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Kleis, John E. (1868 -)

Dean Nelson

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KLEIS, JOHN E.

File No. B-699

John E. **Kleis** was born at Daven Germany, August 15, 1868, son of Theodore and Barbara **Kleis**.

Theodore **Kleis** was engaged in farming in Germany and John received his early instructions in the art of agriculture from his father.

John attended the country school of Daven, which was operated by the Roman Catholic Church. The school was **divided** into six grades and the pupils **divided** according to their ages. The older pupils attended school in the morning and the younger pupils in the afternoon. The reason for only one-half day attendance was due to inadequacy of space in comparison to the number of students.

After John graduated from the sixth grade he worked as a farm laborer in Germany. He followed this work until 1887. At that time he was considering where he should go to find new employment.

In June 1888 John left for America and came to Saint Cloud, Minnesota. John immediately started working for the threshing crews in Central Minnesota. He worked as a farm laborer around Saint Cloud for several years. He then secured a position as Material Handler for the Great Northern Car Shops.

It was during his travels as a farm hand that John became acquainted with Barbara Wirchfeld.

On February 9, 1897 John **Kleis** married Barbara Wirchfeld at Saint Nicholas, Minnesota.

Barbara Wirchfeld was born February 3, 1879 at Saint Nicholas, Minnesota daughter of Nicholas and Margaret Wirchfeld. She spent her early life at home and worked for several years previous to her marriage.

Barbara (Wirchfeld) **Kleis** remarked about the changes that have occurred in Stearns County since her childhood. "It was always possible to earn your livelihood when I was young. Opportunities seemed to arise

KLIES, JOHN E.

every where and although wages were only \$10 to \$12 per month prices were very low. I can remember buying butter at 3¢ a pound and eggs at 3¢ a dozen. My father sold cord wood one year for 50¢ a cord delivered. No one seemed to mind hard work and everybody was happy and contented."

To John and Barbara (Wirchfeld) Kleis were born eight children, three deceased, Michael; Mathias; and William, five are living, Peter; Thomas; Joseph, Margaret; and Anthony.

There are also seven grandchildren.

John and Barbara (Wirchfeld) Kleis are both enjoying ripe old age at their residence at 619 Ninth Avenue South.

John states, "I've enjoyed my life in America and believe it to be a worth while country. As a young man here, I worked for \$160 per year and everyday ten hours per day. It seems like a difficult and hard life at that figure but dollars would buy twice the groceries and clothing then as they now do."

"One winter I cut wood at Saint Cloud for 35¢ a cord. I haven't found one young man now that would do that. The younger generation are gradually losing their ability to work."

John Kleis retired from the Great Northern Shops several years ago. His son Peter is in business in Saint Cloud and manages the Skelly Oil Company on Lincoln Avenue South.

Interviewed: John Kleis
Date: July 22, 1936
By: Dean Nelson

FROM THE RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE

FOR THE JOHN E. KLEIS BIOGRAPHY

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>	<u>Father's Name</u>	<u>Age</u>
1. Barbara Wirchfeld	Feb. 3, 1879	St. Nicholas	Nicholas	
2. Peter Kleis	Dec. 10, 1897	Luxemburg	John Kleis	29
3. Thomas Kleis	Nov. 17, 1899	"	" "	31
4. Michael Kleis	Aug. 8, 1902	Wakefield	" "	34
5. Joseph Kleis	Feb. 16, 1905	Collegeville	" "	36
6. Anton Kleis	Feb. 22, 1909	Wakefield	" "	41

<u>Mother's Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Book</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1. Margaret Wirchfeld		A	355	7	
2. Barbara Kleis	19	(1897)B7	179	8	
3. " "	21	(1899)B9	219	7	
4. " "	23	(1902)B12	408	3	
5. " "	26	(1905)B15	59	1	
6. " "	29	C	636	9	

MARRIAGE RECORD BOOK O. PAGE 7217

John Kleis and Barbara Wirtzfeld

Married at St. Nicholas February 8, 1897

By: Rev. Isidore Hengarten.

Witnesses: Thomas Wirtzfeld and Katie Wirtzfeld

KLEIS, 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:

The spelling of Wirtzfeld is the correct and German spelling as stated in the legal records.

CORRECTION:

The marriage of John Kleis and Barbara Wirtzfeld on February 8, 1897 is correct as stated in the legal records.

Reinterviewed: John Kleis
Date: November 22, 1937
By: Dean Nelson