

CEMETERY WALK - CALVARY SEPTEMBER 2020

ED AND ROSALIE PESIK

ED: Good afternoon, Friends. We are two members of the Pesik Family, Ed and Rosalie.

Our family history in this area goes all the way back to our grandfather, Joseph Pesik. He was born in 1854, in Prague, Bohemia, which eventually was renamed Czechoslovakia, and now known today as the Czech Republic. He always lovingly referred to it as "the old Country."

Grandfather Joseph and Grandmother Mary came to this country on separate ships. The ocean crossings took 6 weeks - sometimes much longer depending on the weather. They had to bake hard bread for the voyage and bring their own containers for water. Both families ran out of water before landing in America and had to depend on the kindness of others and the rains to survive.

Grandad bought his first 80 acres of farmland and had it completely paid for before he bought the second 80 acres. When he started farming, he only had one cow and mule which he hitched to the plow to break ground for his crops.

He was an absolutely amazing guy - he helped build the first capital building for Iowa which was located in Iowa City. He and the other workers cut the stone by hand, working 12-14 hours a day for a salary of \$1.00 a day. He and the other laborers hand-quarried the blocks of Devonian limestone at Iowa City and along what is now present-day Coral Lake in Johnson County. You can still see the marks of the chisels and hammers on the blocks to this day.



Old Iowa Capital

ROSALIE: Grandfather Joseph married Mary Susank in 1876. Let me give you some insight on the Bohemian customs of that day. - he married her the same day that he asked her father for her hand in marriage. No courtship at all!!! I do hope it was love at first sight for them. People say that does work out sometimes. To this union were born 2 children, a daughter named Hattie Agatha and our father Anthony Joseph.

Father married Anna Tomlin in Diagonal, Iowa, on May 9, 1905. Dad and Mom lived on the family farm there in Diagonal after Grandma and Grandpa Pesik moved to Creston. This farm became an Iowa Century Farm in 1976 - our United States of America bi-centennial year. What a special day that was!

Our family was quite large, to say the least. There were 10 children born to this union with one dying in infancy. There were 5 surviving daughters, and 4 surviving brothers. In alphabetical order, because that is still the best way for me not leave anyone out, our family consisted of Albena, Alfred, Edward, Frances, Irene, Magdalene, Paul, Rosalie, and Sylvester. Strangely enough, none of us ever married or chose to leave the family farm.

ED: Yes, like all my siblings, I lived my life on the family farm and loved it very much. The only time I ever left the farm and Iowa was when I was called up to Army duty in 1942. I served in the quartermaster's corps and served my Army time stationed in North Africa at first, and then later was sent to Italy with the cavalry. Helping take care of 28,000 mules was a lot of work, but it was the

kind of work that made an old Iowa boy more comfortable in foreign land.

ROSALIE: Ed is so modest that he would never tell you about how well he did during his service time. He came back to Iowa on December 23, 1945, having served 14 months in North Africa and 18 months in Italy and was credited with a three year Good Conduct Medal, European- African Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon with 2 bronze battle stars and a World War II Victory Medal. We were all so proud of his service to our Country.

ED:

When my duty time was up, I was more than happy to come back to the farm, but in the 1970's, I had the worst experience of my life - the worst kind of experience for any farmer.

All good farmers will tell you that the first cardinal rule around farm equipment is to stop the machine before trying to work on it or clear debris from it. One afternoon when I was baling hay and the baler jammed, I tried to clear it while the baler was still running and caught my right hand in the baler. I yelled for help, and my cousin and neighbor came running and pulled me free.

ROSALIE: Ed was totally in shock by the time we got the ambulance out to the farm. He was taken to Iowa Methodist Hospital where they operated on several times before the doctors realized a week later that they could not save his arm and, it would have to be amputated. By the time his ordeal was over, Ed had spent 63 days in the hospital and has undergone 11 surgeries.

ED: I have to say, it was really tough making a come-back from this accident, but you know, you can never give up. I did eventually get an artificial arm, but I had to learn how to do everything in a new way now that I was a lefty. Why, I even got back to being a bowler again. When you lose your throwing arm and have to learn to throw with the other, keeping your balance is pretty tough. I had some down and disappointing times at first. But, I never gave up, and the first time I broke 100 bowling with my left hand was quite an event..

ROSALIE: Ed wasn't the only one who worked hard on the farm. Although I never worked outside our home, I gardened, canned, raised chickens, sold eggs, and used the feathers from my flock of chickens to make pillows to sell and give as gifts. I also had social times with my MYN Book Club, and of course the Holy Spirit Parish was where all of us spent many volunteer hours helping out in the Parish. The Pesik family was instrumental in the start of the Immaculate Conception Parish which was part of what was originally the St. Malachy Parish. This new parish was instituted in 1905, with Rev. John T. Noonan as its first pastor.

ED: Over the years, my brothers and sisters and I lived quiet, modest lives on the farm. Our whole Pesik family shares so much joy in the fact that we were able to contribute over 3 million dollars to the St. Malachy School and Holy Spirit Parish. We love that we were able to give the gift of education to many, many children who have passed through the doors at St. Malachy.

ROSALIE: We are so happy that you all have stopped by to visit us today. Blessings to each of you and we hoped that you have enjoyed hearing about the history of the Pesik family.



The Last Surviving Pesiks

Ed

Rosalie

Irene

Paul