Mr. Botko served on the Farley Township Board for many years while he was farming. He also served on the A.S.C. Community Committee and the Rural school board.

Mr. and Mrs. Botko celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on January 15, 1952. The Botkos also shared the Honor of Pioneer Couple with Dr. and Mrs. Gable who was pastor in Tabor in 1956, in a parade at the 75th Jubilee Anniversary of Warren in 1956.

The Botkos farmed in Farley Township, Polk County over forty years before they retired and moved into Warren, Minnesota in 1944. Mrs. Botko passed away at the age of 77 years from a heart attack on January 15, 1959. After his wife’s death Mr. Botko kept himself busy raising a garden and a few chickens and pigeons. After several small strokes he passed away August 12, 1965 at the age of 87 years.

THOMAS BOTKO

Thomas Botko was born August 28, 1910, the fourth child born to Mr. and Mrs. George Botko Sr., who were pioneer farmers in Farley township in Polk County.

As a child, Tom along with his brothers helped with the chores around the farm. Most of the work consisted of hoeing long rows of trees that his folks planted when they bought their farm in 1918.

Tom remembers when he first started school and how he hated the one mile walk to school each day. His mother had to walk with him most of the way and sometimes she chased him until he finally realized that there was no getting out of it.

Times were really tough. One winter Tom tried trapping skunks and a few minks. It was smelly work to skin these animals, but he made $90.00 in the venture. Finding success in the skunk business, Tom and his brother George were ready to jump to action when they read in a magazine that there was a company in Minneapolis that was selling breeding stocks of Chinchilla rabbits, and if a person would buy their breeding stock they would buy back all the rabbits one raised. After careful consideration, Tom and George decided to place an order for two pair of Chinchilla rabbits, and they were in rabbit business. In about a year they had a nice bunch of young rabbits ready for shipping and they shipped them to Minneapolis. Ten days passed and the rabbits arrived back, thin, barely living and charges for postage were collect; so that ended their rabbit venture. There was no such a company buying rabbits. It was just a way to beat some teenagers out of their hard earned money.

Then when Tom was 20 years old, his Dad let him rent a quarter of land and for helping him with his land, his father let him use some of his machinery. Tom bought his first tractor in the fall of 1932 for $500 and then in 1933, Tom bought his first binder, but grain prices were very low at that time. Young Tom cleaned a load of 100 bushels of barley and got $20 for it. Wheat was selling for around 35 cents a bushel.

In the spring of 1934, Tom purchased his present farm from three brothers in Minneapolis, but he didn’t move onto his new farm until the spring of 1935. Then on June 4, 1935, Tom was married to Clara V. Quern of Oslo, Minnesota. Tom and Clara started farming in some very poor years as the grain prices were very low. Also there were a large number of cows to milk by hand as there was no electricity, and kerosene lights were used. Clara helped Tom out in the field with the shocking, and in milking cows, feeding chickens and taking care of the hogs. They had some tough years till about 1940, when prices got a little better. Then to this union, four children were born: Ann Marie, Jerald, Jerome, and Sharon. Electricity was finally brought out to the rural farms and we could discard our kerosene lanterns.

When the Botkos first started farming, it was real hard to get to town during the winter as the roads weren’t plowed out for a car to travel on. They had to use horses and a bob-sled if they wanted to go to town for groceries. The few times that Tom would go to town with a car in the winter he would take the back seat out of his car and put in about three or four cream cans and bring back hot water in them as they did not have a hot water heater. That’s the time that snowmobiles would have come in handy.

Tom and Clara are members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Tabor and Clara is a charter member of the Lutheran Church Women, starting in 1947. Tom is on the church council and has been for quite a few years and has also been president of the church council for over 10 years.

Tom is Superintendent of the Grain Shows at the Crookston Winter Shows, and has been for quite a few years; he is also Secretary of the Marshall County Poultry Show.

Tom used to do a lot of extra work in Polk County, working for the A.S.C. in Crookston for over 20 years as a reporter and then being promoted to a county supervisor for the A.S.C. He held that job until he developed kidney problems and had to give up farming and rented the farm out. For the time being Tom and Clara intend to live on the farm.

GEORGE FERENCIK, SR.

George Ferencik, Sr. was born on February 18, 1873 in Sariska Zupa, Czechoslovakia, to Anna and Andrew Ferencik. He was baptized on February 18, 1873 into the Lutheran faith and at the age of thirteen years was confirmed into the same faith. In April 1892, he immigrated to America, coming to Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. After a month he came to Minnesota, settling in the Tabor area of Polk County, Farley Township where he remained until he moved to Eminimus Home, Warren. He was a charter member of the Lutheran Church of Tabor.

On February 19, 1900, he married Mary Ritoch, daughter of George and Mary Ritoch of Tabor. To this union twelve children were born: Anna, Mrs. Andrew Koblan, Culhan, Colorado; Sophis, Mrs. Arnold Ramussen; Lena, Mrs. Helbert Larson of Alvarado, Minnesota; Helen, Mrs. John Soltis, Fargo, North Dakota; Esther, Mrs. Arthur Fillipi, Warren, Minnesota; Mildred, Mrs. Ernest Klenen, Warren, Minnesota; Ruth, Mrs. Edward Sear, East Grand Forks, Minnesota; and George Jr., Warren, Minnesota. There are also 24 grandchildren, 43 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary, February 6, 1934, his only son, George Jr., February 23, 1970, and four infant daughters. His parents and brother and sister also preceded him.

Ernest Klenen was born at Oak Park Township near Oslo, Minnesota. His wife Mildred, nee Ferencik, was born in Far-