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Ostendorf, Augusta (Wittcho) (1854 -)

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OSTENDORF, AUGUSTA (WITTOHO)

File No. B-992

Augusta Wittcho was born August 14, 1854 in Brandenburg, Germany. In 1855 she came to this country with her parents, William and Mary (Gorr) Wittcho. They settled first in Acatlan, Wisconsin where they lived for two years. Then they bought a farm six miles from that place on which they lived for twelve years. In 1868 they came to Minnesota and settled on a homestead in Albany, Stearns County.

The trip from Acatlan, Wisconsin was made by train as far as St. Cloud. That was as far as the railroad extended. From there they went by ox carts to Albany. At that time only three or four settlers resided there. The nearest trading post was St. Cloud twenty five miles away.

The first year they lived in an old Indian shack until a log house was built.

There were quite a few Indians at that time, but as it was after the Indian War they caused very little trouble, although they would appear quite frequently usually to beg food or tobacco.

The chief crop was wheat. Just enough oats and corn was grown to supply their own needs, as there was no market for these two products.

The grain was cut with cradles, raked into piles with hand rakes, and tied into bundles with whisps of straw.

Threshing was sone with flails the first few years. Later on Paul Obermiller bought a threshing machine, operated by horsepower, and he did all the threshing for the settlers.

The wheat was hauled by oxen to St. Cloud, a trip that usually took between three and four days.

The first crop failure occured in 1873, due to the grasshopper scourge.

They came in such large swarms that at times the sun was hidden by the clouds of grasshoppers. They devoured every green thing in the fields. After completing their destruction they all left.

The following year proved to be one of the best years the settlers had ever witnessed before or after the grasshopper scourge. All crops yielded abundantly. The grain was so heavy it laid on the ground and **could** only be cut from one side.

Tourists in covered wagons passed the Wittcho home, and many of them spent the night there.

On January 24, 1874 Augusta Wittcho married August Ostendorf. Father Wolfgang Northman who was then stationed there performed the ceremony. The attendants were Adolph Richter and Amelia Wittcho.

August and Augusta (Wittcho) Ostendorf had five children, two of which are dead.

Helen was born August 3, 1881 was married to Mathew Winter and had four children. Ernest, was born November 3, 1907 is married to Margaret Stromann and has one daughter Janice. Viola, was born April 22, 1919, and is in Minneapolis. Warner was born November 7, 1921, and is at home. They all live in Melrose.

Marie, was born November 27, 1883 is married to Bernard Sauer and lives in Cisseton, South Dakota. They have five children, Marie Genevieve and Wilfred. Two children are dead.

August F. Ostendorf Junior was born August 11, 1885 and lives with his mother.

Augusta (Wittcho) Ostendorf the person who heads this biography lives in Melrose. Her husband August Ostendorf died March 9, 1935 and is buried in the Catholic Cemetery at Melrose.

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Interviewed: Augusta (Wittcho) Ostendorf
Date: May 20, 1937
By: Ann Kramer

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