THE ARCHIE SPARKS FAMILY

by Mrs. Harold Gautschi

Homesteaded south of Lusk, Wyoming in Royal Valley.

Archie LeRoy Sparks was born Sept. 3, 1875 in Independence, Ia. His parents were Milburn and Jane Sparks. Milburn Sparks was born in Jones County, Illinois in 1850.

Jane s:overeign was born in Montreal, Canada in 1856 (There is a record of the Milburn Sparks Family in the book "The Pound and Kester Families" by John E. Hunt published in Feb. 1904. The Pound Family coming from England in 1676 and the Kester Family from Germany in 1685. These families settled near Philadelphia, Pa. and Germantown, Pa.)

There were eight children in the Mil­ burn Sparks family, Archie, the oldest.

They left Iowa in the late '70's and located near Bazile Mills, Nebr. when Archie was two years old. They moved to the vicinity of the Hering Mill shortly after that. The Hering Mill being located on the Verdigris River. He attended school in District 37.

Archie married Frances Mae Hering April 10, 1901.

Frances Mae Hering was born Aug. 31, 1877 at Papillion, Nebr. She was the third daughter of Julius and Ida Hering. Julius was born in East Prussia, Germany. Ida Fields was born in Greenbay, Wisc. Frances received her education in the Royal Nebraska Schools, then attended a small Teacher's College in Omaha, Nebr. Her father built and ran the Hering Mill for many years. She had four sisters and three brothers.

Frances and Archie lived in Royal, Nebr. for a number of years. He was something of a jack-of-al-ltrades,plasterer, carpenter, ran a butcher shop for many years, also a musician. He played cornet in the Royal

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band and the days when that organization could afford to hire a band leader, wear classy uniforms and furnish music both at home and nearby cities including Omaha. He was a fiddler, too, or perhaps it would be better to state he was a violinist. However when he played for dances around the country or in town, he drew the bow across the strings that even the most religious feet couldn't refrain from keeping time. In time he won many Old Fiddler's Contests in Wyoming.

In 1910, having homesteaded south of Lusk, the family had grown to include two daughters and a son. The daughters: Tillie Leon born Jan. 27, 1902; Thelma Belle born Feb. 15, 1907; and the son, Julius, born March 24, 1910, all in Royal, Nebr.

There were two more daughters born in the Sparks family at Royal Valley: Violet Ruth born July 15, 1913; and Wyoma Mae born Dec. 7, 1915.

There were eleven families from Royal,

Nebr. which moved south of Lusk. This be­ came known as Royal Valley. Each helping his neighbor, they became known as Royal Valley. Each helping his neighbor, they be­ came a very active group.

There being no high school in the Valley, Archie sent his oldest girl to school in Royal, Nebr. She stayed with her Grand­ parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hering. She later attended Lusk High School graduating in 1919, valedictorian of the class. The rest of the children attended Royal Valley School and Lusk High School. Violet was valedictorian of the class of 1931. Tillie attended college at Lawrence, Kan. and Thelma went to Barnes Business School in Denver, Colo.

Violet went to the University of Wyoming at Laramie, Julius joined the u. S. Navy, serv­ ing later also in World War II, in the

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Seventh Fleet in the South Pacific.

The main farming was raising certified seed potatoes for Archie. He took great pride in raising the best. He always helped with the County Fair and State Fair Booths for many years. He owned a potato digger, bought in 1927, quite unique, but not too satisfactory.

He was a member of Custer Lodge No. 21,

IOOF of Lusk and belonged to the Niobrara County Pioneer Assoc. In the later years of his life he took up the study of archeology and mineralogy, becoming a connoisseur in lapidary work, mostly as a hobby. He had a collection of over two thousand polished stones. He displayed these at rock shows around the country. The many friends and rock hounds will see some of this collection at the Niobrara County Historical Museum.

Archie continued farming until 1930, then moved to Lusk where he resided until his death in Feb. 1953.

Frances, or "Aunt Frankie", as all the children called her, was a very good mother. She taught Sunday School whenever the minis­ ter came to Royal Valley. She was a Charter member of the Royal Valley Extension Club, helping in every way. She always observed the holidays, birthdays and Sundays saying it was so important to keep traditions.

There would be surprise parties for the children. She loved songs and poetry, re­ citing for each child their favorites. The many volumes of "The Book of Knowledge" were handy for all the questions asked by the children. The little children could not touch the family Bible without help from an older sister or her, then the story would

be read from it.

Frankie passed away in Feb. 1928.

The children married as follows: Tillie married Ralph Roley and moved to Miami, Fla.

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They had three sons, Norman, Eugene, and Richard. Thelma married Harry Carlisle, living in Lusk and they adopted two children, Kenneth and Delores. Julius married Gaynell and live in Bakersfield, Calif. They had a daughter and son, Barbara and Carl. His first wife passed away in 1958. He remar­ ried, his wife Willa having a daughter by a former marriage. Violet married Steve

Shaber living in Reno, Nev. Mae married Harold Gautschi of Lusk, having a son and daughter, Charles and Laraine. The children of Thelma and Mae were raised in Lusk. They all graduated from Lusk High School.

Charles was Salutatorian of the Class of '58 and Laraine was Salutatorian of the Class of '60. Charles attended Harvard College and the Wharton School of Business at Penn.

State, receiving a Masters Degree in Busi­ ness. Laraine attended Colorado Woman's College and University of Arizona, receiv­ ing a Masters Degree in English. Delores went to the Rapid City Business College.

All the Grandsons of Archie and Frankie served in the Armed Services; Gene Roley in the Navy, Richard Roley in the Navy, Carl Sparks in the Marines, Charles Gautschi in the Navy, and Kenneth Carlisle in the Army. Norman died in 1941 at the age of 15 of Leukemia.

Archie would have been very proud of these boys and should have been. He was proud to be a patriotic American, he said he was too young for one war and too old for the next one.

Relatives who also lived in Royal Val­ ley: a sister to Mrs. Sparks was Mrs. E. 0.

Kint, Mr. E. o. Kint being a cousin of

Archie; a sister to Archie was Mrs. Lela

Blackmore; a brother of Archie named Dick Sparks lived there for a time.