

Ada N. Gauss

born 5/12/1878

Chelsea, Michigan

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died 1/8/1955

Lansing, Michigan

married 12/15/2930

Frank Montague VanSyckel

The farm that Ada came to live on after she married Frank VanSyckel November 15 1899 was chartered to Samuel F. VanSyckel by President Martin Van Buren August 12,1837. It was located on VanSyckel road near Plainfield Michigan in Livingston County. Frank was able to buy his sister's share of the farm after it was willed to them by their father Edgar VanSyckel in 1922.

He did general farming with milking cows, raising sheep, hogs, and chickens. Ada made many pounds of excellent butter that was shipped by train with fresh eggs each week to Detroit.

She was a fine cook and housekeeper. She enjoyed it very much. She adored her husband and children and was a quiet spoken person that I never heard complain about anything. She enjoyed her church and read her Bible regularly.

Frank was a small man with beautiful white hair from the time he was young. He was a very hard worker and they hired an extra man to help do the farm work. But I have also heard my mother tell about all the farm work she and Eugenia did during the summer, especially at haying time. One time she told about them getting to the barn on top of the wagon to find they had a rattlesnake riding with them.

I remember a few things when they were on the farm. One Christmas we were to spend Christmas day with our grandparents and there had been so much snow that VanSyckel road was blocked, so grandpa came across a field with his horses and sleigh to get us and he took us back to our car later in the afternoon. Christmas at grandma's was special, the tree and gifts were shut in the parlor until after they had a delicious dinner had been served by grandma, around her long table that I now serve my family and friends on. I remember a picture that hung over her table that was a dish of fruit.

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In the summer time when we visited, I remember a playhouse that, Auntie Marjorie had made under the trees out from the kitchen. We had lots of spice boxes to play with. Grandpa had Sugar Diabetes and there wasn't insulin to use at that time, so he battled it with diet but he would crave sweets so much that it was hard for them to control it. He got sick and developed pneumonia and died October 1, 1930. Eugenia VanSyckel Delamarter was made the Executrix of the estate. Louisa told that her dad never forgave her for spending some money on a special hat and she felt that he felt she was a spender.

Grandma moved into a house in Plainfield that had belonged to Mary Louise Montague (Frank's mother). They rented the farm for a few years and finally sold it to Ray and Cora Hill on December 20, 1938. As I remember it Marjorie, lived with her there for years. After Marjorie was married to Heil Grubaugh they both worked at the Howell T.B. Sanctorum for some time. After they moved, Grandma started coming to stay with us in the winters. She started coming in the years of 1937 & 38.

I found that in those years mama wrote in her diary that Grandma did a lot of the ironing and always kept the mending done. I can remember her always helping us with the night dishes. She was always very quiet and never corrected us unless she was left in charge. She always went home in the summer time so she could enjoy quiet, her church, neighbors, and family that still lived near.

In 1941 when I graduated from high school she wanted to go visit her sister-in-law Lydia and her family who lived in California and Arizona. My father bought a new car for us to drive and she paid the expenses of the trip. We were gone 6 weeks and had a wonderful time. We first visited in Globe Arizona with her niece Leta, her husband Barney and son Richard. The heat bothered Grandma very much, so I bought a car window fan cooler before we went on across the desert, which did help a lot. The night we arrived in Yuma, it was so hot she could not stand it outdoors so I got a motel that was air cooled and she stayed in. I went and got a light lunch at a drug store and brought her back a lunch.

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We arrived the next day in Long Beach to Lydia's. She was Grandma's brother Gene's wife. It was much cooler by the water and she was able to remember many things and good times they had together. Lydia's daughter Lucille Nutter also lived in Long Beach and we visited with them many times. Her husband was Ray and their son was Gerry. We spent several weeks with each family. While we were in Long Beach we took a trip to Catalina and rode a glass bottom boat. We visited a cousin Marjorie Montague in L.A., she took us on a tour of Hollywood. Then we went North to San Francisco, went to Fisherman's s Wharf, Golden Gate Bridge and park there. Then we went north to visit Gordon and Gene Gauss who was Grandma's nephew. We did a lot of sightseeing while we were there and she was able to keep up very well.

After we got home that summer she went back home to Plainfield. We cannot put a date or when the family felt it was too dangerous to have Grandma by herself, so they moved her to our house to stay. She was able for some time to work for a lady in East Lansing. But she came back and used to just sit and rock. My dad told us he wanted us all to learn to knit because he felt it was a shame that she couldn't do some handwork. She got so she couldn't remember and would ask the same questions over and over. The Doctor said it was hardening of the arteries.

She went with my folks to Florida 1946, but after that she stayed with Bun and I. When the folks built their little house she stayed with them summers. When daddy died in 1950 she didn't know who he was. In the years that followed there isn't anything recorded and so we have tried to put together some information. Mother Married Jacob Lange in August of 1951 and at that time I believe Grandma was living with some ladies in a rest home. They decided to move and so Eugenia took her back to her house until summer. Then Mother and Margaret Ann kept her in Jackson that summer.

By this time she was very hard to care for she slept very little and would get up and wander all over the house. So Margaret slept on a cot across the doorway so she couldn't get out it was a very hard summer.

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I believe that she went back to live with Eugenia in the fall about 1954. At Thanksgiving time she broke a hip and was then in the hospital for some time she developed pneumonia and died January 8 1955. I was very fortunate to have had my Grandma teach me to bake bread and make molasses and sugar cookies.

Thoughts of Ada Black Huyck Mead on February 25 , 1997