

Hyde family roots grow deep, strong Farm, nursery on property

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 20 July 2012 14:08 -



Land was important to Glenn Hyde.

That's why Jan (Hyde) Wightman of Lexington and Tom Hyde, a Methodist minister in Sidney, have held on to Hyde property southwest of Gothenburg.

Because the land has been in the family for 100 years, the owners will receive a 2012 Pioneer Farm Family Award at the Dawson County Fair in August.

The story actually begins in 1911 when Henry Hyde bought the Bacon Hog Ranch for his son, Mason Hyde, who married Fanny Blank in 1912.

Mason and Fanny, Jan and Tom's grandparents, farmed the land. Mason was elected to the Nebraska Legislature to represent Dawson County in 1923-24.

Jan said he served a second term in 1935-36 which was the last session before the old Capital building was torn down and a new one built.

Mason served the first session in the new building and also participated in the last year of the two-house legislature, Jan said.



A one-house system, known as the Unicameral, was instituted in 1937.

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Some 70 years later Jan's husband, John Wightman, was elected to the Nebraska Legislature and now represents most of Dawson County, Custer County and some of Buffalo County.

On the farm, Mason and Fanny raised three children—Glenn, Rachel (Hyde) Bringelson and Mason Jr., who moved to North Platte. All are now deceased.

In 1944, Mason and Fanny moved to Gothenburg and Glenn took over the farming operation.

Mason died in 1946, followed by Fanny in 1976, and Glenn and his bride, Lucille, bought out the other siblings.

Besides traditional farm crops, Jan said Mason began selling trees and started Gothenburg Nurseries in the 1940s.

Jan and Tom's parents expanded the business to include a greenhouse and a flower shop and later sold sod.

"Mom took a florist training course and sold flowers and bedding plants," she said.

Lucille and her mother-in-law, Fanny, also raised peonies and iris south of the house which they cut and sold for Memorial Day.

Jan said her father would have liked to go to college but couldn't because of the Great Depression.

"He graduated from high school in 1931," she said.

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Still, Glenn loved history and did much work for the Gothenburg Area History book.



Tom and Jan did go to college at Wesleyan University where, during her senior year, she met John Wightman.

“Gil Grady (of Gothenburg) lined us up. He was in law school with John,” she said, noting that marriage waited until 1964 after she’d spent a year as a medical technologist in Denver.

While growing up south of Gothenburg, Jan remembers attending Banner United Methodist Church and youth fellowship, spending time with other southside kids and riding the bus to school in town.

Country schools in the Banner Church area were closed before Jan and Tom started school. Jan graduated from Gothenburg High School in 1959 and Tom in 1969.

Interestingly, Rachel (Hyde) Bringelson—Glenn’s sister— was best friends with Jan and Tom’s mother.

“My mother married her best friend’s brother,” she said.

Alvin Bringelson, who married Rachel, farmed with Jan and Tom’s father.

Lucille died in 1978.

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Jan said their father lived on the farm the rest of his life, until a cold day in November of 1990.

“He went to check on cattle on corn stalks and had heart failure we think,” Jan said, noting that neighbor Darwin Edson had seen Glenn’s car and found him.

“He was born on the farm and died in the field,” she said.

Harlan and Rosanne Tryon bought the house and building site which were damaged or destroyed by a tornado in 2007.

“The house was restored but that is all that is left of the original farm buildings including most of the trees,” Jan said.

About receiving the award, she said it’s nice to know that their roots go deep enough.

“They’ve been in place 100 years,” Jan said. “Even though we don’t live there anymore, Tom and I still own the farm.”

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