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Gretch, John (Grotch) (1866 -)

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GRETCH, JOHN (ALSO SPELLED GROTOCH)

File No. B-452

John Gretch was born June 5, 1866 in St. Wendel Township.

John Gretch is the son of Simon and Margeret (Winter) Gretch.

Simon and Margeret (Winter) Gretch were born in Germany and were married there. They came to America on a sailing vessel in search of a home and a place where they could better their station in life.

They first settled in St. Wendel township where Simon took up a claim. After improving this claim he sold it a few years later and moved to Albany where he bought a tract of land, consisting of 160 acres for \$80.00. This land is located about one mile north of Albany and is now known as the Bredeck farm. Here they resided for nine years and then traded for a farm two miles farther north, where they continued to farm until the farm was taken over by the son John.

John had to start working at an early age and so his schooling was sadly neglected. The only school of the township was about five miles distant. Owing to the fact that his father always had work for him he only attended school for about a week. His teacher was Casper Klosterman.

Up until John was six years of age his father used oxen. "Oxen." John remarked, "were very powerful but in hot weather they gave out quicker than horses. When the young ox was to be trained he was led around the field a few times and then he was ready to be hitched to the wagon. When a trip was to be made in a hurry the people would walk, because the oxen were too slow."

The first team of horses his father bought were wild and high strung. One day, shortly after they got the team, and not accustomed to horses, they ran away the wagon passing over John who received several

broken ribs. Since there was no doctor for many miles he had to let nature take its course, however, he soon recovered.

Furniture was all constructed by the settlers themselves, John still has the same table that was made and used by his father. It was made without the use of a saw and nails.

The settlers were always willing to help out one another. Even the deer were plentiful, and the settler who would shoot one would always divide it with his neighbors. If a neighbor needed money, it was loaned to him without a note or security.

John Gretch as a boy used to cut grain with the cradle. A few years later his father bought a reaper. This was a great improvement over the cradle as it worked on the same principal as a mower, cutting the grain, which then was pushed onto a platform by a revolving reel. A rake then automatically raked it off, just enough at a time to make a bundle. The reaper was followed by one or more men who would tie the bundle with a few strands of grain.

The next improvement was the harvester. This machine would cut the grain and elevate it, enough to make a bundle, at a time.. On a platform attached to the harvester were two men who would alternately grab a bundle and tie it with strands of grain.

Then came the wire binder, working on the same principal as the present harvester, but instead of using twine it used wire to tie the bundles. The draw back here was, at threshing time men were required to cut the wire and then feed the bundles into the threshing machine by hand. Often times small pieces of the wire went into the machine and were blown into the straw stack. Now if the cattle would get at the

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straw pile and happen to swallow a piece of this wife it usually would result in death to the animal.

Even though the new inventions made the work on the farm a pleasure John Gretch still thinks that people were more content in the good old days.

On October 25, 1886 John Gretch married Martina Mock daughter of Engelbert and Katherine (Ress) Mock of St. Anna. Father Othmar O.S. B. performed the ceremony. The attendants were, Jos. Gretch and Katherine Mock.

Simon and Margeret (Winter) Gretch made their home with the son John for a few years and then lived with a son in Litchfield, Washington where they later died and were burried.

John and Martina (Mock) Gretch are the parents of three children. Catherine, born October 21, 1887 died at St. Benedicts Academy at St. Joseph, where she was a member of the order, October 11, 1911. Anton, born May 8, 1891, resides on the home farm. They have nine children. Rosalia, Leander, Clarence, Wilfred, Anton Junior, Alfred, Walter, Elmer, and Mary Ann.

Elizabeth, born May 8, 1891, married William Metz . They have two children, Marcella and Mary Ann. They reside at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Interviewed: John Gretch
Interviewer: Walter B. Haupt
Date: March 24, 1937

Publication Granted

FROM THE RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE
FOR THE JOHN GRETSCHE (ALSO SPELLED GROTSCH BIOGRAPHY)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>	<u>Father's Name</u>	<u>Age</u>
1. Carolina Groetsch	Oct. 21, 1887	Albany	John Groetsch	
2. Anton "	Aug. 4, 1889	"	" "	23
3. Elizabeth "	May 8, 1891	"	" "	

<u>Mother's Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1. Martina Groetsch		B	75	40	
2. " "	23	B	138	35	
3. " "		(1891)B1	4	11	

MARRIAGE RECORD BOOK J. PAGE 93

John Gretsche and Martina Mock

Married at Albany, October 25, 1886

By: Orthman O. S. B.

Witnesses: Joseph Gretsche and Katherine Mock

GRETSCH, JOHN

Second interview to affirm or correct information in biography as compared to information as listed in the legal records in the Stearns County Court House.

CORRECTION:

Birth of Anton Gretsches should read August 4, 1889, as stated in legal records in the Court House.

Re-interviewed: John Gretsches
By: Walter B. Haupt