

Cornelius Boyle and Family: North Dakota Pioneers

Part One

Boyle Families Who Trod the Streets of Sheldon, North Dakota



by Daniel C. Boyle, youngest grandson of Cornelius.

Sheldon, Ransom County, is located nine or so miles south of the Boyle farms in Highland Township, Cass County. It is there the Boyles bought supplies, sold grain shipped livestock, and attended Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Table of Contents

<u>Cornelius Boyle and Ellen Doyle</u>	3
<u>Owen Boyle and Margaret McGrath</u>	6
<u>Patrick Joseph Boyle</u>	8
<u>John Boyle and Mary Ethel (Mae) Marshall</u>	12
<u>Cornelius Boyle and Laura Simonet</u>	13
<u>Peter Boyle and Gertrude Murphy</u>	15
<u>Henry Thomas Boyle and Frances Priewe</u>	17
<u>Francis (Frankie) Boyle</u>	19
<u>Mary Ellen Boyle and Charles Elmer Niles</u>	20
<u>Martin Joseph Boyle and Mary Louise Brown</u>	22

Cornelius Boyle and Ellen Doyle



Cornelius and Ellen Boyle in 1894

Cornelius Boyle arrived in Ransom County, Dakota Territory (DT), (now North Dakota) in April 1881. He was 39 years old. In October 1881, he filed papers for a homestead five miles south of Fort Ransom. He returned to his 200-acre farm in Mara Township, Ontario County, Ontario Province, Canada that fall. In the spring of 1882, he brought his family to Ransom County. The family included his wife Ellen Doyle; sons Owen, Patrick, John, Peter, Cornelius, Francis, Henry and Martin; daughter Mary Ellen and Bridget Donnelly, the aged maiden aunt of Ellen.

Cornelius and his family were in Ransom County, DT well before Lisbon, the county seat, got its charter in March 1883.

Cornelius Boyle was born in Inishative Townland, Termonmaguirk Parish, County Tyrone, Ireland in 1842. Ellen was born in neighboring Aghaginduff Townland, Killeeshil Parish probably in 1835 or 1836. (Please note, the spelling of the names of townlands and parishes vary from one record to the next.) County Tyrone now is part of Northern Ireland.

The Boyle children were all born in Mara Township near Orillia, Ontario, Canada. They ranged in age from four to 19 upon arrival in Ransom County. They had all been baptized in St. Columbkille's Catholic Church, near Uptergrove, Ontario.

By 1885, Cornelius and Ellen, the younger members of the family, and Bridget Donnelly had moved to Highland Township, Cass County, DT. Bridget died there in 1889. Two of the sons, Owen and John homesteaded in Ransom County as did Bridget Donnelly, who likely was 75 years old then. Patrick homesteaded on a

nearby location in LaMoure County, but by 1893 had acquired property in Highland Township. The Boyle sons adjusted their ages upward to be old enough to homestead whereas Bridget adjusted her age downward to 65 to be young enough.

Cornelius Boyle died in 1894. Here is a snippet from his obituary. *"The United Workmen, of whose lodge he was a member, led the procession on foot, and were followed by a long line of carriages. It was, by far, the largest funeral procession that ever passed through Sheldon."* Sheldon had been founded 13 years previously.

The Friday Sept. 28, 1894 issue of the Sheldon Enterprise newspaper contains this item written unsolicited by John H. Burke, editor, who also owned a farm in Highland Township near that of Cornelius and Ellen.

IN MEMORIAM

"Again the reaper—Death—has swung his scythe, again a victim has fallen: not an infantile blossom, not a noxious weed, not a decayed branch; but the sturdy oak, in all the pride of its maturity and strength, has felt the blow and lies prone before the fell destroyer.

Sad is death under any circumstance; but when it snatches from our midst the kind and generous neighbor, the devoted husband, the loving father, the man who had a cheerful word and a warm clasp of the hand for all his acquaintances, we are tempted to murmur and doubt the justice of Divine Providence.

Our only consolation is that in a short time, at most, we will meet our dear friend again--meet him where parting is no more, and sorrow never comes..

In that hope we will abide until the Golden Gate--that gate through which no mortal has ever glanced and returned to tell of the glories he has seen--shall swing wide open, when we are sure that the man who never forgot a friend while here, will meet us with extended hand and welcome us with the same open-hearted cordiality that distinguished him on earth.

As a memorial of our regard for Cornelius Boyle, as a man, a neighbor, and and a friend, we render this tribute to his memory."

Ellen and her sons Henry and Martin took over the 640-acre Highland Township farm. Cornelius Boyle could read but not write English. He could take the measurements of a grain bin and calculate in his head the number of bushels it would hold. Shortly before his death there were a few mortgage papers with a C. Boyle signature. Ellen also used a witnessed 'X' for a signature during her marriage. However she administered Cornelius' estate and signed all the necessary papers

with ease. She could read and write English from her youth, but choose to not act superior to Cornelius before officials when documents about land ownership and debt were prepared.

In 1902, Ellen retired from the farm to live in Fargo, where she owned a three-bedroom Queen Anne-style house at 912 South Eighth Street with “all to do with.” Her daughter Mary moved with her as a companion and in 1904 married Charles Niles. Charles and Mary continued to live with Ellen until she died in 1905. Mary then received a life estate in that house. Ellen was an astute manager, a devout, hospitable woman, a good cook and hostess. She prided herself on the freshly starched shirts and collars her husband and eight sons wore to Mass each Sunday.

By the time of Ellen’s death, Sheldon had a Catholic cemetery. Consequently after her burial there, the remains of her husband Cornelius and oldest son Owen were moved from the Lisbon cemetery and reburied in St. Mary’s Cemetery near Sheldon. Tombstones were erected. There are two stained glass windows in St. Mary’s Church in Sheldon. One is dedicated to Cornelius and Ellen, and the other is dedicated to their son, Owen.

Cornelius and Ellen had speculated from early days on several building lots in Lisbon, the Ransom County seat. The lots were kept for years and complicated the settlement of the estates of both of them. When these lots finally were sold 20 or more years after purchase, they still had not appreciated.

In 1906, shortly after Ellen’s death, four of Ellen’s sons and one daughter-in-law were farming in Highland Township. Among them they owned 2,600 acres in Highland Township and 160 acres in Eldred Township.

Cornelius and Ellen were the parents of eight sons and one daughter. All the sons who married were farmers. There were 49 grandchildren in total, 23 were granddaughters. Several of the grandsons were farmers, but none of the granddaughters married a farmer.

Owen Boyle and Margaret McGrath



Owen Boyle in 1894

Owen Boyle was born in 1863 and Margaret McGrath was born in 1862. They both came to Ransom County, Dakota Territory (DT) from Ontario, Canada with their parents. Each of them successfully completed homestead requirements. The Boyle and McGrath families had known each other in Ontario. The fathers of Owen and Margaret had filed their Ransom County homestead papers on the same day in October 1881.

Margaret had a bit of trouble with her homestead papers. Some are stamped “fraud” in bold letters. She apparently had stated she was a citizen when in fact she needed to file first papers to become a citizen. This delayed receipt of title to her property for a year. Margaret was among the first schoolteachers in Ransom County.

Owen and Margaret were married in 1885 in Lisbon, Ransom County, DT. Their farm was near Verona, but located in Ransom County. The children of Owen and Margaret were Mary Ellen Rose (Mayme) (1887-1941); Owen Joseph (1890-1934); Margaret Penelope (1892-1942); Martin Peter (1893-1978); Cornelius Hugh (1895-1959); and Eugene Francis (1898-1961).

These children were first cousins of Thomas McGrath, Sheldon’s contributor to the world of poetry. Owen and Margaret (usually called Maggie) continued with their farm near Verona until the late 1890s, when they rented a farm near Chaffee in Cass County, North Dakota.

Owen died after a very brief illness in January 1899. He was 36 years old. In the florid style used then, his obituary concluded: *“He was a just and upright citizen, a firm and constant Christian, a good and faithful Catholic—a man whose character tended to uplift society and better those with whom he came into contact. Open hearted and generous, all were his friends, and dying as he lived left no enemy.”*

On a January day, 34 teams followed the hearse from Buttzville to Lisbon. His obituary indicates he carried \$7,000 in life insurance, a substantial amount. Some thought of Maggie as a rich widow.

By the time of the 1900 census, Margaret had moved her family to Highland Township where she bought a half section of land. It was located next to the farms of her Boyle brothers-in-law. Her brother, James McGrath, then unmarried, helped with her farm. Maggie owned this farm until November 1919 when she sold it in a "Maggie-to-Minnie transaction."

Minnie was Maggie's sister-in-law, Mary Ann Boyle, wife of Patrick Boyle. An unusual feature of Maggie's farm was an orchard of fruit trees.

Mayme married Charles R. Jones in 1914. By 1920, she was a widow with a daughter, Margaret, two years old. Mayme was a stenographer living with her mother, Maggie, in Fargo, North Dakota. Neither Mayme nor Maggie married a second time.

Owen Joseph married Mae Kelley (adopted name Westlake). Their children were Elizabeth (Betty) (1921-1988); Owen Joseph (sometimes called Joe) (1922-1979); George Barry Boyd (1924-1996); Dennis Martin (1926-1998); and Cornelius Eugene (1928-1956). Owen Joseph Boyle tried farming rented land on his own, but was not successful. Two of his children, George and Dennis were baptized at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Sheldon.

Martin Peter was farming Maggie's land when he was called to serve in the army. Both he and his brother, Cornelius Hugh, were soldiers during World War I. Martin Peter married Gertrude Silva late in his life.

Margaret Penelope was a registered nurse. She did not marry.

Cornelius Hugh (called Neil) married Elma Mae Harrison in 1916 in Enderlin, North Dakota. Their children are Gwendolyn (1918-2000); Eunice (1921-2008); Cornelius Raymond (b.1923); and Kathleen (1928-2005). Neil was a barber in Aneta and Lisbon, North Dakota before moving to Great Falls, Montana.

Eugene Francis married Opal Esther Bryant in California.

Except for Cornelius Hugh, Maggie and her children were living in California by 1930; first in San Luis Obispo and then in San Mateo. Some of the descendants live there now.

Patrick Joseph Boyle and Mary Ann Thornton



Patrick Boyle in 1894

Patrick was born in 1864. He accompanied his father Cornelius and brother Owen to Ransom County, Dakota Territory in 1881. His homestead was in LaMoure County, near Grand Rapids. He married Mary Ann Thornton in Sheldon in January 1892. By 1893, he owned a 320-acre farm in Highland Township.

In the mid 1890s, a fire occurred which destroyed Patrick's farm buildings and an entire newly harvested crop. He then rented a 960-acre farm in Walburg Township, Cass County. The nearest village was Chaffee.

By 1904, he was back in Highland Township with a 960-acre farm of his own. Part of the holding was in Minnie's name. Patrick was a big, powerful pious Catholic man, who expected a lot from himself and others. Patrick could take offense and was handy with his fists. However, he was quite gentle and subordinate to Minnie.

Before his marriage, Patrick worked during the winter in the logging camps in Minnesota. Once, he was kneeling by his bunk saying his evening prayers aloud. The lights were out. There was only the glow from a space heater. Someone yelled at him to "shut up." He continued to pray; he was told to "shut up" again, but continued to pray. Finally someone threw a boot at him. He finished his prayers. Then he picked up the boot and threw it into the fire. The next morning when it was light, he found the logger with only one boot and used those handy fists on him.

The family of Patrick and Minnie were Henry Thomas (1893-1977); Cornelius James (1894-1985); Frances Marie (1896-1997); Martin Louis (1897-1976); Mary Ellen (1899-1926); Catherine Mary (1900-1996); Owen Joseph (1901-1968); Francis Myron (1902-1973); Charles Thornton (Charley)(1904-1957); Doris Ann (1906-2003); Mary Alice (1908-1992); and Patricia Agnes (1911-2003). None of the children graduated from Sheldon High School.

Instead several of them graduated from Sacred Heart Academy in Fargo, North Dakota: Cornelius in 1912; Frances in 1915; Catherine in 1916; Owen in 1918, Mary

Alice in 1928; and Patricia Agnes in 1930. Except for Mary Alice and Patricia Agnes, they would have attended Sacred Heart Academy on a boarding school basis. Mary Alice and Patricia Agnes were day students. Patrick and Minnie had moved to Fargo in 1925.

Each of these children had a Shetland pony. The ponies had a barn of their own. It was apart from the separate horse and cattle barns on the farm. Patrick did things in a big way. His farmstead was replete with impressive buildings, including a grain elevator. He had his own threshing rig and fancy harnesses for his horses. He threshed his own crops and did custom threshing for others.

Patrick had a 64 volt Delco electric plant to light his house, barns and other out buildings. Some farmers had smaller 32 volt Delco systems, but most were without electricity of any sort.

Patrick and Minnie retired to Fargo, North Dakota. Their house was a short walk from the campus of the Agricultural College, now North Dakota State University, where some of the daughters attended classes. Patrick served one term as a Cass County Commissioner. Minnie died in 1928. In 1940, Mary Alice and Patricia were living with their father at 810 North 13th Street, Fargo.

In 2015, all the related Boyles who own farm property in Ransom, Cass, Barnes or Stutsman County, North Dakota are descendants Patrick and Minnie or widows of their descendants. Together they own nearly 6,000 acres of farm land.

Henry Thomas married Rose Law. Their children were William Patrick (1920-2001); Myles Francis (Mike) (1922-1986); Donald James (Red) (1924-2014); and Mary Catherine (Marie) (1925-2010). William graduated from Sheldon High School in 1938. The younger ones graduated from Enderlin High School. In the 1920s and 1930s, Henry and Rose farmed the land formerly owned by Maggie Boyle. About 1940 they bought a farm near Buchanan, North Dakota and moved their family there.

Cornelius James (called Neil) married Catherine Zink. She was a teacher at the Highland District 69 School. Their children included Kathleen (1921-2005), Mary Geraldine (Gerry) (b.1922), Patrick Michael (b.1927) and Michael Terrence (b.1930). Kathleen and Gerry graduated from Sheldon High School in 1939. Patrick and Michael graduated from Enderlin High School. Catherine died in 1935. Neil purchased a farm 2 1/2 miles north of Alice, now owned by his son, Patrick. Neil married his second wife Pearl Hennessey after he retired to Fargo.

Martin Louis married a local girl, Elenor Meierotto, in 1930. Their children are Richard Louis (b.1931); Joan Meierotto (b.1934) and Nancy (b.1945). Martin moved his family to a farm near Fingal, North Dakota about 1940. Richard, Joan and Nancy now own that farm.

Owen married Mary Gertrude Truesdale. Their daughter was Mary Colleen (1925-2014). Owen was an officer with the Dakota National Bank in Fargo. He was blind during the last years of his life. The second wife of Owen was Irene Cossette. Irene and Colleen both owned land in Highland Township. This land inherited from Owen had been under Boyle ownership since 1904 except for a period in the late 1930s when it reverted to the Bank of North Dakota.

Charley and Myron with their brother Martin Louis farmed their father's land for several years after he retired to Fargo. During that time they sometimes had housekeepers on the farm. Both Charley and Myron married a housekeeper. They were sisters from Fort Ransom, North Dakota. Charley married Jennie Selsand and Myron married Gertrude Selsand.

Charley later owned a popular tavern in Fargo. The only Boyle to own farmland now in Ransom County is Charley's son, Charles Thornton (Chuck) Boyle, who lives in Arizona. He inherited that land many years ago from Charley.

Myron and Gertrude divorced. Myron was a skilled mechanic who ended his working years as a farm laborer.

Frances married James Kennedy. She taught for a while at the Highland District 69 School, a one room rural school, complete with a barn, in Highland Township. Then she taught in Fargo for several years at the Roosevelt grade school. Later for many years she taught in the Elbow Lake, Minnesota schools. Frances and James had a son James Boyle Kennedy, a pharmacist, and a daughter Mary Ellen Kennedy, a teacher. Frances lived to be 101 years old.

Mary Ellen died young from a disease she contracted while nursing at St. John's Hospital in Fargo, North Dakota. She did not marry.

Catherine Mary married T. Edward Ruddy. They had a daughter Mary Ann and two sons, Patrick, and Michael. This family lived in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Catherine cared for her father Patrick during the illness which would eventually take his life. Patrick Ruddy owned Duffy's Tavern in Fargo. Catherine, better known as "Cassie," was the source of many family stories.

Cassie managed a physician's office. She had many friends; one, a renown jurist. He was Ronald Davies, United States District Court Judge for North Dakota. While on assignment in Arkansas, he ordered the integration of black students into the all white Center High School in Little Rock, an action challenged unsuccessfully by Orval Faubus, governor of Arkansas.

Doris Ann trained as a home economics teacher and then as a dietitian. She directed dietetics for a major hospital in New York City and was a consultant to the

Veterans Administration on dietetic matters. One of her claims to fame is that she dated Leo Durocher, the professional baseball player. She married Robert Roy Thompson, a naval officer.

Mary Alice, a teacher, married Walter Clemens. He was born near Leonard, North Dakota. Their daughter is Genevieve. As a young woman, Mary Alice taught in the Highland District 69 School. She also taught at the Fargo Senior High School and in high schools in Massachusetts. This family retired to California.

Patricia Agnes graduated from the St. John's Hospital School of Nursing in Fargo. She served in the Armed Forces as a nurse during World War II. She married Cecil Williams. Their children are Thomas and Susan.

The daughters of Patrick and Minnie all had professional training as either nurses or teachers. Frances, Mary Alice, and Doris married later in life to older men. Mary Alice, Doris and Patricia were living in California when they died.

John Boyle and Mary Ethel (Mae) Marshall



John Boyle in 1894

John Boyle homesteaded in Ransom County, Dakota Territory. He got title to his claim in June 1890. By 1900 he and his brother Cornelius were renting a large farm in Walburg Township, near Chaffee, North Dakota.

In March of that same year, John and Cornelius, both single, bought two parcels of land which straddled the Cass County-Ransom County border. They paid \$3,470 for one 462 acre parcel and \$2269 for the other 302 acre parcel. The two parcels were joined. In July 1905 they sold this land for \$15,280, nearly tripling their original investment.

An October 1917 record shows John entering the United States at Neche, North Dakota. The record describes John as a Canadian farmer and a United States alien. He had likely been farming near Borden, Saskatchewan near his brother, Peter.

During his bachelor years, John sometimes wintered with the families of his married brothers, but he could not be counted on to baby sit.

When he was 60, John married Mary Ethel (Mae) Marshall, a schoolteacher. She was 20 years his junior. They adopted a daughter, Bette (1929-1997). John and his family lived then at 912 South Eighth Street, Fargo, North Dakota. This property was owned earlier by his mother.

As a high school student Bette would have service station attendants roll back the odometer when she took unauthorized trips in John's old, previously low mileage, 1937 Chevrolet.

Sometime in the late 1940s, John and Mae moved to Billings. John died in 1950. Both John and Mae are buried in St. Mary's Cemetery near Sheldon, North Dakota.

Cornelius Boyle and Laura Simonet



Cornelius Boyle in 1894

In 1900, **Cornelius** Boyle and his brother John, both unmarried, were farming in Walburg Township, Cass County. By 1906, Cornelius owned 320 acres of land in Highland Township. By 1914, the year he died, Cornelius had acquired a wife, Laura, and a family. The family were Cornelia Mary (1907-1947); Clarion Loucile (1908-1970); Clarence James (1910-1991); Thomas (1912-1945); and Katherine Mildred, called Mildred (1914-1975). Mildred was 2 1/2 months old when her father died.

Between 1906 and 1914 Cornelius prospered greatly. He owned a 960-acre farm near Drayton, North Dakota with a complete threshing rig. He also held notes secured by mortgages on several farms. Cornelius' illness lasted five months. He sought medical care in Chicago and learned the cancer was terminal. He had time to consider his will carefully.

Cornelius' will named his "beloved brother" Henry, administrator of the will and trustee of the estate. The will limited Laura's income to \$1,000 a year if she remarried while any of the children were minors. Remember in those days husbands were expected to support wives and widows with means were thought to need protection from unsuitable suitors! The switch to trustee did not occur for 12 years, until 1926. The estate was valued then at \$109,000.

Even in 1914, an annual income of \$1,000 was not a handsome amount. Today's inflation adjusted equivalent is about \$24,000. In 1926 the estate, still with ten mortgages on farm properties, was valued at \$109,000. Today's inflation adjusted equivalent is \$1,430,000.

Following Cornelius' death, Laura and the family moved to Sheldon where they lived for a very short time before settling in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Beginning in the 1920s, the children left for California. Laura moved to California from Grand Forks after 1940 when her health had started to fail.

Cornelia Mary was a registered nurse. She did not marry.

Clarion Loucille married Eric Strathmere. They lived in California and had two children, Diane and Eric. Diane lived for years in Mexico City, Mexico. Her descendants still live there.

Clarence James married Oleta Evon Gourley in California.

Thomas was a serviceman during World War II. He was killed in England in 1945 when an airplane crashed into buildings where he was stationed.

Mildred married a celebrity. He was Jimmie Dykes, a major league baseball player. Jimmie played in three World Series, 1929, 1930, and 1931. Later he managed six major league teams, but never won a pennant as manager.

Peter Boyle and Gertrude Murphy



Peter Boyle in 1894

Peter Boyle married Gertrude Murphy from Mapleton, North Dakota in 1903.

In December 1898, Peter, a single man, had purchased lots in Enderlin, North Dakota for \$5,000. Enderlin was founded only eight years earlier. He sold these lots nine months later for the same price. He is on record owning a livery barn in Enderlin.

There is another curious land transaction. In December 1899, Peter bought 1040 acres of land in Owego Township, Ransom County, North Dakota for \$1.00. He sold it in June 1901 for the same amount. This land is now part of the Sheyenne National Grasslands.

By 1906, Peter and Gertrude were renting the 800 acre Max Boehm farm in Highland Township, just down the road from the farms of his brothers, Patrick, Henry, and Martin.

In 1907, the Peter Boyle family moved to near Borden, Saskatchewan, Canada. Borden was founded in 1905, but never grew. Even in 2015, the population is less than 300.

A 1916 record shown that Gertrude, Harold and Genevieve had become naturalized Canadian citizens. There were six hired men in Peter's household, most of them Greek Catholics.

By 1921 the family was farming land adjacent to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Peter and Gertrude lived out their lives in Edmonton.

Their children were Harold Francis (1905-1987); Genevieve Marie (1906-1962); Michael Phillip (1908-1963); Gertrude Estella (Greta) (1910-1979); and Marguerite Ellen (1912-1992). The first two were born in Highland Township.

Harold's obituary shows he was a famous one-eyed sharpshooter, who trained troops during World War II. His loss of vision in one eye in a childhood accident did not diminish his skills with a rifle.

An undocumented family story suggests that Michael Phillip was a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, a Mountie.

Now a little concluding story. In late October 1934, Peter was hospitalized in Edmonton. He was surprised and somewhat dismayed when his brother Martin showed up at his bedside. Peter wondered if he had taken "a turn for the worse," but was not notified by his physician. Why else would relatives from far off North Dakota be there.

There was another explanation for Martin's visit. Martin and Mary and others had traveled 1,000 miles by car from North Dakota to attend the funeral of Mary's sister, Zillah Parks in Red Deer, Alberta. Edmonton was along their route home so they would have visited Peter and his family even if Peter had been well. Peter survived his hospitalization; he lived seven more years.

Henry Thomas Boyle and Frances Priewe



Henry Boyle in 1894

Henry and Frances were married in 1904 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo, North Dakota. They honeymooned at the World Fair in St. Louis in the company of his sister Mary and her new husband Charles Niles. Frances was possibly the first white child born in Casselton, then Dakota Territory, now North Dakota. Henry and Frances met when she was a teacher at the one room Highland District 69 school.

The children of Henry and Frances were Miriam Frances (1905-2005); Henry Kenneth (1907-1968); Thomas Wayne (1908-1974); Helen (1910-1983); Elizabeth (Betty) (1913-1969); Gretchen (1915-1998); Paul Cornelius (1916-2003); Jeane (1920-1993); and Harriet Louise (b. 1924).

Miriam married Hubert McCully from Sheldon. Hubert had a reputation as a colorful referee of basketball games. He was a big, heavy man, but fast and light on his feet. People came to games to watch him run and sweat and to speculate on the number of pounds he would lose each game. Miriam was a teacher and also a proficient violinist who played for the Lincoln, Nebraska Symphony Orchestra. Their daughter is Diane.

Henry Kenneth did not marry.

Thomas married Leona Jung. They lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Helen married Theodore Clifford. They lived in Mohall, North Dakota and later in California.

Elizabeth married Wilbur Zepp in California.

Gretchen married Byron Thayer in California.

Paul Cornelius married Margaret E. Wilmart. They lived in Mohall and Minot, North Dakota and also in Green Valley, Arizona.

Jeane married Frank Rein in California.

Harriet married Meyer Robert Guggenheim, Jr., whose family is noted for its wealth and philanthropy. They later divorced. Harriet is recorded as one who swallowed goldfish during her high school years in Fargo. She was a “government girl” in Washington, DC during World War II. She lived in several South American countries and for years has made her home in Spain.

Except for the youngest two, the children of Henry and Frances all graduated from Sheldon High School. When the parochial school was operating in Sheldon, the Henry Boyle family patronized it. In fact, Henry was one of the trustees of that school.

In 1904, shortly after the marriage of Henry and Frances, Henry was elected a Cass County Commissioner. He served when the oldest present section of the Cass County Courthouse was built. A plaque there commemorates his service. From 1909 to 1913, he was Cass County Sheriff.

After his term as sheriff ended, Henry moved his family to Sheldon. He and Martin dissolved their farming partnership. Henry built new farm buildings in Highland Township. He usually had hired help on his farm and commuted from his home in Sheldon to his farm as needed. Henry ran again for Cass County sheriff in 1924, but was defeated in the primary election.

Henry was a generous man. Once he noticed that the young son of a woman who did laundry for his family and others was wearing a lightweight, worn jacket on a very cold early fall day. “Where is your coat?” he asked. “This is my coat,” the boy replied. Henry took him into the general store and bought him a complete set of winter outerwear, including a coat, overshoes, cap, mittens; and two complete sets of indoor clothes as well.

Frances was devoted to her children and to the social life of Sheldon, consorting with the wives of business and professional people. There are stories of music teachers coming from Fargo on the morning train to give lessons before returning to Fargo on the afternoon train. Frances was a temperance advocate and consequently a teetotaler. Her brother-in-law Martin considered it a coup whenever he successfully sneaked EverClear grain alcohol into her Christmas punch.

Henry, like his brothers and most people of the time, prided himself on his horses. He once raced with a horse and buggy from his farm nine miles north of Sheldon into town to catch a train. It took 27 minutes. One time Henry bought what was advertized as a very well bred, but aged mare. Henry believed her to be in foal to a highly regarded stallion. Henry paid a substantial price for the mare, more for the unborn foal than for the mare. When the mare delivered, the foal was a mule.

Henry and Frances moved into Fargo in the late 1930s. In 1940, Henry was field advisor, North Dakota State Employment Service, Unemployment Compensation Division. He may have been a Governor William Langer appointee. Then Elizabeth, Gretchen, Kenneth and Paul were all living with Henry and Frances at 1226 North Third in Fargo. Elizabeth and Gretchen were stenographers; Kenneth and Paul were clerks.

Henry died after a short illness in 1942. Afterwards several members of the family moved to the Los Angeles area in California. Frances died there in 1949. Henry Kenneth, Helen, Elizabeth, Gretchen and Jeane all died in California.

Francis (Frankie) Boyle

Francis Boyle, born in 1873, was determined by a court to be “mentally deficient.” He likely had Down’s syndrome although that term was not used then. His mother left her “unfortunate invalid son” a \$2,000 legacy. A legal guardianship was established with his brother Henry as trustee.

Francis, however, lived with his brother Martin and his family on the original Highland Township Boyle farm until his death at age 49 in 1922.

During his final illness he was bed bound for a number of months. His sister-in-law Mary tended to his needs. Years later, Mary remembered with satisfaction a compliment she received from Henry. He said, “Mary, I have to hand it to you, I never saw him with dirty sheets.”

Mary Ellen Boyle and Charles Elmer Niles



Mary Ellen Boyle in 1894

Mary Ellen lived on the Boyle farm in Highland Township from 1885 until 1902. Then she moved with her retired mother to Fargo, North Dakota. In 1904 she married Charles Elmer Niles in St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo. When Ellen died in 1905, Mary Ellen received a life estate in Ellen's house. She could live in it all her life, but she could not sell it. This was unfortunate; her husband was not inclined to settle in Fargo.

Charles was an inventor. His inventions included collapsible clothes drying racks and movable clothes lines. He also invented a pulley and ratchet device used to lift the harnesses from horses and elevate them for storage next to the barn ceiling above the stalls. When it was time to harness a team the harnesses could be lowered gently upon their backs. The Boyles used this invention in their barns to save the hassle and work of lifting heavy harnesses on and off the backs of horses and carrying them to pegs for storage.

The children of Mary Ellen and Charles were Cornelius Elmer (1905-1945); Mary Helen (Helene) (1906-1983); and twins Henry Thomas (Feb. 1908-Sept. 1908) and John Boyle (1908-1970).

In 1910 this family was living in Mandan, North Dakota where Charles was operating a confectionary business. By 1920, they were living in Minneapolis, Minnesota with Charles being a salesman of specialty products (maybe his inventions). By 1930, Mary Ellen and Charles were divorced.

In subsequent years Mary Ellen learned her living in a variety of ways. She was proprietor of an eat shop in St. Peter, Minnesota and a sales person in department stores in Minneapolis and St. Paul. During World War II when she was past 65, she

worked at the Boeing Airplane Company in Seattle, Washington. After that she worked until her death as nanny to children of minor celebrities in California. Throughout her life she was a devoted mother to her children.

Mary Ellen, known to the extended Boyle family as Aunt Mary Niles, was a tall, good-looking woman. She aged well and had a high sense of fashion. Her shoes were dyed to match her outfits; her hair always well coiffed. When in her mid-70s, she appeared to be 20 years younger.

While Aunt Mary Niles lived only 17 of her 91 years in the Sheldon area, she chose to be buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. She lies next to her twin sons, John and Henry Niles; and near the graves of her parents, Cornelius and Ellen Boyle, and those of her brothers, Owen, John, Cornelius, Francis, and Martin.

Martin Joseph Boyle and Mary Louise Brown



Martin Boyle in 1894

Martin Joseph Boyle married Mary Louise Brown in February 1909. At that time mixed marriages were not performed in area Catholic churches even outside the Communion rail. Martin was Catholic and Mary a Methodist. Their marriage occurred in the residence of the rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo, North Dakota. Mary became a Catholic in October 1909.

Mary Brown was born in Gill Township, Cass County, Dakota Territory in February 1888. Her parents were James G. Brown and Jane Collins. James Brown was born in Big Dairies Townland, Devenish Parish, County Fermanagh, Ireland in January 1857. Jane Collins, of Irish descent, was born in Huron Township, Bruce County, Ontario, Canada the previous year.

Farm years in Highland Township

Martin and Mary farmed in Highland Township from their marriage in 1909 until 1937. The 1910 census gives a glimpse of Mary's situation as a newlywed. She was 22 years old, married 14 months, and pregnant with her first child. The household included herself; Martin; Frankie (Martin's older brother); seven hired men; a foreman; and a cook. At this time Martin was farming in partnership with his brother, Henry, who was living in Fargo, occupied with his duties as Sheriff of Cass County.

The farm consisted of 1,120 acres, large for its time and well equipped. From an early date the farm home enjoyed central hot water heat, running water, a bathroom and a 32-volt Delco plant to furnish electricity for lights and simple appliances. One of the appliances was a well-used churn, which fitted into the Maytag clothes

washer. The house had a summer kitchen in the basement complete with a dumb waiter. There was a separate dining room for the hired men.

Outbuildings included a bunkhouse for the hired men, a blacksmith shop, a smokehouse, a root cellar and an icehouse. During prosperous years, ice was shipped by the carload from Detroit Lakes, Minnesota; at other times it was cut by hand and hauled from the nearby Maple River.

Flour was purchased by the ton. Sugar was purchased in 500-pound lots; olives and whiskey in five-gallon kegs. In the fall, a carload of lignite coal, to be shared with relatives, was ordered from a coal mine near Taylor, North Dakota, in which the family had an ownership interest.

In 1912, Martin purchased a Mighty Michigan touring car with Spanish leather upholstery and 16-inch springs in the seats. It cost \$1,600, the equivalent of \$38,500 2015 dollars.

In 1913, when Henry's service as Sheriff of Cass County was over, Martin and Henry dissolved their farming partnership arrangement and divided the holding. Martin remained on the home place with 640 acres. Usually an additional 640 acres were rented.

Minimum size for a threshing crew was 15 men and household help included as many as three hired girls. During the harvest five meals a day were prepared. In addition to breakfast, dinner and supper, there were forenoon and afternoon lunches taken to the workers in the fields. In those days the noon meal was dinner and the evening meal was supper.

Cattle and hogs were raised and butchered, bread baked, butter churned, eggs gathered, and a garden raised. Fruit and vegetables were preserved. Mary's all-time baking record was 32 loaves of bread on a Saturday which was repeated the following Tuesday.

The farm was diversified with beef and dairy cattle and hogs as well as crops of wheat, barley, oats and flax. Martin preferred milking strain Shorthorn cattle. He favored Belgian horses for draft work and Standardbred trotting horses for driving. At one time he owned 80 horses, some of them unbroken broncos purchased in western North Dakota.

During the years on the farm, Mary managed the household, bore and reared seven children, and nursed her brother-in-law, Francis (Frankie) Boyle, during his lingering illness. She was active in community affairs serving on School and Township Boards, as an assessor, in the Altar Society and as the Democratic clerk of many elections.

She helped with many church suppers and funeral lunches. One of her specialties was plum pudding with a whiskey- or brandy-laced hard sauce. This was sometimes served at church suppers and caused persons, who otherwise were teetotalers, to smack their lips and give compliments on the sauce.

Low prices beginning in the early 1920's and the drought, bad weather, poor crops, and crop and livestock diseases of the 1930's took their toll. For Martin and Mary these conditions were complicated by previous bad investments, the poor health of Mary, and an inability to obtain refinancing. Foreclosure occurred in 1937. Martin left the farm where he had lived for 49 years and where he and Mary had lived together for 28 years. The debt on the farm was \$6,500, a little over \$10 per acre.

Alice Years

They moved five miles away to Alice, North Dakota (population 161) to start anew. Martin was 59 years old and had only parts of three years of formal education. Mary was 49 and had a seventh grade education. Two children were left at home—Robert in high school and Daniel, four years old.

Instead of a ten-room well-equipped farm home, they lived first in a three-room house without central heat. The rent was \$6.00 monthly. They got water from the village pump, which was two blocks away. During the winter, the pump was often surrounded by a huge mound of ice.

Over the years the housing improved; the next house (rent \$8.00 monthly) had four rooms, a hot air floor furnace, a chemical toilet in the basement, and a cistern which stored rainwater from the roof of the house. The rain water entered the kitchen via a hand pump. This soft rain water was used to wash bodies, clothes, dishes, and floors. Very little soap was needed for it to lather. Water from the town well, or a nearby farm, was used for drinking and cooking.

The last house in 1945 was a three bedroom house complete with bathroom. The rent was \$35.00 monthly. It was a veritable mansion compared to the others.

Martin worked a variety of jobs - including a foreman position on Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects mixing grasshopper poison and planting shelterbelts. The 1940 census show Martin working 60 hours a week as a WPA foreman.

Other times he worked variously as a farm laborer; a section hand on the railroad; a county employee mowing weeds on county road right of ways; and a checker of gravel on road improvement projects. He became a farm-to-farm salesman of minerals and livestock feed supplements and of Pride hybrid seed corn.

Often, Martin wore a badge and policed dances held in the Alice town hall or at the Silver Zephyr, a dance spot located south of Alice at the intersection of Highways 38 and 46. The weapon he carried was a billy club.

Mary also sought work outside the home. She clerked in grocery stores and at the post office and operated school lunch programs in both Alice and Sheldon.

Sheldon Years

In 1946, Martin and Mary and their youngest son, Daniel, moved to Sheldon (population 262). This decision was made in part to assure Daniel's high school education as Alice no longer had a high school.

Mary is perhaps best remembered in Sheldon for the school lunch program she managed. Some years she worked with a different volunteer mother each day; other years she had steady assistance from Gladys Kaspari, Mary Bartholomay and others. She was active in the Sheldon School lunch program for a several year period in the late 1940's and early 1950's, earning a \$27.88 monthly retirement benefit for her effort. During this time, Mary was active in the American Legion Auxiliary and honored as a Gold Star mother.

Final years of Martin and Mary

By 1955, when Martin's health was failing he and Mary moved to Fargo to be close to medical care. Martin died in St. John's Hospital in July 1956 after a four month's stay. One leg had been partially amputated because of diabetic gangrene. He is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery near Sheldon.

After Martin's death Mary and Daniel lived in Sauk Rapids and Bigfork, Minnesota and in Grafton and Bismarck, North Dakota. From 1960 to 1962, Mary was housekeeper for Father Earl Ferry in LaMoure, North Dakota. She also spent time in Pinellas Park, Florida with her brother, James Brown.

From 1965 until her death in 1979, Mary lived with her daughter Eloise in Everett and Marysville, Washington. Mary, a widow for 23 years, is buried in the family plot at St. Mary's Cemetery near Sheldon.

The Family

Seven children were born to Martin and Mary Boyle: Eloise (1910-1997); John Emmett (1912-1992); James Preston (1914-1996); Mark Wendell (1915-1918); Robert Tichbourne (1921-1945); Jerome Keith (1924-1932); and Daniel Clair (1933-).

The older children, Eloise, John, and James attended St. Mary's parochial boarding school in Sheldon. The younger ones, Jerome (Jerry) and Robert (Bob) attended the District 69 one room grade school as did John and James for the 8th grade. Eloise attended Sacred Heart Academy in Fargo for three years. She hated being away from home. She returned to graduate from Sheldon High School in 1928.

John and James graduated from Sheldon High School in 1931. Robert graduated in 1939, and Daniel in 1950. John and James were in the same class. When John was in the first grade, schools were closed nearly all year because of the 1918 flu epidemic.

During their years in Sheldon, the Boyles were active members of St. Mary's Catholic Church. From the farm they took many a nine-mile sleigh ride wrapped in horsehide robes to attend Mass in Sheldon.

Eloise left Sheldon when she married Leslie A. Wold of Enderlin, North Dakota. Their children are Valerie Jean (b.1936) and Susan (b.1950).

Eloise had a moment of fame when she served as nurse to the infant Brown quadruplets, Connie, Cleo, Claire, and Clayton of Leonard, North Dakota. The quads were featured in a patriotic short subject film shown across the country during WWII. The film showed Eloise holding Connie and a soldier, sailor, and marine each holding one of the boy quads. Mary Niles, a sister of Martin and aunt of Eloise, saw the feature while attending a movie in Seattle and said involuntarily and in a voice loud enough to be heard throughout the theater, "My God, that's Eloise."

Eloise divorced Leslie, married him a second time, and divorced him again. She worked for 14 years in the housekeeping department of Providence Hospital in Everett, Washington, and lived her last years there.

Valerie married Byron Middleton and Frank Dumont. Her Middleton children are John (b. 1954), a San Francisco Hall of Fame trumpet player known as "White Lightning", and Leslie Ann (b.1956), an office manager for a dental practice. Leslie Ann has a son Myles Davis Middleton.

Valerie's Dumont son is Ronald Dumont (b.1965). The Middleton children live in the San Francisco, California area. Ronald lives in Seattle, Washington.

Valerie worked as a waitress and cook in restaurants and clubs in California and Washington. For years before retirement she did food preparation for oil well crews working off the north coast of Alaska. Presently, she lives in Sequim, Washington.

Susan married Walter Matteson, a pipefitter. Their child is Wendy (b.1972). Susan trained as a beautician and bookkeeper. She is presently married to John Moberg. They also live in Sequim, but winter in Arizona.

John (Jack) married his high school sweetheart Nora Arntson in Seattle in 1941, ten years after they graduated from Sheldon High School. John worked for the Boeing Company for 30 years. He was an industrial engineer. Nora taught elementary school for nine years in North Dakota and went on to teach 21 years in Washington.

Shortly after John and Nora married they moved to Kent, Washington where in 1958 they built a home on Lake Meriden with a spectacular view of Mount Rainier.

Their son was Timothy John Boyle (1945-2014). He was a financial computer consultant for accounting systems. One job was to assist portions of the Ohio state government when they were bringing computer systems into compliance with year 2000 Y2K requirements. Other projects included work in the Bahamas and others in Alaska. Tim married Adrienne Vorderstrasse, an art teacher.

Marilyn Kay Boyle is their daughter. Marilyn recently retired as Director of Sports Medicine at the University of Akron in Ohio.. She married Malcolm Bowman. Their children are Nicole Marie (b.1969) and Bradley Paul (b.1972). Nicole married Alan Gaffney, a native of Dublin, Ireland and a graduate of Trinity College. They have three children with Irish-derived names: Fiona (b. 2001), Maeve (b. 2003) and Aidan (b. 2005).

Marilyn's son Bradley is a physician living in Idaho with a practice in Washington. He married Jamie Hartung, also a physician. They have a daughter Nora (b. 2005) and a son Evan Paul (b. 2008).

Marilyn is now married to Kenneth MacDonald, who was also affiliated with sports programs at the University of Akron. They live in Green, Ohio.

James (Jim) began sailing on Great Lakes ore carriers in 1937. He started shoveling coal and worked and studied until he became a ship's officer. He was a Chief Engineer for many years before his retirement. He sailed 43 seasons on the Great Lakes, all of them for the Pittsburgh Steamship Co.

James married Isabelle Cerar of Eveleth, Minnesota. Their children are Kaye Ann (b.1947) and Mary Louise (1952-2011). During their retirement years James and Isabelle lived in Cape Coral, Florida.

Kaye Ann graduated from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. She married Clinton Witzman, a Northwestern Bell Telephone Company lineman. (Clinton died in 2001.). Kaye Ann was a teacher in a teen mothers and children program intended to facilitate the graduation of teen-aged mothers from high school and to teach them child care and parenting skill.

The children of Kaye Ann and Clint are Eric (b.1972) and Jeremy (b.1975). Eric is a letter carrier for the Postal Service. He married Rhonda Goenner and they have a

son Peyton Anthony (b. 2004) and a daughter Piper Ann (b. 2008). Rhonda is a Certified Public Accountant. They live in Duluth, Minnesota.

Jeremy is single. He lives in Duluth and is an attendant in a group home for developmentally disabled adult men.

Mary Louise married Gregory Merritt. He is a descendant of one of the seven Iron Men credited with discovering iron ore in Northern Minnesota in the 1880s. Gregory is retired from work as a skilled draftsman and sheet metal worker. Mary was a special education assistant working with developmentally disabled children in the Duluth public school system. She died in 2011 after a battle with cancer.

Their children are Nathan (b. 1978), and Cameron (b. 1983). Nathan is an aeronautical engineer who works for Lockheed-Martin in Fort Worth, Texas. He has a bachelor's and a master's degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Cameron is a petroleum engineer. He contracts with British Petroleum and works in Iraq on a 28 day there, 28 days at home rotation.

Mark Wendell (Wendell) received severe head injuries in an accident on the farm when he was three years old. Unnoticed, he was trying to climb on the wheel of a grain tank when the grain tank moved and his skull was fractured.

The intent was to take him to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota but he was taken off the train in St. Paul, Minnesota and died in an ambulance en route to a hospital. A physician from Enderlin accompanied Martin and Wendell on this sad journey. They traveled on a Soo Line passenger train from Enderlin, North Dakota.

Robert (Bob) graduated from Sheldon High School in 1939. During his last high school years, he and his cousins Geraldine and Kathleen Boyle had rooms in Sheldon where they did light housekeeping. After a stint doing defense work in California, Robert served in the Army Air Force during WWII. He was a flight engineer on B-24 bombers used for training purposes.

Robert was killed in a B-24 crash near Lowry Field outside of Denver, Colorado in May 1945. His body was not recovered from the crash site; it had been completely incinerated. He was 23 years old. Just eight months earlier he had married Fae Kendell, a Mormon girl from South Weber, Utah. The two of them loved to dance to the swing music of that time.

Jerome Keith (Jerry) was eight years old and had recently received his First Communion when he was stricken with appendicitis and died from peritonitis following surgery.

Daniel (Dan) graduated from Sheldon High School in 1950. He served two years in the Army at Camp Gordon, Georgia during the Korean Conflict. Then he took

advantage of the GI Bill and graduated from St. John's University at Collegeville, Minnesota. Later he received a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Public Health degree from The University of Michigan.

From 1965 until 1997, Daniel worked in the administration of the Medicaid program in Washington DC, St. Paul, Minnesota, and Baltimore, Maryland. When he retired, Daniel had worked longer in the administration of the Medicaid program than any other Federal employee.

Dan married Elaine Dysthe of Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1965. They divorced in 1980. Their children are Brenda Kathleen (b.1967) and Kristin Marie (b.1968). Both Brenda and Kristin are unmarried. They each have massage therapy practices in Alexandria, Virginia. Brenda graduated from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. Kristin is a graduate of New College, the Honors College of the Florida state university system.

Dan married Ann MacKay in 1982 when he was working in Minnesota. They moved to Baltimore and then to Columbia, Maryland where they lived until retirement in 1997. Ann worked first as a geriatric nurse. She moved on to nursing administration and later to association management. She retired from a position as Vice President for the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging in Washington, DC.

Dan and Ann enjoy living at the Charlestown Retirement Community in Catonsville, Maryland. They have a view of the Baltimore skyline and city lights from their fifth floor sunroom!

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Daniel C. Boyle, Catonsville, MD