

MARTIN

Pioneer History of Louis Karras

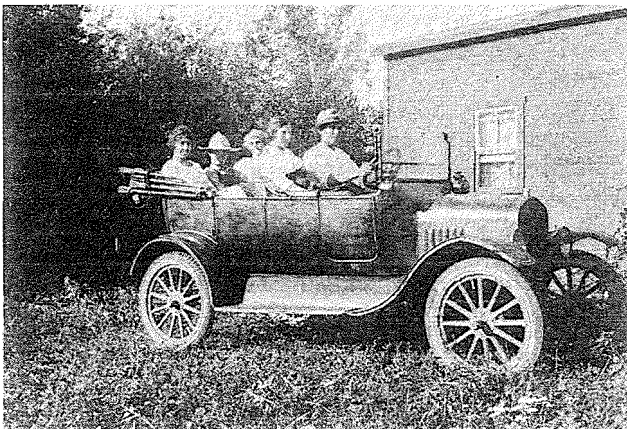
Louis Karras, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Karras who came to the homestead 5½ miles north west of Moosehorn from Neche, North Dakota, U.S.A. in June 1911.

I didn't like the idea of my parents going on to a homestead, so I stayed back until November 1912 or four days before my 20th birthday. It was then I decided to visit my parents and see for myself how they were getting along, as they were well up in age. My father was 73 years of age at that time.

They had a small log house, two cows, and a garden and that was all, but they had very friendly neighbors. There was a family on every quarter section in our district. They were all trying to help one another, so I decided this should be a nice place to make my home. I made it my home from 1912 until 1947 when I sold my farm to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kort, who I believe are still living on it.

Adjoining the homestead we had the following neighbors: the William Pohl family to the south, Adolph Pischkes to the west, Gus Knopp's to the north and my brother Edward to the east.

Adjoining the corners were the Andrew Nickel family on the south east corner, George Karras family on the south west corner, Gus Teske family on the north west corner and Louis Hertzog family on the south east corner. So it didn't matter which direction



Mr. and Mrs. Karras, Mrs. Foster with Ray and Winnifred in back seat.

one turned, you would always be close to a neighbor, and they were all nice people to know and associate with.

By sheer coincidence when I went to visit my parents, I happened to be one of the first passengers on the first passenger train that pulled into Moosehorn. Up to that date the passenger trains only ran as far as Oak Point, then you had to transfer to a freight train that pulled a passenger car. I bought my ticket at Winnipeg to go to Moosehorn but when we got to Oak Point to transfer to the freight car, we were told if we wanted to wait till Monday there would be a passenger train straight to Gypsumville. This happened to be on a Friday and being young, I decided to stay in the Oak Point Hotel over the week end, just to be one of the first passengers on the first passenger train that pulled into Moosehorn. I was very disappointed upon my arrival to Moosehorn for I saw nothing but spruce trees and stumps where ever I looked. There were a C.N.R. station, water tank, and a little store called the "Armstrong Trading Co." It was located on the west side of the railway tracks and was managed by Steve Stephenson. On the east side of the tracks was a log built store called "Moosehorn Supply", managed by Ben Edlen who sold everything from needles, to rye whiskey under the counter for \$1.00 for a 26 ounce bottle. Everybody thought he was a great man, and he was.

In the spring of 1913 I built an addition to our house and after that my father and I started clearing land and with about the second swing of my axe I struck a rock. My father heard me say words he had never heard me say before, as I was brought up very religiously. He didn't say anything and we just kept working. We cleared and broke about five acres that summer. This land was broken up with a combination of one team of horses and one team of oxen, by my brother Ed and brother-in-law Louis Hertzog.

By 1913-1915 most of the homesteaders were getting titles to their land and they were all anxious for capital to invest in more horses, cattle, and farm implements. Not more than 5 percent of the settlers had fire insurance and to obtain a mortgage loan you had to have fire insurance on your buildings, so I took advantage of the opportunity and became the first fire insurance and mortgage loan agent in Moosehorn. When I wasn't clearing or breaking land or doing