

Katharina (Gerle) Mazur

Submitted by Eva Harris, daughter

Katharina Gerle was born in Ottenhausen, Austria on July 30, 1897. Her father Bernhardt Gerle immigrated to Amulet, Saskatchewan in 1911 where some of his extended family had settled. Her mother Julianna Gerle followed in 1912 with some of the family. She had to leave Katharina (15) and her brother John (9) to be brought over later. In 1913, Katharina's father took out a homestead in the Roan Mine district of Saskatchewan. Roan Mine was a rural post office and store with a coal mine nearby, some twenty-five miles south of Hardy, Saskatchewan.

In 1914, the First World War broke out followed by four years of revolution where families were scattered. Katharina was taken prisoner and villages were burned. In 1918 she received the first piece of mail from her family in Canada only to learn of the death of her father as the result of a huge prairie fire that swept through the south of Saskatchewan in April 1915. More years of separation from her family followed until the spring of 1923 when Katharina emigrated from Austria to Odessa, Saskatchewan near where her mother and older brother lived.



In the meantime, my father Joseph Mazur, born in 1893 and also from the same village in Austria, had immigrated to Amulet, Saskatchewan in 1910 where his two brothers had homesteads. In 1913, Joseph took up a homestead in the Roan Mine district where Katharina's father had homesteaded. In 1923, while visiting relatives in Amulet, Saskatchewan, Joseph and Katharina met. A whirlwind romance followed and Katharina Gerle and Joseph Mazur were married on Christmas Day, 1923, in Pangman, Saskatchewan.

Katharina's Pioneer Life Begins

On January 6, 1924, Katharina and Joseph started their honeymoon trip with a team of horses and a buggy, as there was no snow that year, to the homestead at Roan Mine, Saskatchewan. Katharina had never been there before. The closest town near Roan Mine at the time was Hardy, Saskatchewan. Currently the closest town is Minton, Saskatchewan which became a town in 1930. Their first home was a two room shack with a table, chairs, a bed and a pot-bellied stove. Joseph (Joe), made benches and stools. There were no cupboards to start with. Soon they had fifty acres of prairie broken. They acquired four horses and a cow. Water had to be hauled or melted from the snow for livestock, house use, and laundry.

Joe added rooms to the house as the family grew. Son Bernhardt (Ben) was born October 17, 1924, daughters Eva on December 15, 1925, Mary on July 9, 1927, Johanna on December 27, 1929 and son Edmund on January 7, 1937. All were born in the farm home with no doctors. Midwives were Grandma Hlavka or Grandma Gerle.

Joe and Katharina milked cows and sold butter at ten cents a pound and eggs at five cents per dozen. The crops were three bushels per acre sometimes, but in 1929 there were no crops as the grasshoppers cleaned everything up, even the potatoes. In the Dirty Thirties there was continued drought and dust storms. However, there was municipal relief at \$6.00 per month for a family of seven and \$75.00 in the fall for clothing for a year. How we enjoyed shopping in the Eaton's catalogue. Mother made all our dresses and even made nice coats - fur-trimmed and all with fabric cut from large hand-me-down coats. We were so proud.

Mother tended a large garden and did a lot of canning. We had our own meat: beef, pork, chicken and we even made our own sausage. We always had good food to eat and share with family and friends. There were good times with school house dances, box socials, pie socials, and the ever popular Christmas concerts when people would come from miles around. In the summer there were picnics,

ball games, and field days.

In 1943, my parents purchased their first car, a Model A Ford, and then a tractor in 1952. In 1958, the electrical power finally came through followed by the telephone in 1967, which was a luxury.

After 49 years on the farm, mom and dad moved to Weyburn, Saskatchewan in 1972. Mother said she thought she was in heaven having running water, a telephone, and electricity. Mother and dad enjoyed family visiting, card playing and church-going.

Dad passed away at age 87 in August 1980 and mother passed away at age 92 in January 1990.

Katharina and Joseph Mazur left a legacy of 23 grandchildren and 46 great grandchildren. They would be proud.

Ben Mazur 1924-1996, Mary Klein 1927-2012, Johanna Brasseur 1929-2001.