DALE AND LAURA CHARAIS

Dale Marlow was born in Crookston in May, 1944, and lived with his parents Clarence and Leila Charais, and his sisters, Delsie and Corrine, at their farm home on section 12, Roome township, Polk county. Dale attended district #110 until the rural school closed in 1953. He then transferred to Crookston, and continued from grade four at Franklin Elementary. After his first two years at Central High School he transferred to the Northwest School of Agriculture, graduating in 1962. Dale enlisted in the National Guard in the fall of 1964 and served basic training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. He later transferred to the Air National Guard in Fargo, North Dakota, and received his discharge in 1972. In November of 1966, Dale Charais and Laura Ann Munjon were married at the Methodist Church in Crookston, with her father officiating.

Laura was born in New Jersey in January of 1946. She came to Minneapolis in 1960 with her family, graduated from high school in 1964, and attended Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa. Laura moved to Polk county in 1964 with her parents, Paul and Naomi Munjon, and her brother, Richard, when her father was appointed minister to Wesley United Methodist Church in Crookston. After graduating from Aaker's Business College in Grand Forks, North Dakota, she was employed in Crookston as secretary at the Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, and the Agriculture Division at the University of Minnesota Technical College, Crookston.

We lived in Eldred, Minnesota from 1966 to 1974 and moved to our present home at section 12, Roome township, in December, 1974. Dale has been engaged in farming since 1962. We have two sons, Alec, born in May, 1973, and Brad, whom we adopted in October of 1975 at three weeks of age.

MR. AND MRS. LEMUEL CHARAIS

Lemuel and Evelina Charais, together with their four children — Viola, Clarence, Helen, and Lillian — came to Polk County in 1916 from Fowler, Indiana. Evelina's brother, Lee Besse, also came with them. David Besse, Evelina's father, had purchased a section of land three miles east of Climax, Minnesota and felt that tilling would be the answer to the wet lands. This had worked well in Indiana but the colder winters of Minnesota caused the ground to freeze more deeply and break the tiles. Lee Besse returned to Indiana after two years on the farm but the Charais family remained there for ten years during which the children attended school in Climax.

Mr. Charais bought a threshing machine and did custom threshing for the neighbors. He also played the violin for barn dances in the area.

In 1926 they rented a half-section three miles south of Eldred, 160 acres in section 10, Vineland township where they resided, and 160 acres in section 14. The house on this farm was built of logs. The land was wet, the crops were poor, and fatal sleeping sickness among their best work horses added to the problems of the unfruitful years. In the early 30's Mr. Charais purchased an International F-12 tractor, his first. A few years later he bought one of the first small combines to be used in the area — an Allis Chalmers. Also at this time he purchased his farm from the State of Minnesota for the sum of $3000 — less than $10 per acre.

Mr. Charais served on the town board of Vineland township and also on the school board of district 254. Evelina was a member of the Eldred Homemakers Club. Helen married Ordean Estenson in 1933 and they were the parents of four children. Clarence married Lelia Steiner in 1936 and they also had four children. Viola married Nilmor Wahl of Climax and they later moved to Mentor, Minnesota. They had five children. Lillian was married to Carl Amundson of Shelly and they had four children.

In 1945 Mr. and Mrs. Charais moved into Eldred, where they purchased a home from Olga Frederickson. They raised chickens and Mr. Charais did carpenter work. He later sold the farm to Alvin Suldhahl. Lemuel Charais passed away in 1956. Evelina continued to live in Eldred and was active with her yard and garden work until her death in 1973.

JOHN CONNERAN SENIOR

This fine gentleman was for years one of the enterprising and extensive farmers in Polk County, having owned 920 acres of land, most of which was under cultivation. The land is still in the family, but has been given to his sons, and in turn passed on to his grandsons.

John Conneran Sr. was born in County Galway, Ireland, on November 10, 1844, and came to the United States to join his brother, Lawrence, in New Jersey. He arrived in New York City on May 2, 1862. Two years later his father came over, and they moved up into New York State, where they lived for a time before returning to New Jersey. John Conneran worked as a brakeman on a railroad for awhile, and then as a conductor.

He met and married Ann Logan in Manchester, New Jersey, in 1872. Ann Logan was of Irish stock also, having been born in Belfast, Ireland, on September 25, 1854. She had immigrated with her family to America, arriving in this country the night of President Lincoln's assassination, April 14, 1865. She lived with her family at Red Bank, New Jersey.

After his marriage, Mr. Conneran became a section boss on the railroad. He held that job for seven years, during which time he saved $1,000 of his earnings as a stake for his contemplated venture to the distant West. By this time they had three children: John Jr., Mary, and Katherine, all of whom were born at Red Bank, New Jersey. His wife longed to be with her people, the Logans, and Mrs. Barney Haggerty, who had already moved to the Red River area near Fisher. So, later in 1879 he brought his family to Fisher's Landing, which was still the railroad terminus and head of navigation at that date.

In the earlier days Fisher's Landing was better known as Shirt Tail Bend, a name given during the log-driving days when a lumberjack hung his shirt on a stake to mark the sand bar on the bend. Hence the name stuck for a long time.

As a homestead, he settled on a quarter section of prairie land in Section 6 of Roome Township about six and one-half miles southwest of Fisher. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Kate Logan, had a claim on it for a time, but she allowed him to file on it, which he did in the spring of 1888. By May 15, 1888 he had his house built and was occupying it. Mr. Conneran bought 160 acres more in section 6, and 160 acres in section 32, 80 acres in section 8, all in Roome Township; and 40 acres in section 7 of Fisher township. He also owned 320 acres in Woodside Township. The Woodside property was only a quarter of a mile south of Maple Lake, and a few miles south of Mentor.

At one time Mr. Conneran spent four or five years on his Woodside farm getting out cordwood, which he shipped to Crookston and Grand Forks, employing 10 to 12 wood choppers, and sending off 1,000 to 3,000 cords a year. One winter his shipment was a car load every day.

His farming operations were also carried on in a large scale. At the height of his business he planted 400 to 500 acres in wheat, and also kept 50 to 75 head of cattle when he had range for them. But about 1916 he cut his herd down to 25 head, in addition to 10 to 12 milk cows, which he kept for butter,