

“The railroad tracks were just across the highway in Mendota.”

“They would knock on the door and ask for food.”

“She'd give them a meal and they'd do work around the yard. I think all the hobos on that railroad line knew about Lillian LeClaire, the Angel of Mendota.”

“You were pretty sure of a meal at her door,” said Lillian Rose Brown Anderson.

Lillian Felix LeClaire died on August 30, 1940 at the age of 58.



<https://mendotadakota.com/mn/ancestors/>



This information from the the Mendota MdeWakanton Dakota Tribal Community at <https://mendotadakota.com/mn>.



SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY
2109 Boulder Pointe, Shakopee, MN 55379

952-693-3865

shakopeeheritage.org



SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY



Lillie Felix
LeClaire

1881-1940

Compiled and written by David R. Schleper, Shakopee Heritage Society © 2020



Lillie Felix was born on September 6, 1881.

Her parents were Peter Felix Jr. and Margaret Bellecourt. Her grandparents were Peter Felix and Mazasnawin Iron Woman Rosalie Frenier.

Lillie attended Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania from 1897 to 1904.

Lillie Felix married Albert LeClaire on July 12, 1904 in Hastings.

Lillie and Albert had their first three children, Oliver Albert LeClaire, Selisha Lillian and Raymond Sylvester LeClaire in Mendota.

Lillie and Albert and their 3 children moved just outside Shakopee to 17 acre farm in 1919. Eventually, they had 40 acres.

They had two more children, Margaret Celina and Russell Francis LaClaire were born in Shakopee.



<https://mendotadakota.com/mn/ancestors/>

On left is the LeClaire house in Mendota in the 1920s. On the right is the pickle keg, and the children near the farm outside Shakopee. They would love reaching in to grab a pickle!



Albert LeClaire farm was part of Shakopee until 1972, when the City of Prior Lake annexed the reservation, according to Mary Losure (2002 in ***Our Way or the Highway: Inside the Minnehaha Free State*** by University of Minnesota Press, p. 85-87, and <https://mendotadakota.com/mn/ancestors/>).

The Prior Lake Indian Settlement became the Shakopee Mdewakanton Dakota Community and is the site of the Little Six bingo parlor.

According to granddaughter Rose Brown Anderson, Lillie had a pickle keg at the farm outside the door, and the children would always dive into the pickles!

At a school in Shakopee, Albert and Lillie's older children were called "half-breed" and "dirty Indians."

The two youngest would come home with cuts and bruises. Lillie complained to the teacher, who was told that her children just needed to toughen up.

Lillie decided to move back to Mendota with the older children, while Albert and Russell stayed and farmed.

Lillie, Albert's wife, was a wonderful person, according to her granddaughter, Lillian Rose Brown Anderson.

Lillian LeClaire was at the birth of many Mendota babies, including her granddaughter.

Lillian Rose Brown Anderson was born breech. She didn't breath for a few minutes, according to her relatives.

"My grandmother hit my behind and then my back, and something flew out of me and I started to cry."

Her parents, grandparents, and Great Aunt Jennis LaCroix all applauded, cried, laugh, hugged and said prayers, rejoicing.

Lillie "used to feed anyone who knocked at the door, mostly transients."