Edmund Huderle and live northeast of East Grand Forks, Minnesota; and Gladys, the youngest, married Roy Lautl and they still live on my parent's farm in Sandsville township.

**GEORGE RITOCH**

Out in Sandsville Township, along highway 220, in a little white farm house lives Julia Ritoch, a widow, all by herself now. George Ritoch, her husband, passed away in July of 1968. Their children, grown up, have long since gone from the vicinity.

The first George Ritoch with his wife, Mary, and son, John, emigrated from Slovakia in the 1880's and found work in Minneapolis, where they lived among Slovak friends until they moved to a forty acre farm near Tabor, but in Northland township. While in Minneapolis they lost their first son, but got two daughters. Mary and Annie. In 1893, they came to their farm in Polk county and a year later another son was born to them. They named him, George, after his father.

The Ritochs helped build the Holy Trinity Slovak Lutheran Church of Tabor and were faithful members of that church all of their lives. The girls grew up and Mary married George Ferencek at an early age and they made their home in Farley township. Annie married John Evin and they too farmed in both Polk and Marshall counties for many years before moving to Warren. When George Junior was fifteen, his father passed away after a lingering illness. Left alone with his mother, he took over the farming operations and later bought more land with a set of good buildings on the place where they were going to live. He loved horses and took good care of them in doing his farm work. All the farming was done with horses then.

George also loved "schoolarmys" when the country was dotted with little white school houses. He took them to dances, for which Tabor was famous and he usually showed the girls a good time. So it was not strange that he fell in love with a school teacher, Julia Covlin, from Erskine, and they were married on August 2, 1926. His mother continued to live with them. In a few years they acquired a family of three girls and one boy. His mother passed away in 1936.

In 1935, they bought the farm in Sandsville township and moved there in March. The children got their education in an Alvarado school. Dorothy, Mrs. Duane Mauch, lives in St. Croix Beach where the family is engaged in real estate business. Shirley, Mrs. William Langston, is in San Francisco and is employed by the United States Government. Betty, Mrs. Kenneth White, lives in Kent, Washington, and has a purse-making business from her home. Thomas looks after the farm and his mother, but also does business in Minneapolis. While living in Northland township, George Ritoch served on the school board in their district. In Sandsville township, he served as town treasurer for a number of years. He also served on the education board in the Alvarado school.

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**THE SCANDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH**

The Scandia Lutheran Church was organized on November 20, 1893 as Helland Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church and located in Scandia township, Polk County. The first officers were Johan Stromstad, Nils Veen, Gust Christianson, Gitte Stromstad, and Tom Sandem. The Reverend Brynildson was the first pastor.

The congregation met until 1915 in the schoolhouse. On February 9, 1915, at the annual meeting at the home of the Christianson Brothers, members decided to build a church structure. Location selected was the northeast corner of section 27 on land owned by Tom Sandem. Alfred Christianson, G. G. Eia, Theodore Stromstad, and the Reverend O. J. Lutnes were elected to serve as the building committee.

The cost of the new church was approximately $1,400. Most of the labor was donated by members of the congregation and friends. Many sacrificed their limited means and valuable time in order that the church could be built.

One of the most disastrous material catastrophies to strike Scandia congregation occurred on Sunday afternoon at approximately 4:30 p.m., August 1, 1937, when lightning struck the church spire and the church was consumed by flames in less than an hour! An eyewitness to the crash promptly spread the alarm throughout the neighborhood. To extinguish the flames was hopeless; consequently efforts were concentrated on saving the fixtures, which was done both swiftly and efficiently. The altar, the altar rail, the pulpit, the pews, the organ, and everything detachable, including a calen-

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**Brief History of Scandia Township**

The first meeting of the Scandia township, Polk county was held on October 6, 1896. The meeting was called to order by John Stromstad. The following board was elected: chairman, Gust Christianson; supervisors, Tom Sandem, John Stromstad; treasurer, Gitle Stromstad; assessor, A. N. Mjelde; town clerk, John Clementsen; constables, B. O. Roem, Gust Linder; justice of the peace, Thor. Anderson.

All were elected unanimously with fifteen votes being cast. Their first item of business was to vote to buy road equipment, including a reversible road machine and road plow and six slush scrapers: they were to purchase them as soon as possible. At their next meeting, it seemed that the treasurer and the justice of the peace had declined their positions so two other men were appointed to fill those positions. A. N. Mjelde was appointed as treasurer and John Clementsen as justice of the peace. Bonds were fixed for all offices. Thirty-three names were registered for voting.

It is interesting to note how they carefully used their road taxes to build and maintain the roads. We also see where medicine for a family was paid for by the township. And at another meeting, a member was reimbursed for burying some horses. In May, 1906, it was decided to build a new bridge over the state ditch. The job went to T. J. Berg. He was to get $600 for the job.

The business of Scandia township is carried on at this time by the following members: chairman, Bert Tollefson; township clerk, James Larson; treasurer, Roger Larson; and supervisors, Rolland Hamre and LeRoy Opdahl.