

CHARLES F. AND BLANCH (DILLON) KRASKA 754



Charles and Blanch Kraska

Charles Kraska came to Richland Center as a young man. He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His parents were Charles Kraska (spelling on birth certificate) and Aloisa Halupnik, both born in Bohemia. Charles was the oldest of five children, four boys and one girl. The other children were Ronald Ennis, Frank Baker, Arthur Kraska and Louise (Kraska) McClellan. Their father drowned in Lake Michigan before Arthur was born. Their mother couldn't speak or understand English. The children were put in different homes. Ronald took the name Ennis, and Frank the name Baker. Charles, Louise and Arthur were with a family named Mousseau, at La Valle, Wisconsin. They kept the Kraska name.

Mary Blanch Dillon was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin. Her parents were John Dillon and Arminda Rice. She had five sisters, Hanora Faith, Margaret Hagenah, Pearl Lawler, Ann Reno, and Theresa Boak. She also had five brothers, Henry, John (Jack), Francis (Frank), Edward (Ted), and Thomas.

Charles and Blanch were married January 10, 1911, at St. Mary's Church, Richland Center, Wisconsin, with Fr. McKevitt officiating. They were the first couple he married after he came to Richland Center. He baptized all their children, married two of them, and baptized their two oldest granddaughters.

They were the parents of ten children, five boys and five girls. John Arthur and Thomas F. died in infancy, and Charles, Jr., at five years old. James married Helen Pellett. Martin (Pat) married Carol Peaslee. Martin died May 25, 1974. The daughters were Dorothy (married Byron McBain), Mary (William Harris), Margaret (Charles Turner), Elizabeth (Raymond Brown), and Helen (William Barry).

Ann Reno was killed when crossing Gorham Street, Madison, Wisconsin. Her son, Bernard, five years old, came to live with the Kraska family, Blanch being Ann's sister.

Charles worked for Arthur Toms at the funeral and furniture store, the present Lunenschloss-Hansen. He also worked for James Miner and John Daughette, doing concrete work. He began as a contractor in about 1920. He bought a model T ton truck in 1927, but never learned to drive. That summer James, fourteen years old, obtained a driver's permit. During the summers, James drove the truck and worked for his father. Before buying the truck, Charles hired "Davis Dray Line" to haul his materials.

Charles and crew dug much of the sewer lines, poured curb, gutter, and sidewalks for the city, all done by hand shoveling. He had a cement mixer. All sand, gravel, and cement was hand shoveled into it. He built many houses, hand sawing all boards. Three houses on North Church that he built and lived in are now owned by Jerry Collins, Marilyn Moser, and Vernie Freeman. He built several barns.

After graduating from high school, James worked with his father. Later years it was Charles Kraska and Sons, Concrete and Carpenter work. In February 1943, Charles and James went to Excursion Inlet, Alaska, on a government project. Blanch passed away March 1950, and Charles, February 1951.

Submitted by Mrs. James Kraska