

History of Kosheiffs

By Mike Kosheiff

George Kosheiff brought his family to Canada Sept. 17, 1925. They first lived near Rimbey and then moved to take up farming at Spirit River.

George decided to try farming in Canada after he had worked in the mines in Australia, been a cobbler in China, and he had been a Royal Palace Guard in Russia, where he knew Czar Nicholas II quite well and he told me he even had tea with the Czarina on more than one occasion.

George took up a homestead at Gage Nov. 8, 1928, this is the land presently farmed by Michael Kosheiff. On the way out to the homestead I recall he mentioned passing many buildings being moved to the present site of Fairview.

Crossing the Peace River was always a dangerous undertaking and I can remember my father, Lawrence telling me of two different occasions when the family had a hair raising experience. While crossing the river with a team one day one horse slipped and went down and couldn't get up, the ice was thin in the fall of the year and it was cracking all around. The horse that was still up spread it's legs and kept on going pulling the whole outfit and the downed horse until they made it safely across. I know my dad thought a lot of that horse and my brother and I got quite attached to that animal in later years. On another trip near spring breakup, the family was taking two outfits across the Peace River and they were following one another by about four hours. My grandfather George was on the first-team and he apparently crossed without incident. My father, Lawrence, who was following came to the crossing and water was flowing and seemed to be about four feet deep. He didn't dare cross and he didn't know what had become of my grandfather. The family didn't know for six weeks whether grandfather was dead or alive.

Tom Kosheiff told me that smoke from the ground burning in the early days around 1928 was so dense that during the daytime on some days when they went anywhere someone had to carry a lantern to guide the way.

The whole family stayed in a tent from January to summer in 1929 until they built a shelter. To give you an idea of the gigantic job it was to open up the land by hand, the windfalls were so heavy a man on horseback couldn't possibly get through.

Mike Kosheiff said all you had to do to keep your stock in was fence one side of a clearing. Mike and Zina said whenever you went to see the grandparents, the buggy never seemed high enough as water was often over the floorboards. My father remembered one year when the water was over the fence posts.

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All the Kosheiff's and the others of Russian descent believe in the Old Greek Orthodox faith. As devout Christians one of their first duties was to put up a church. The church that stands one and a half miles north of Hines Creek although it is not the original one that was built in the 1930's of logs by community effort.

During the hard times for entertainment most of the old time Russians made their own type of beer called Braga and when the party started all the neighbors came and never left until the keg ran out.

The Kosheiff family has now spread out into quite a large clan and into the fourth generation in the Peace River country. George Kosheiff had one daughter Polly and four sons, Mike, Lawrence, Tom and John.

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Polly was married to Lawrence Andreef. They moved into the Gage area in 1929, then moved to B. C. in the 1940's. They had five sons and four daughters. Mike was married to Zina Nasedkin. They moved into the Gage area in 1930 with young son Mitchell. Two daughters Lueba and Cathy were born later.

Lawrence married Rachel Sideroff in 1932 and took up a homestead about 12 miles north of Hines Creek just south of Tom Walker's. They had two sons Michael and Fred.

Tom married Zina Zine Pahaboff. They started on their own in the Gage (Ranger) area in 1940. They had three sons, Karl, Danny and Wayne. John married Margaret Calugin about 1944. They left for B. C. in 1945.

Although the family has spread out all across Canada I think they still think of the Peace River country as home.