

The Story of Stephen & Martha (Hatch) Cook

Stephen Washington Cook (C200=Soundex) was born on March 2, 1845 in Theresa, New York. The birth record of Blanche Cook in Mitchell Cty, Iowa in 1880 showed Stephen's birthplace as Jefferson Co, NY, which is the NY county at the mouth of Lake Ontario's discharge into the St. Lawrence River. Theresa is located about ten miles from the river on current day state Highway 37.

Stephen's middle name was always thought to be "Webster (like his son, James); however, "Washington" was shown on the birth record of Olive Cook.

Stephen was the oldest of five children in the Dan and Esther (MacDonald) Cook family: Stephen, Domaer(Sp?), Mary Elizabeth (Libby), J.A. (Ino?), & Helen.

CIVIL WAR DUTY

Stephen Cook entered the military in Sept 9, 1862. He fought in the Civil War as a corporal in 'H' Company of the 23rd Illinois Infantry (per grave marker in Groton SD & Death record at Brown Cty, SD, Reg of Deeds). He was discharged on July 24, 1865.

BLACKSMITHING IN IOWA

Stephen Cook moved from Wisconsin to northern Iowa with his family sometime after the birth of his sister, Helen, in 1865. (No Cooks were listed in the 1860 Census as living in Mitchell Cty, Iowa). The family settled around St. Ansgar township in Mitchell County, Iowa, near the Minnesota border.

Rev. Claus Clausen of Rock County, Wisconsin and a number of Norwegians settled St. Ansgar around 1853. It was the first township in Mitchell County to be settled. St. Ansgar was given to the town by Rev. Clausen to honor his favorite saint, whose name meant "God's Spear". The people had moved west because the

government land in Wisconsin was nearly exhausted and people were eager to have a place to earn a living (from Mitchell County History, see below).

John P. Cook, a native of New York, came west in 1836 to Davenport, Iowa. He was a lawyer, who represented Mitchell County as a Whig in Congress from 1853-1855 (p.231, "History of Mitchell & Worth Counties, 1883", Union Publishing; viewed in Iowa State Historical Library, Des Moines, June, 1994 by Bill Lauzon). John P. Cook might be a relative of S.W. Cook that encouraged his movement to this part of Iowa.

The Iowa 1870 census listed his mother, Ester (Esther) Cook, as the head of the household in St. Ansgar township in Mitchell County:

Name	Age	Relati	Born	Occup
Esther	44	mother	NY	
Stephen	25	son	NY	Blacksmith
Domaer(sp?)	21	son	NY	Blacksmith
Mary	18	daughter	NY	
John	12	?	Wi	
Helen	5	daughter	WI	

Stephen was listed as owning \$1000 in real estate at the time, and Ester having \$500 in personal effects.

In the book, "Mitchell Country History", published in 1989 (viewed in Iowa State History Society Library in Des Moines, June 1994), the following information was given (p.74, Town Article #T110) under the caption of "St. Ansgar Reminiscence" concerning the business firms of the town as it appeared in about 1876: "On the corner where Miss Syverud lives was the S.W. Cook blacksmith shop. Mr. Cook traded the building to C.L.Tessman for 40 acres of land in Mitchell County, over on the Worth County Line"

In the "St. Ansgar Centennial History, 1853-1953 (96 pages, in Osage and St. Ansgar Libraries) there is a description of 2 village blacksmiths: Just Thompson and O.K.Berg. Apparently, the shop of S.W.Cook predated the author's knowledge.

In the St. Ansgar Centennial History booklet, when describing the Town of Stacyville, a possible Cook connection is described (P.87, Town Article #T132), without reference to a date: "The lumber company was owned by Cook of St. Ansgar and managed by Matt Weber 50 years ago...Eddie Hatten bought the lumber business from Cook and changed it to a lumber, plumbing and cement business."

The St. Ansgar Centennial History described a J.F.Kock who opened a lumberyard in 1883 (Kock & Son). Mr. Kock had an interest in many businesses in the town and served as the 1st president of the Citizen's Bank when it was established in 1900. This may have been the person referred to as "Cook" in the lumber company article.

In the 1880 US Census from Iowa, the S.W.Cook family was listed with names of siblings and his own young family: Note that Iowa did not require any vital records (birth, death, marriage) prior to 1880, so government records are not available.

S.W. Cook, husband	age 35
Esther Linn Cook, mother	age 55
Martha D. Cook, wife	age 26
J.A. Cook, brother	age 23
Luella D. Cook, daughter	age 3
Helen Cook, sister	age 14
Elmer E. Cook, son	age 2
Madge Cook, daughter	age

1/12

The 1885 Iowa state census did not list any of the S.W. Cook family.

HOMESTEADING IN THE DAKOTA TERRITORY

The Cook family was one of the first of the pioneer settlers in West Hanson Township of South Dakota, coming to SD from northern Iowa in the mid 1880's. Some of the Cook family (mother, sisters, brothers) must have remained in Iowa since there were letters being written to there as of Jan, 1906.

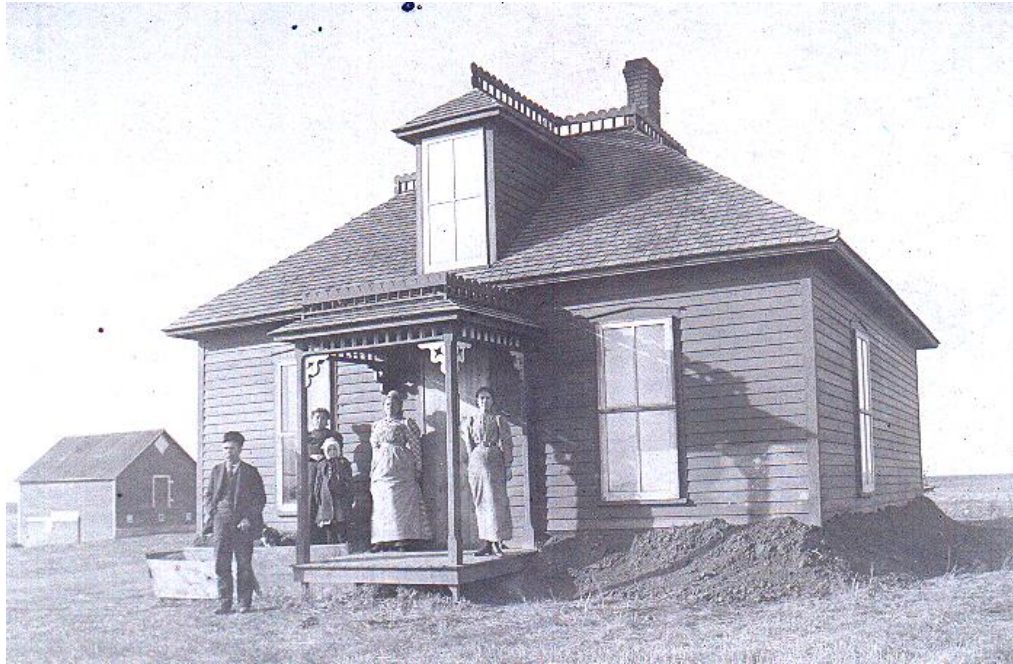
The Land Grant Act of April 24, 1820 permitted settlers to obtain government land for farming. The new Cooks plunked down their \$200 (\$1.25/acre) and started being farmers in Dakota Territory. Land records showed that Stephen and Martha began their homesteading on Nov 12, 1885 (Brown Cty, SD Homestead Rec. Vol.8,p.319) on 160 acres of land in the township of West Hanson: Town 122N, Range 61W, 5th Prime Meridian in Section 9, SE 1/4, about 6 miles SW of the city of Groton, SD. The deed was officially filed on July 20, 1887 at the Aberdeen Land Office (Brown Cty, SD, Deed Rec. Bk 23,p.353). Their section was immediately north of the designated "school" section #16. Artesian Creek



meandered through the central part of the land. The Cooks built their buildings in the north east corner of the property. Bill

Lauzon has videotape of what the land and present day (6/1993) buildings look like.

Stephen loved machines, especially steam



engines. He passed on his knowledge, love of machinery and mechanical abilities to his children.

The Cooks had respectable farm holdings in S.D. in the early 1900's, hiring a number of people to help work the farm. Stephen hired Otto Oswald (first connection between the Cook and Jones families) in around 1902-4 to work the steam engines. On Oct 26, 1900, SW and Martha Cook proved up on their homestead and officially bought their 160 acres of land from the state of SD (Brown Cty Reg of Deeds, Warrantee Vol.54,p.421). Land transactions of Stephen/Martha/SW Cook were also recorded in Book 23,p.353; Bk 81,p.634; Bk 84,p.502; however, they were not found and their substance remains unclear.

By 1993 the full original Cook homestead quarter section had passed into the hands of a Mary Habeck, who was renting out the land. A gravel section road runs on the east

side of the land, and the graveled Town Road 21 is on the south. It also appears that the old Artesian Creek moved it's course & location to the west a considerable distance and was renamed to Mud Creek.

The Stephen Cook family was not the only Cook clan living around the Groton area of South Dakota. In the late 1880's the William L.Cook family came to Bates township from around Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1902 they moved to

Farney township and in 1913 to Groton itself. This Cook family was well established in the financial and political community. They controlled the Ferney Farmers Elevator, auto shops and other companies. The family included Lina Kennedy Cook (wife), and children: Joseph W. & Elsie Bahr Cook, Joyce Cook Breckenridge & Donald Breckenridge, Jesse K & Helen Cook, Stewart Cook, and M.R. Cook. Steward may be the S.W. Cook referred to in several documents that contain only initials (easily confused with Stephen Washington Cook). M.R.Cook may be the same as Milo R. Cook who moved to Groton in 1912. His family included wife Hattie, and children: Donald Milo, Beverly William (male), Robert Charles & Mildred Schmidt Cook, Claribel Cook Olson & Robert Olson, and Lois Cook Sour & Harold Sour. (from History of City of Groton, SD).

**MOVE TO THE
CITY OF GROTON, SD In 1900?**

Stephen left his country farm due to failing health and built a home in the city of Groton. On Oct 24, 1902, Stephen W. Cook bought from Mr./Mrs. Collins, for \$360, 9 lots of land (block 18, lots 1-9, in 1st Addition) in the city of Groton (Vol.65,p.619). This land is on the present day corner of Main Street and 7th Avenue, kitty corner from the city park and across from the Catholic Church. Bill Lauzon has a videotape of the 1993 area.

On April 30, 1907 SW Cook (Stephen or other?) bought from George Aves, lot #6 in block 3 in the original plat of the City of Groton (Vol.84, p.502).

In 1981 the city of Groton published a book of its centennial history (Bill Lauzon purchased). It contains numerous entries and pictures of the "other" Cook family, but very little of the "first" Cooks in the area. It refers to S.W. Cook as vice-president of the Brown County Mutual Insurance Company in 1888 (p.53), but that doesn't sound like Stephen. "S.W.Cook & Sons" were in the lumber business in Groton (p.205), starting by buying out St. Crois Lumber in 1906 at lot 5, block 5 of the city (p.161) The Cook lumber company ran closing out ads in the 1907 Groton Herald newspapers (p.205). S.W. Cook had organized and was the first manager of the Ferney Farmers Elevator. The Centennial History guesses that S.W. may have been William L.'s brother, "but, there was another family of Cooks in

HOMESTEAD REQUIREMENTS:

21 yrs or older; build 3 structures (typically 1 was the out-house; live & work the land for a certain number of days per month per year for 5 years. It was recognized that people had to earn money by other occupations to pay for the expense of starting a homestead. Homesteading was very lonesome and harsh in a desolate land.

Groton" (US!). Bessie Bradshaw Cook was the one in the Stephen Cook family that got



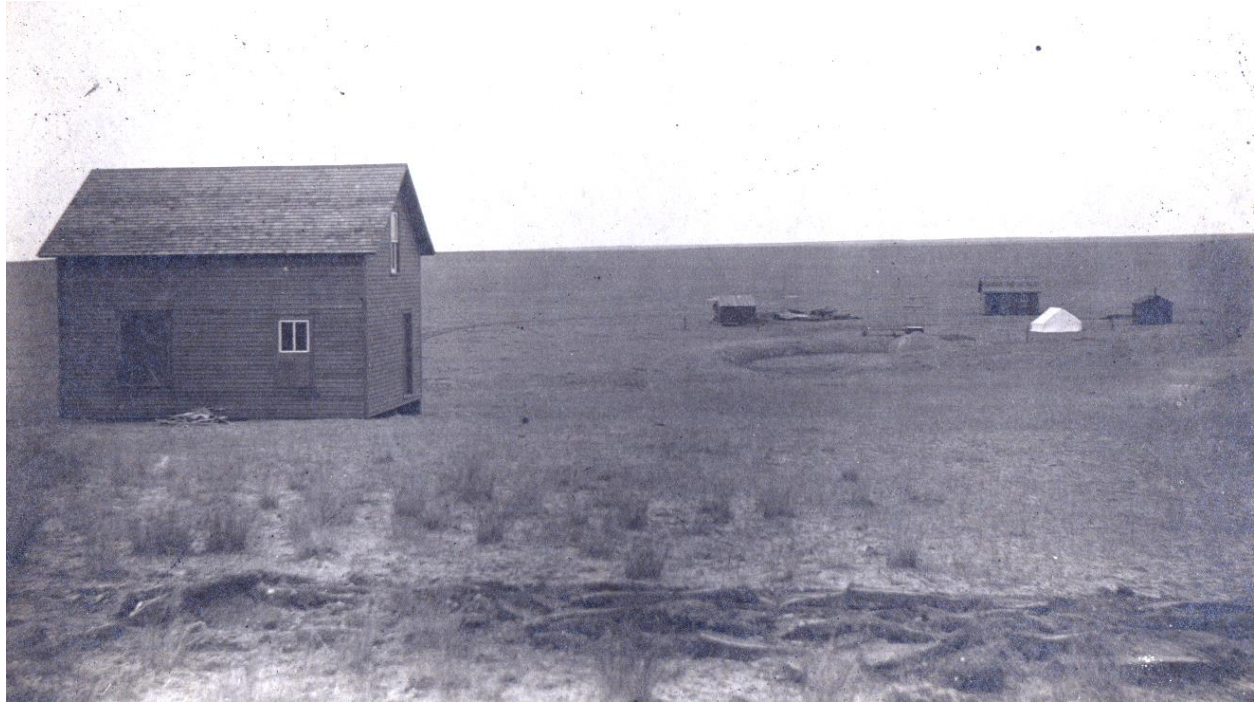
in Groton's Centennial limelight. She was listed as being the bookkeeper of Brooberg's clothing store for many years (p.145).

Stephen Cook was a person who commanded and earned respect. His employees and even some of his close friends and in-laws referred him to as "Mr. Cook". Stephen was a past commander of the Leavitt Post, G.A.R. and referred to as a "1st class citizen in the broadest sense of the word" in his Groton obituary.

HOMESTEADING IN MONTANA TERRITORY

I-----I
I Broadview,MT I
I I
I Comanche,MT I
I Acton,MT I
I 13 miles I
I Billings,MT I
I I
I-----I

By 1907 all of Stephen Cook's children were old enough to homestead. In 1907, Stephen took Otto with him to investigate various homesteading possibilities in Montana. They selected land about 15 miles northwest of Billings, at Comanche, MT.



They filed 8 homestead claims of 160 acres each for various members of the Cook family, and Otto. (see sketch) It took a long time for the government homestead paper work to be processed. Finally, in 1908, the Cook family moved by railroad cars from South Dakota to Montana. It must have been a remarkable sight since even the steam engine thrashing machine and separator was transported to Montana. In addition to his own family, a number of neighbors in the Groton area also went with the Cooks to file claims in Montana.

Family stories tell that the Cook girls lived in Billings during portions of the year, especially winter. It's possible that Stephen & Martha spent their first Montana winter living in Billings. Land records showed that on Dec 22, 1908, a SW and Martha Cook

(assumed to be our relatives) bought 1 1/2 lots (with house?) in the city of Billings, MT for \$450 from Margaret & Henry Rupert, of Billings (Wty Deed Bk.30,p.302, #13393). It was located at Block 4, west half of lot 18 & all of lot 19 in the Suburban Subdivision, north of the NP railway r/w, in SE 1/4 of Sec 4, T1S, R26E. In 1993 Billings lingo

the land is located at 337 & 341 Custer Ave; it's a block south of Broadwater Ave, a main street, and between west 3rd & west 4th streets. Stephen & Martha sold the land to Wm Nicholls, of Billings, on Nov 8, 1909 (Wty Bk D, #18453)

Stephen did not enjoy good health after moving to Montana (obit).

The 4 Cooks, with their homestead adjacent to each other, jointly worked the land and had joint buildings at the center point of the 4-quarters. A big barn was built on Stephen's land. A large machine shed was built on Olive's land. Libby had a house and lived alone. Elmer probably had a separate house for his family.

THE FINAL YEARS

Stephen and the rest of the Cook family "proved up" their homestead obligations in January, 1912. Stephen may have then given the land to John Flaig and then moved to California {thought from Lorene McCarthy, 8-92}. The land remained in the Cook family until about 1928 when John & Olive Flaig sold it to a Fred Dreves (per L.McCarthy, 8-92).

Stephen died on April 28, 1912 (his son Jim's birthday) at his ranch in Comanche, Montana, at the age of 67 years. He died of cystitis pyelonephritis (inflammation of bladder that effected the kidney & caused infection & possible failure), which he had for about a year. It was during that year that the attending physician had been seeing Stephen, last seeing him 3 days before his death. Stephen suffered from prostatitis for about 20 years. The funeral was held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Groton SD, where he was buried.



John Flaig assumed operational responsibilities for his father-in-law's land.

MARTHA DeETTA HATCH

The Hatch family was from England, per Cook family memory. They were living in Oshkosh, Wisconsin in 1854 when Martha was born.

LIFE IN IOWA

When Martha was a young girl, her family moved to northern Iowa, where they farmed. She met Stephen Cook while living there. In 1975 they were married.

LIFE IN SOUTH DAKOTA

In about 1885, Stephen and Martha Cook moved to northern South Dakota to set up a homestead farm. It was located about 3 miles southwest of the city of Groton, South Dakota.

The Cook family moved into the city of Groton in the early 1900's. Martha's obit referred to their home as a "pleasant resort for neighbors and friends".

MOVE TO MONTANA

In 1908, the family moved to the Montana frontier and began to homestead at Comanche, near Billings.

MARTHA IS WIDOWED

Martha's husband, Stephen Cook, died in 1912. Martha processed her claim for the homestead land (SW 1/4 of Sec 2, T3N, R24E) the couple had settled. On Jan 6, 1913 she received her land patent deed #42075 (Yellowstone Warranty Bk 45, page 286) from the U.S. Government Land Office in Billings, MT, under the authorization of President William H. Taft.

LAND DEALINGS

Martha and her sister-in-law, Libby (Cook) Fritcher, owned some land in the village of Comanche. At one brief time it was a rather good-sized town, but now nothing more than

two homes and long forgotten memories. On Nov. 15, 1915 Martha bought land from Brockway Real Estate (Lots 24 & 25 in Block 7) in the East Comanche subdivision of the Town of Comanche (Warranty Book 57, Deed #79720). She sold the land a year later on October 20, 1916 to the State Elevator Co. of Cascade, MT (Book 54, Page 418, #82248).

On December 14, 1917, Martha sold the original Cook 160 acre homestead to John W. Jones (Book 65, page 308, #103607). John W. Jones was a cousin of her daughter-in-law, Gladys (Jones) Cook. This transaction paid off two (??) mortgages on the land from November 24, 1915 to C.E. Shoemaker & Co. for \$1500 and \$150.58.

DEATH DURING A VISIT TO HER CHILDREN

In 1918, Martha Cook was visiting her sons, James & Elmer, who were living in Buffalo, WY. Her daughters, Blanche and Grace, and her sister-in-law, Libby Fritcher, accompanied her. The group of women were on their way to California. Martha had been recovering from the flu. However, she had an asthma attack and died after a short illness on December 8, 1918.

The funeral service for Martha DeEtta Hatch Cook took place in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Groton, S.D. She was buried on the south side of her husband. During a 1993 visit her grave was not marked.

KIDS:

1. Luella

Married Harold McFarlane. Young Photos of Ruth, Ellis & Vern were taken in Groton, SD, indicating they might have lived there. Photo of Hazel taken in Sisseton, SD.

KIDS:

1. Ruth McFarlane

2. Harold
3. Vern
4. Ellis
5. Hazel Eilene
6. Leslie
7. Grace Irene -Grace Irene McFarlane was born in Groton, SD on November 7, 1909 to Luella (Cook) and Andrew McFarlane. On June 14, 1925 she married William Ray Huff at Milbank, SD. The family lived in and around Wilmot, SD. The family had four children: Donald Ray, Alvin Leslie, Joyce Irene, and Delores Darlene. Another son died as an infant. In 1939, Grace became ill fairly quickly with encephalitis (sleeping sickness). She was taken to the hospital at Sisseton, SD, but there was little that could be done. She passed away at 4 AM on Wednesday, October 4, 1939 at the age of 29.



2. Stephen Elmer

Stephen Elmer Cook was born in Mitchell County, Iowa in about 1878. He moved to South Dakota with his parents

in around 1884. The family, probably to avoid confusion with his father, Stephen, referred him to as Elmer. In the 1880 US census in Iowa he was referred to as Elmer E. Cook.

LIFE & MARRIAGE IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Elmer met Bessie May Bradshaw, a young girl living in nearby Groton, SD. On Jan 10, 1906 they were married. R.A. Bradshaw, Louis L. Lane & S.W. Cook were witnesses'.

There are homestead records in Aberdeen (Brown Cty) that showed an Elmer Cook with land (Bk 81, p.634--



couldn't find) but it has not been substantiated as being Stephen Elmer, nor known if he would have been of age at the time. Similarly, a number of records showed a James W. Cook (his brother?) in land transactions.

Marvin Cook was born on Jan 5, 1907 in Groton [1].

HOMESTEADING IN MONTANA

In 1908 Elmer & his family traveled to Montana to homestead with his father, brother & sisters.

Elmer homesteaded on 160 acres of land (S 1/2 of NE 1/4 & lots 1&2, of Sec 2, T3N, R24E), under application #459, S/N 01852, receipt #953352. He satisfied his homesteading requirements on Feb 10, 1913 and received Cert #41065 from the Dept of Interior (Yellowstone Cty Warranty Bk 45, p.173).

He handed in the certificate to the Commissioner of the General Land Office to receive his Land Patent # 44437 to obtain clear ownership of his 159.64 acres of land on June 6, 1913 (Bk 45, p.624). It was recorded in the Regional Land Office in Billings on June 30, 1913 as Patent #340308, under the authorization of President Woodrow Wilson.

Life was tough. Farms were miles from Billings (15 miles), Comanche (6 miles) or any other town. It was an all day event (sometimes ordeal) just to go to town to get supplies. Winters were bad. Roads and transportation was poor. Mail came once a week or less.

Helen Elizabeth was born on Sept 15 or 18, 1910 at Comanche, MT.[2] Hazel DeEtta Cook was born in about 1914 [3].

Family legend (dates somewhat disputed by land records in MT and WY) was that Elmer apparently didn't like the tough homestead farming or married life and that he became fed up with the whole situation; so in about 1912 Elmer left his

family (wife & 3 kids) abruptly, including the family homesteading arrangement. John W. Jones, a banker and son of W.A. Jones (and cousin of the Jones' girls) bought Elmer's Montana homestead. John Jones was visiting his cousin, Vivian Jones Oswald and her husband, Otto, and learned of the availability of the land. {per Lorene McCarthy}

THE MOVE TO BUFFALO, WYOMING

Facts concerning land transfers, however, point to a slightly different story. Jim & Elmer Cook families sold their Montana homesteads and together moved to the Buffalo Wy area in late 1916, for reasons unknown.

Jim settled in the city of Buffalo, while Elmer bought land about 3 miles NW of Buffalo.

On Nov 11, 1916 Elmer & Bessie Cook bought some rolling pastureland from A.A.Lucas of Sheridan, WY (Book 19,p.268-Johnson Cty Clerks Ofc). The land was a confusion quilt of legal descriptions (drawn of map of Bill L) in Town 5N, Range 83W of Johnson County, WY, consisting of:

SEC 5: SW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 & S 1/2 OF SW 1/4

6: S 1/2 OF SE 1/4

7: N 1/2 OF NE 1/4

8: NW 1/4 OF NW 1/4, E 1/2 OF NW 1/4, W 1/2 OF NE 1/4 & SW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 17: NW 1/4 OF NE 1/4, S 1/2 OF NE 1/4, N 1/2 OF SE 1/4 & SE 1/4 OF SE 1/4

The land is now part of the Bud Love Game & Fish Reserve of the State of Wyoming. Further information may be available from the WY Land Admin Branch of the Game Commission (Dave

Hund, 307-777-4596) or Rick Palester, the area game warden (6/93), 307-684-5223. It is south of the H.F.Bar Ranch and U.M. Ranch. A videotape of the terrain is available from Bill Lauzon.

A land transaction occurred on Oct 22, 1917 that transferred some land from the Cooks to Paul Rothwell (Book 26,p.4-unviewed in 6/93), and the mortgage with Mr. Lucas was released (Book R,p.87).

BESSIE RETURNS TO GROTON, SOUTH DAKOTA

Sometime around 1918 Elmer left his family, for unclear reasons.

Bessie sold the family land holdings near Comanche, MT to J. Hentry Conover of Comanche on Nov 19,

1918 to cover the first mortgage of \$2000 and 2nd mortgage of \$913.15 (Yellowstone Bk 67,p.159 & p.196). Needing to be clarified is the unclear description of additional land involved in this transaction in T1N, R23E: E 1/2, NW 1/4; E 1/2, SW1/4; S 1/2, SE 1/4.

After Elmer left his family, Bessie & children moved back to Groton, SD after she sold the land.

Nobody really knew where he went. There were rumors of him being in Washington, but he was gone before it could be traced.



SOURCES:

[1] Family Photo of Elmer Cook family, by Groton photographer, hand dated Christmas, 1908. Note: Photo [2] has a hand written birth date of Marvin of Jan 5, 1907, making his 2 yrs old if the Christmas 1908 photo is correct; also during the 1908 period the family was homesteading in MT, making it probable that the 1908 was really 1907.

[2] Photo of Elmer and Helen taken Dec 14, 1911 at Billings, MT; from collection of Leon Cook family, observed 1998; shows full names & birth dates of Marvin and Helen; Note: BD of Helen on photo of Sept 15, 1910 conflicts with that in Helen's obit that indicates BD of Sept 18, 1910.

[3] Photo of Hazel, with attached graduation commencement card from Groton HS for 1932; gives middle name as DeEtta; Calc DOB to be about 1914 (1932-18yrs); from collection of Leon Cook family, observed 1998

Bessie May Bradshaw was born on May 14, 1880 in Gratiot, Wisconsin. Her family moved to the Groton, South Dakota area in about 1898.

She married Stephen Elmer Cook in 1905. In 1908, the Cook family moved to Montana. In 1916 the Elmer Cook family moved to Buffalo Gap, Wyoming near Buffalo, where his brother Jim moved at that same time. By this time, 3 children were born: Marvin, Helen and Hazel.

Elmer left his family in about 1918. Bessie May moved her family to her hometown of Groton, South Dakota in March 1919.

Bessie Cook worked for many years as a bookkeeper for the Brooberg Mercantile Company, a dealer in "noble" lines of ladies wear (Groton Centennial History,

p.144-5). She was a member of the Rebekah Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) for 50 years.

In 1933, Bessie began living with her son Marvin. In 1958 she moved to the IOOF home in Dell Rapids, South Dakota. She was living there when she died on December 14, 1965.

Bessie's burial service was held at the Groton Methodist Church. (info from her obituary)

KIDS:

1. Marvin - Marvin lived for a time in Florida and Aurora, Co.
2. Helen - Helen E. Cook was born on Sept 18, 1910 at the Elmer & Bessie Cook homestead at Comanche, Montana. When she was about 6 years old, her family moved to Buffalo Gap, Wyoming. Her father, Elmer Cook, abandoned the family about 3 years later. Bessie Cook moved her family of 3 kids back to her hometown, Groton, SD in March, 1919. Helen was very popular in high school. She was described in her obituary as "one of the loveliest young ladies in Groton". She was a member of the vested choir of the Methodist Church, and in fact, was buried in her choir robe. During her high school graduation, Helen became sick. It was believed to be a severe cold, but turned into an intense case of the flu that eventually affected her heart. Helen was ill throughout the summer. She died several months later at home, just 2 days before her 18th birthday. The doctors termed the cause of death as "leakage of the heart" (obituary).
3. Hazel

3. Blanche



Blanche Cook was born on April 25, 1880 in St. Ansgar, Iowa, (Mitchell Co Birth Record Book A, Page 1). She was the 3rd child of Stephen and Martha Cook. The 1880 US Census in Iowa listed "Madge" Cook as being only a month old, making it probable that Blanche had this nickname.

Blanche had a 1/4 section homestead plot. She may not have finished her homestead obligation.

Blanche was a good seamstress, probably living in Billings for at least a portion of the year, like Olive.

Blanche wrote to Olive in 1912 how John (Flaig?) and Otto (?) had been working on Olive's house.

On Nov 8, 1916, Blanche Cook, of Comanche, sold for \$4000 her homestead land (NW 1/4 of Sec 26, T4n, R24E) to William H. Barkhuff, of Broadview (subject to his obtaining a \$2000 loan), (Bk 57,p.527, #84084)

Blanche never got married. She moved to California.

On Aug 30, 1920, Blanche Cook, of Los Angeles, bought back the homestead land formerly owned by her brother Elmer (S 1/2 and Lots 1&2 in NE 1/4 of Sec 2, T3N, R24E) from J. Henry & Berdia M. Conover (Yellowstone Cty Reg of Deeds, Warranty Bk 77, p.295, #139063).

Blanche Cook died on August 7, 1956. Her memorial service card does not indicate a location of death or burial, beyond the Broadway Chapel of the Utter-McKinley Funeral Chapels. It is believed to be in California. [1]

SOURCES:

[1] Memorial Service Card for Blanche E. Cook, Obtained from Family of Leon Cook, 1996

4. **James** (Our ancestor)

5.

6. **Olive**

Olive Millie Cook was born near Groton, SD on Jun 18, 1887 to Stephen and Martha Cook. Her parents were homesteading a farm in West Hanson township.

HOMESTEADING IN MONTANA

Olive Cook earned money to finance her homestead by working in Billings, Mt as a seamstress. She had learned the skill from her mother. Olive satisfied her homestead living requirement by being at the farm for several days a month. She, like other women, often spent much of the winter in town. In Feb 1909 & Jan

1912 she lived at 104 N-32 St in Billings (per letter addresses)



MARRIAGE TO JOHN FLAIG

Olive married John Flaig on Feb. 28, 1912, at Billings, MT (Yellowstone Cty Clk of Distr Ct, Bk 6,p.12, cert #2566). Olive was 24 years old; John was age 34. It was witnessed by B.E. Cook (Blanche?) and J.W.Cook (James?). John was born in Wittenberg, Germany in about 1878 (calculated).

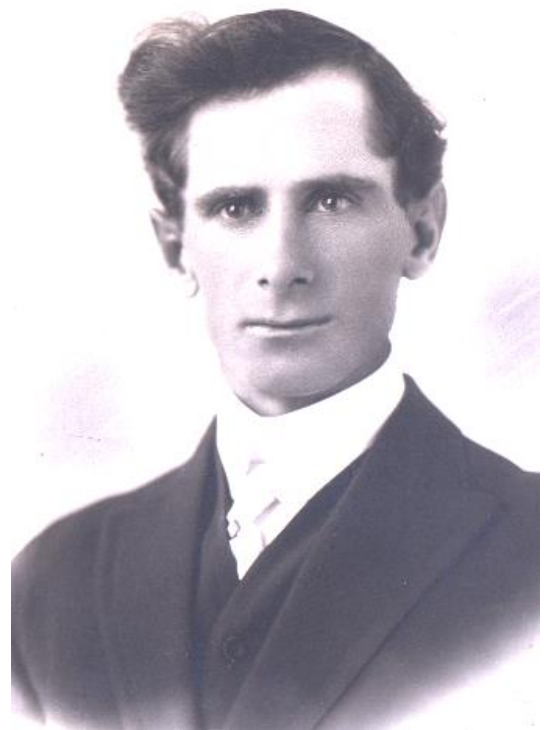
LAND HOLDINGS IN MONTANA

Olive & John Flaig eventually ended up with the 3/4 section of homestead land of the Cook clan (Olive, Steven, Libby). See sketch under Steven.

On March 30, 1914, John & Olive M. Flaig sold their land in Sec 34 (NE 1/4, sec 34, T4N, R24E) to Davis Lee Fly from Big Horn Cty, MT (Warranty Deed Book 48, p.63,

#52212). In July of that year, Davis married Lilliam Oswald, sister of Otto Oswald

Eventually the Flaig's moved to California and returned to Montana periodically to work the farm in the summers. They leased the land out, but it wasn't successful. Finally in 1928 they sold the homestead to Fred



Dreys, from Iowa.

John Flaig was a farmer/rancher. In Dec 1906 he lived at Box 49, Leon, WI -- made inquiry at Patent Office Oct 1907--was in Groton, SD May 1908. On March 24, 1908 a patent was issued (#882,820) to John Flaig at Billings, Mt for an improvement to the Tongue truck for Harvester & Binders. In April, 1909 Chas LaPorte, Peoria, Il, sent a letter to John at Billings, MT, wishing to see the invention. By the time the tongue patent was finally processed, others had already made other

improvements on the tongue so the work John had done had little economic value.

Jun 1908-conducted business in Groton, SD between Groton Band & Bank of Sparta Nov 1911-in Comanche, MT -- conducted business with Bank in Billings over a debt with Dr. Sudduth for \$105 Jan 1912-received final proof of Homestead at Comanche, MT from Dept of Interior, Billings, MT In 1912 John and Olive Flaig received the 1/4 section of land owned by Steven Cook, after he died.

Dec 1917-Tax bill to Olive G.(Millie?) Flaig for \$48 on 160 acres of land at Comanche, MT (Yellowstone Cty) - SE 1/4, Sec 2, Tn 3, R 24 - value \$1490 1918-had savings account with bank in Broadview, MT-lived at Comanche

The Flaigs sold the homestead farm in 1926 and moved to Long Beach, CA [1].

SOURCES:

[1] Newspaper article on 50th wedding anniversary, with photo; 1962; unknown paper location

7. Grace

Grace and her husband, Burl Reed, eventually sold the Montana homestead and moved to around Adrian, Michigan. They may have relinquished the homes before proving the homestead.

Based on information on photographs of the Reed family in the Leon Cook collection, birth dates were estimated and middle names of the children were determined.

Helen Alma was born about Jan, 1916. Margaret Ellen entered the world around Feb, 1918. Grace gave birth to Mildred Belle Reed in July 1923. Virginia came about May, 1926. There was no information about when Donald Berl Reed was born.

Grace and Berl lived in/around Adrian, Michigan (photographer location) at the time their children were born.

There were many land transactions involving Reed families in the early days of the Yellowstone County area.

Berl S. Reed owned 160 acres of land kitty corner from the Stephen Cook homestead in the Comanche area of Montana around the time that the Cook families had satisfied their homesteading claims (1912-16).



Berl S. Reed was married at the time to Edna E.

On Jan 14, 1914, Berl Reed received title to land from the U.S. Government at N 1/2 of SE1/4 and NE 1/4 of SW 1/4 in Sec 30, T3N, R25E (Bk T, p.189, #55547).

On Oct 15, 1915 they sold, for \$4800, their land (NE 1/4 in Sec 10 of T3N, R24E) to Fred F. Griep, Jr of Correctionville, Iowa (Yellowstone Cty Reg of Deeds Warranty Bk 52, p.503/4, #67196).

8. Ruth

Ruth Violet Cook was the last child of Stephen & Martha Cook. She was born in Groton, SD in 1896. At the age of 33 months she died after suffering for 2 weeks with la grippe and then pneomonia (per obit).