They raised oats, wheat and some flax. They also had a good garden, which produced a good food supply toward their living.

The Belgium school was nearly three miles away from their home, the children walked to and from school in nice weather. In the winter time, the father would take them with a team on the big bobsled. On the way home, he would stop at the neighbors and fill barrels with water for the livestock and cans of water for the house. They worked hard on their farm, bought more cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys and increased their income.

The children grew up on this farm, working out to help with the income. All became farmers and in time acquired their own farms. Alma married a farmer, John passed away in 1930, and the father in 1931.

Lester, Raymond and Merle are all retired now. Merle sold his land and lives in Euclid. Raymond rents his farm out and lives near Baldwin, Wisconsin. Lester also rents his farm out but still lives on the place. Paul still lives on the Magsam home place, and farms it, with more land which he bought and rents.

The mother lives with her daughter Alma and on November 16, 1975 celebrated her 96th birthday.

**MRS. ANNA SIREK**

My mother came from Czechoslovakia in 1897 with her parents. They settled in Tabor Township, Polk County. My father came from Two Rivers, Wisconsin. They lived on a homestead. In 1906, they bought a farm of 160 acres near Angus, Minnesota. They farmed with horses till 1917, when they bought a tractor. In 1915, I married Louis G. Sirek. We bought a farm near Sherack, Minnesota. This farm consisted of 240 acres besides rented 320 acres. We lived there eighteen years. We were blessed with two daughters and four sons. In 1940, the first son was drafted into U.S. Army. He served in Hawaii for four years. Two years later, the second son was drafted into U.S. Army. He was sent to Germany. The third son enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was sent to Guam. The youngest went to U.S. Army and was sent to Okinawa. We were all very thankful when they returned safely. In 1949, my husband died. My oldest son rented our farm, but I stayed there for five years. Our daughters went to Vocational School and high school.

**STROOT AND FITZSIMMONS**

In 1875, after serving two years with the German army in France, John Stroot came to the United States. One year after his arrival in Wabasha, Minnesota, he married Marie Schmidt, who, like Mrs. Stroot, had emigrated from Hanover, Germany.

With three small children and a desire to make a living in farming, the Stroot family set out for northern Minnesota in 1882. Traveling by covered wagon, they finally reached their homestead in Belgium Township of Polk County. Their home, in which they reared three additional children, is still intact.

Education, an important phase of their life, was available at the township school. Frank, the second child, began school at the age of eight when he could speak only German. Little did he realize that all of his twelve children and a number of grandchildren would attend this same school.

In early days, this school buildings served another role, that of church. When a priest made one of his rare visits, Mass was held at the schoolhouse.

As the John Stroot family was growing and developing a thriving farm, the family of Englebert and Philomena Klos chose, too, to leave Europe for a truck farming livelihood in America. Their first stop was in Shokapoo, Minnesota, where a daughter, Marie, was born in 1883. Moving from there to Cavalier, North Dakota, they became the parents of a second daughter, Emma, in 1892. After a short stay at Wylie, Minnesota, the last move was made to Red Lake Falls, Minnesota. It was there that Frank Stroot married Emma Klos on February 1, 1910.

Besides settling his own homestead in Belgium township, Frank Stroot kept busy in church and civic affairs. He was one of the earliest and strongest supporters of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Euclid, Minnesota. At other times, he served as a justice of peace and in World War II, on the draft board.

Although Frank Stroot died in 1970 and Emma in 1973, seven of their twelve children still live in the Crookston and Euclid areas. The other five live elsewhere in Minnesota and Iowa. Four of the twelve are actively engaged in farming, the other eight have a variety of occupations. Only a few of the many grandchildren follow the longtime farming tradition.

Settling in Iowa, after leaving Kilkenny, Ireland, Mr. and Mrs. John Fitzsimmons, the former Ann Hollywood, were the parents of four children and sought their living in farming. One of these children, John, born in 1852, would someday be a Polk County resident.

Crossing the path of the Fitzsimmons family was the John Corbid family. In Galway, Ireland, John Corbid had been a gardener for a family by the name of Higgin. Romance intervened and John Corbid married Margaret Higgins, the daughter of his employer. The Corbid family, too, settled in Iowa and had a number of children. Among these children was Ellen (usually Nellie) who was born in Elkader, Iowa in 1859.

Young John Fitzsimmons and Nellie Corbid were married in Murray County in Minnesota and were blessed with five sons. Many of their official records and documents were burned in a fire in an early Murray County Court House.

Choosing these sons to raise and desire for more progress in farming, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzsimmons moved to Polk County in 1905. Sadly, soon after their arrival, Mr. Fitzsimmons fell ill and died. With a great deal of courage, Mrs. Fitzsimmons and her five sons stayed in this new area. The sons engaged in farming and other occupations. Nellie Fitzsimmons died at the age of ninetieth in 1949, but two sons and one grandson still live.