

Biography of Fred Wilke
--Elmer Taxdahl

Mr. Fred Wilke was born in Berlin, Germany, February 10, 1854, and is still living at the age of 73 years. His parents names were Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick Wilke. They are both dead.

He left Germany when he was twenty years old and went to Illinois where he worked three years. Then he came to North Dakota in 1877 and worked three years before he took homestead. He took homestead in 1880 in Griggs County in Bald Hill Township. He has two quarters of land. His first house was very small. It had only two rooms. His barn was very small, too. He had to go to Valley City for his food stuff because it was his nearest town. He went to St. Paul to get a horse and a mule. His mule died so he had only one horse. Then he went to New Salem and got two bronchos. He didn't have much machinery. He had a wooden McCormick binder and a walking plow. He didn't have money to pay for the binder so later they put judgment against him.

Some of his early crops were wheat and flax but it was so dry and so many gophers that he didn't get much yield.

He didn't have coal so he had to go to the Sheyenne river and get wood for his fuel.

When he was going to borrow money he had to pay twenty per cent interest.

He has never been married. He had his cousin, Albert, to cook for him. He is nearly as old as Fred and he is nearly blind. But now Fred is well fixed and has a nice big house and three barns, a horse barn, cow barn, and a hay barn. He has a grove of trees on the west side of the buildings. He has about twenty head of cattle and seven horses, and now he has lots of chickens and geese on which he mostly lives.

Two of his nearest neighbors are Herman Michaelis and Arnt Taxdal.

PIONEER BIOGRAPHY

Fred Wilke

died - Fall 1931

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