James McDonald, one of the early settlers of Polk County, has accumulated a valuable property in Nisbet Township. He is an energetic farmer and has taken great pains in the development of his homestead, adding to its value and beauty by the careful care of trees, shrubs, and other ornamental improvements, which greatly enhance the value of his estate. Mr. McDonald was born in western Ontario, December 6, 1853. He was the second of ten children born to Donald and Ellen McDonald. His childhood was spent on a farm in Canada, as he left his homestead there in 1875. He went to Polk County, Minnesota and has since resided there. Soon after locating there he filed a homestead claim to one quarter of land of Section 32 in Nisbet Township. This is his present home. Its present location and good improvements show what may be accomplished in northern Minnesota by work and perseverance.

Mr. McDonald has devoted his life to agricultural pursuits and has become thoroughly acquainted with the operation of a model farm. Fortune has favored him and he has added to his acreage, as circumstances justified. He is now the owner of 560 acres of valuable farm lands. He has given considerable attention to the improvement of his immediate surroundings, and his efforts are rewarded by the enjoyment of a pleasant, comfortable home.

Mr. McDonald married Miss Isabel Millar of Canada, May 8, 1878. This union was blessed by the birth of the following children: Ethel Ellen, William James, Eva Belle, Daniel Lloyd, Mable Jennie, Margaret Fern, Roy Herbert, Kathryn Gladys and Mary Edith. Mr. McDonald with his family worshipped at the Bethel Presbyterian Church, as he is a member of that denomination. He also holds membership in the I.O.F. and I.O.F. He is a Republican and stands firmly for his convictions and lends his interests for the principles of his party. He is a citizen of true worth in his community and has always taken an active part in township affairs and served as a member of the township board for a number of years.

Robert Nisbet
Robert Nisbet was born in Lanark County, Canada, on August 19, 1853. His parents were natives of Scotland who settled in Canada. Robert was educated and came to Polk County in the spring of 1874, where he purchased 300 acres of good farmland. One hundred and thirty acres were located on Section 30, Nisbet Township and the balance on Section 25, Huntsville. The original farm homestead is now owned by James Richard Nisbet.

Robert married Margaret Furgerson in 1878. Robert D. Nisbet, their only child, lives in Saskatchewan, Canada today. After the death of his first wife, Mr. Nisbet was married to Christina Geddes, daughter of Danile and Agnes Geddes, on March 12, 1888. From that marriage five children were born, of whom today, only one survives along with a half-brother, Robert D., in Canada.

Hazel Nisbet Browne married the Rev. Russell Browne, now deceased, Presbyterian minister in the Ely, Minnesota area. Hazel died in 1955. They had two sons, Robert, of St. Paul, and a retired Veterans Administration employee and Gordon. Denver, Colorado, a retired manufacturing employee. Gordon is wed to Clara Carpenter, also from Denver, and they have four children, Russell, Robert, Olivia and Susan. Robert is now married to Svea Stenberg, originally from Duluth, and they have two daughters, Linnea and Janet.

Margaret Nisbet Andersen married Colonel W. A. Andersen, Hawaii, and lived there until her death in 1960. Their son, William, was killed in action serving with the armed forces in France in 1944.

James Lindsay Nisbet married Helen Corliss of East Grand Forks. Helen died in 1971 and James remained on the original homestead of Robert Nisbet until his death in 1973. James was a well known farmer and personality in the Mallory and Fisher, Minnesota area. They have three sons, James Richard, Robert, and Thomas.

James (Dick) of East Grand Forks is employed as a sugar

end foreman at American Crystal Sugar Company. His wife is Mary Ann Relf of East Grand Forks and they had three children, Mark Richard, Nancy Ann, and Relf Willard. Relf died in a motorcycle accident in 1974.


Thomas Freeman Lindsay lives in Seattle, Washington and works as an airline mechanic at United Airlines. He was married to Patti Johnson of Grand Forks and had three children: Dawn Olivia Christine, who died in an auto accident in 1972. Patti Ann and David Allan. After Tom and his first wife were divorced, he remarried Donna Anderson of Olympia, Washington.


Harold Geddes Nisbet married Oiene Sordahl of Fisher, Minnesota. East Grand Forks residents, Harold owned an electrical contracting business for many years. They have four children: John Thomas, East Grand Forks, civil service engineer; Jeffrey Nisbet, with the Grand Forks Air Base; Ronald Arthur, English teacher, Minneapolis; Judith Christine, registered nurse, married R. C. Johnson, Mahnomen, Minnesota, living in Leona, Iowa; H. Bruce, Grand Forks, elementary teacher.

John married Marilyn Forde of Bemidji. They have two children, Michael John and Michelle Joy. Ron married Phyllis Charbonneau of Grand Forks and has two sons, Christopher Andrew and Jeffrey Ronald. Judith and Richard have two girls and their names are Sheri Lynne and Janelle Christine.

Charles Relf
Charles Relf was married to Edith Laura Baskerville in Joliet, Illinois. They brought their two children, Melvin Charles and Alma Laura, to Polk County in 1916, when Charles purchased 320 acres of land in Nisbet Township from David Todd. In 1918 a new house was built.

Charles farmed with his wife in the area until his death. Alma Relf returned to Illinois for several years and then made her home in Grand Forks. She never married.

Melvin Relf was married to Elvis Walker, daughter of George and Jane Radcliffe Walker, June 18, 1922. They made their home on the family farm and were the parents of one child, Mary Ann. Melvin and Elvis retired to Grand Forks and lived there until their deaths, Melvin in 1957 and Elvis in 1964. Mary Ann Relf married James Richard Nisbet, July 31, 1954. They moved to the Relf farm in 1955 where they still reside. Mary Ann is a home economics teacher and J. Richard (Dick) is a foreman at American Crystal Sugar Company.

Dick and Mary Ann are parents of two children, Mark Richard, born in 1956 and Nancy Ann, born in 1958. A third child, Relf Willard, was killed in an accident, August 22, 1974, at the age of fourteen.

Mark is enrolled at Moorhead State College and works with Town and Country Concrete Inc. in the summer.

Nancy attends high school in Fisher, Minnesota and is employed at the United Hospital part-time.