Meta is the lone survivor in the family. She was named acting postmaster at the death of her father and served until February 2, 1926, when her brother, Henry, received a temporary appointment from President Coolidge; a regular commission and appointment by President Hoover in 1930; and again by President Roosevelt in 1940 which placed him on a permanent basis. Meta worked at the Fisher bank and at American Crystal Sugar Company in East Grand Forks until her retirement. She now resides in Fisher. Also living are twelve grandchildren, thirty-five great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren. Noel, Warner and Walton Wentzel of the Fisher area are among the twelve grandchildren.

**Nielsville, Minnesota History**

Nielsville — Records kept by the earliest settlers show that the Nielsville community was started near the battlefields where the Sioux and Chippewa Indians fought for supremacy in Northern Minnesota.

The settlement dates back to May of 1872 when Nels O. Paulsrud, for whom the village was named, settled in what is now Hubbard township about a mile and one-half northwest of the present Nielsville, and near the Little River battlefield. Paulsrud came to America from Norway in 1869, and together with his family, built a small cabin on his claim. An old deed reveals that the pioneer’s name was really Nels (or Nils) Olson, and that the name Paulsrud was adopted later from the estate where they lived in Norway.

Other families settled in the area and a sketch written in 1888 reveals that only about 25 families settled in the entire county in 1872, with most of them along the Red and Sand Hill rivers.

A post office was established, and records show that the settlement was named Nielsville in the year of 1882. The inland village which sprang up around the post office was known as “Old Nielsville.” The post office was first located on the Andrew Thompson farm one mile west of Nielsville.

Lewis S. Kolden arrived on the scene in 1883, and the post office was later transferred to the Kolden store near the Paulsrud claim. S. W. Brekke opened a blacksmith shop in 1883, and John Peterson opened a shop during the following year. Paulsrud carried the mail from Caledonia, North Dakota to the Thompson farm and later from Fisher to Old Nielsville.

Noted as a thrifty little town during those years, Nielsville was located in the southwestern corner of Polk county and on the Crookston-Moorhead branch of the Great Northern Railroad. It is situated in one of the best farming sections of the Red River Valley.

As the town grew, businesses sprang up and stores changed hands quite often. Kolden sold his store to his brother, Syver Kolden, and E. C. Onstad in 1892. They in turn sold to George Tollefson, and he and Onstad, who had built another store, moved their establishments to Nielsville when the railroad reached this point in 1896. Halvor Benson and Charles Bye also built stores on the new site.

That same fall Andrew Tronnes built the “Nielsville House” and St. Anthony and Dakota Elevator Company erected an elevator and commissioned an agent to run it. St. Petri Lutheran church, which was built near the old town, was moved to Nielsville in 1897.

The settlement grew as more establishments came into being. Halvor Benson and Charles Bye operated grocery and dry goods stores, and Kolden established a lumber yard in the new town in 1897. When Kolden entered the lumber business in Nielsville he bought out the yard of the Rosan Brothers. The lumber company changed hands a number of times and eventually was operated by John Dahl and members of the Dahl family for a number of years.

In 1897, the Rev. O. H. Brodland became the first resident pastor to serve the St. Petri Lutheran church, bringing God’s message in both the Norwegian and English dialects.

The population continued to grow as more businesses opened up. Among them were livery stables operated through the years by Alfred Wegen, Benny Vigen, Louis Haugen, Ingvald Eidsmoe, and John Orvik; implementers, machinery and gas station by Onstads and Peter Kunkel; harness shop, Eugene Howland; Northwestern Elevator Company with Andrew Monson as agent; butcher shops by Peder Wigen, Lars Vignes, Jacobsons, Albert Wahlund, Melvin Eidsmoe, Hans Paulson, Julius Brekke, Emil Paulson, Archie Olson, and John Martinson; hotel, restaurant, and shoemaking by E. P. Ramsey; Benson Brothers, furniture, framing and funeral supplies; feed mill by Martin Sand; John Swenson, painter; blacksmith shops, J. P. Skulet, S. Brekke, Palmer Sharpe, John Peterson.