

Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum

Fact Sheet No. 1 - The La Fayette Family



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- 1847 -** Edward William LaFayette was born in Norfolk, Virginia. Edward is believed to be the great grandson of the famous slave spy, James Armistead, who took the last name of LaFayette from General LaFayette when he was given his freedom. James had been a double spy in the American Revolution and had worked with General LaFayette in spying for the Americans. Edward is found in the 1870 census in Iowa and moved to Oskaloosa, Iowa by 1880.
 - 1872 -** Lewis William LaFayette, the son of Edward William LaFayette was born on the 10th of October in Liberty, Iowa.
 - 1906 -** Lewis came to Canada because of "the promise of land and of greater freedom for his children." He came to Regina with his wife Lillie (Clarke), son Ernest and brother Golden.
 - 1908 -** Lewis began homesteading in the Fiske area and moved the family to the farming operation he established near Fiske, Saskatchewan in 1911. Most of the land was turned for the first time with a team of horses and in 1913 Lewis purchased a Waterloo steam engine. In 1927 a gas engine was purchased for farming operations and in 1929 an International combine was added. Lewis and his brothers, Golden and Jesse organized a harvesting crew of twenty-two men and traveled throughout the district helping others get the crops in the bins. Lewis also served on the Telephone Board at Fiske, Saskatchewan and was a member of the Saskatchewan Co-op Elevators, later the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.
 - 1916 -** The school district of Oskaloosa in Saskatchewan was named by Lewis in reference to his father's hometown of Oskaloosa, Iowa. All the children and grandchildren born before 1943 attended Oskaloosa School, which opened in 1916 and closed in 1948.
- Ten children grew up on the farm: Ernest, Karl, Homer, Anne, Glen, Edith, Earl, Lillian, Muriel and Daniel. Ernest, Karl, Homer, Glen and Earl all owned and worked land although only Homer, Glenn and Earl remained past 1956. Both Glen and Earl also served in World War II. Three of the grandsons remain farming. The many descendants have lived in every province and territory, at least 12 states and three countries.
- As a God-fearing man, Lewis could also be very strict but he always had children around him. People considered him a person of quiet dignity and high principles. He had two that he lived by. "If you can't say anything good about someone, don't say anything at all." "You can get along with anybody if you don't have much to do with them."
- 1945 -** Lillie died in 1932 and Lewis died in 1945. With his father, Edward who came to Canada in 1920, they are buried in Fiske cemetery along with 10 other family members.