

## Our History

In the fall of 1916, Stella Paul came to teach at the White Clover School south of Turtle Lake. She had just finished a 5 year teaching stint in Valley City, N. Dakota where she went at the age of 16, having attained her teaching degree at River Falls 'normal' (?) in 1911.

Shortly after coming to Turtle Lake, she met John Leisz Jr. and by the spring of 1917 they are dating – going to local dances, basket socials etc. She is boarding with a family by the name of Haase who have an older daughter named Lillie. By summer of 1917, the friendship has started to blossom into a romance and 'he' is writing to her regularly in Hudson where she is spending the summer with her dad, George Paul and step mother – Margaret.

He seems very jealous of her life there. In July he writes that his 'number' was drawn for the army, World War I is on and he will have to take the exam, not much chance of getting out of it.

In late August, all of the drafted soldiers left from Hudson in a big group; but he was rejected – being the only man to run the farm owned by his dad, John Leisz Sr.

Apparently, his sister, Theresa (Aunt Tess) is in Hudson too and he keeps telling Stella to look out for her as she runs around with everyone. Anna, the younger sister is in T.L. and if Stella can keep Theresa in Hudson for awhile, then Theresa and Anna can both go to the 'cities' to work in the fall.

Stella doesn't have a school yet for fall of 1917, but finally Uncle Frank Leisz decides to give Stella the job and she is back at White Clover for another year and no letters until X'mas vacation when she goes to Hudson to see her folks.

In June of 1918, he writes that he is so run-down sick that the Dr. thinks he may never be back to his old self again. He never says anything about meals and still goes to dances 3 or 4 nights a week. Strange! Also writes about getting up at 3:30 A.M., doing the milking, then going to Almena where he shears 102 sheep that day till 6:00 P.M., goes home to milk then for a ride in Bill Leister's new Overland car. No wonder he's sick – all for \$10.20 that day in wages.

Is also dealing for a new Buick but the dealer will give him only \$200.00 for his Ford and he wants \$250.00. Says that Buick is sure a dandy though!

At the end of the summer of 1918, she has a teaching offer of \$85.00 per month at Cushing, WI, Northwest of Balsam Lake. He tells her to suit herself, but he isn't very happy to think she may be going way over there to teach- about 35 miles west of T.L.

She accepts the position and moves in with some people by the name of Jensen. In his letters, which he writes about every other day, he never asks about her school, kids etc. He is so wrapped up in his own loneliness – constantly worrying as to when they can see each other or what she may be doing over there. So funny!

He really is lonesick, also physically sick as he works terribly hard on the farm and his older sisters are already in Billings Montana and married. His brother, Joe, is working at Clover Leaf Cheese Factory between Cameron and Rice Lake. His two kid sisters, Theresa and Anna are working in Mpls. and coming home occasionally to help out.

Theresa later moves to Billings and goes to work in a jewelry store owned by her brother-in-law, Alex Califf. Anna stays in Mpls.

The Leisz families, Frank, Tony, John and Leo all live on near or adjoining farms, so the men cousins visit back and forth frequently; go to many barn dances and the parents are always visiting, playing cards etc.

In Sept. of 1918, Uncle Frank closed White Clover School because of a case of Diphtheria in the district. John, my dad, is sick and wondering if that is what he has. He is so weak he can't work and has been in bed. Estella has just finished her 1<sup>st</sup> week of teaching at Cushing and he can't figure out why in the world she ever went teaching this fall. A couple of days later, he is so sick. Uncle Frank went to town at 12:30 one night to get the doctor who says he has pneumonia with a fever of 107 degrees – has to stay in bed. This is Sept 7<sup>th</sup>.

A new law just went into effect – they can't drive their cars on Sunday because it creates too much traffic. Will go to Cushing on Saturday P.M and come back Monday morning from now on. On Oct 30<sup>th</sup>, he says all the schools and public buildings are closed because of the bad sickness (Spanish Influenza) going around and he thinks that must be what he had. November 11<sup>th</sup>, he writes that there aren't any new cases so it must be over with.

At Thanksgiving, he writes the flu is all gone in T. Lake and Anna and Theresa are coming home. On Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, one of Stella's former White Clover friends writes that her beloved Eddie had come home from the war (Armistice declared Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>) and they had a month to get ready for their wedding but, in 3 days, he was dead from the flu.

Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>, Dad writes he isn't feeling well again and wondering if he is getting the flu again. Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>, he says Anna, his sister, had come home for X'mas but is sick with a cold. In the next letter, he says Anna is very sick with 104 degree temp. and they don't think she'll live overnight. Their friend, Lillie Haase had died the previous morning and he won't be able to attend the funeral. Theresa is coming on January 7<sup>th</sup>. He writes that Anna is still alive but barely – Dr. says she's struggling between life and death and all are worried sick. She can't take her medicine nor water and breath is short. Joe has come and they have sent for Montana girls so he will be meeting the trains. He next writes on Friday and funeral is all over. Girls arrived on Wed. and by Monday they are already going back. He is so lonesome for Anna – says she was always so good to him. Theresa has stayed for awhile which helps. Talks also about the very mild winter and little snow. Thinks he can get his old Ford, Lizzie, out again.

Theresa is going back to Billings – is anxious to get back to the jewelry store where she works.

Dad has started the seeding (April 25<sup>th</sup>). Roads all dried up and nice weather. June is coming and wedding plans seem to be in the making. She is talking about teaching at Cushing another year at \$85 per – he's not very happy. At any rate, he must have convinced her to forget the teaching because they were married on Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> 1919 in St.



Patrick's Catholic Church in Hudson and made the farm their home for the rest of their lives. He bought the far and Grandpa Leisz bought another farm one mile South on R where we kids, especially Agnes and I, often went to stay overnight with Grandpa John and Grandma Gertrude, the step grandmother from Hungry. We loved to sleep on the feather beds upstairs there.

I was born Dec. 1921 and ironically, exactly 21 years later in the Fall of 1942, I started a 3 year teaching stint at White Clover School where she had met John.