm in favor of the older models.

At the time of his death, John Platz had developed his homestead to a tillable state that left his life's work well done.

Two children were born to them after his second marriage to Mary Viehauser of Watertown, Wisconsin, John and Elizabeth.

Charles Platz, whose name heads this biography, spent his boyhood days hunting, fishing, and trapping. As there were numerous Indians camped near his father's homestead he was soon at home in their huts, and at one time was able to speak the Chippewa language to some extent.

He attended school for one term of three months. His first and only teacher was Anton Froelich.

On October 2, 1883 Charles Platz was united in marriage to Anna Handl, daughter of Joseph Handl of Albany. The ceremony was performed by Father Anton O. S. B. The attendants were Mike Miller, Henry Brenning, Katie Habiger, and Thresa Miller.

Immediately after the marriage Charles Platz purchased 40 acres of land for \$160.00 on which he erected a log house and barn, and cleared some land on which he sowed wheat. His first harvest consisted of 48 bushels of wheat.

A few years later he purchased another 40 acres tract, to which he later added another 100 acres purchased from Joseph Lehner and 75 acres purchased from Mike Bock.

In 1921 Charles Platz retired from his farm and moved to the village of Albany. Anna (Handl) Platz died August 7, 1926.

Charles and Anna (Handl) Platz are the parents of nine children: John, who resides on a farm near Albany. Joseph, who married Mary Tomsche. They have five children. Clara married Leonard Meyers and they

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reside on a farm in Canada. Mary is Mrs. Martin Baeckerman of St. Rose. Lena is Mrs. Peter Bieschbach of El Rosa. Mina is Mrs. John Block of Waite Park; Annie is Mrs. Carl Gerads of St. Anthony; Theresa is Mrs. Henry Thom of Albany.

Interviewed: Charles Platz
Date: March 29, 1937
By: Walter Haupt

Publication Granted

FROM THE RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE
FOR THE CHARLES PLATZ BIOGRAPHY

MARRIAGE RECORD BOOK H. PAGE 289

Charles Platz and Anna Handl

Married at Albany, October 13, 1883

By: Rev. A. Capser

Witnesses: Micheal Miller and Tracy Miller

DEATH RECORD BOOK S. PAGE 9 LINE 230

Anna Platz Born in Austria September 26, 1857

Daughter of Joseph Handl

Died August 7, 1926

Age 68 years 10 months and 12 days

PLATZ, CHARLES

Second interview to affirm or correct information in biography as compared to information as listed in the legal records in the Stearns County Court House.

CORRECTION:

Names of children of Charles Platz should read John, Joseph, Philomenia, Clara, Thresia, Mary, Anna, Ida and Magdalena.

Name omitted in biography Ida, Mrs. Joseph Meyer of Waite Park.

This list of names does not coincide with legal records, but has been verified by Charles Platz to be correct.

CORRECTION :

Date of marriage should read October 13, 1883, as listed in legal records in the court house.

Re-interviewed: Charles Platz
By: Walter Haupt