

Thomas and Cecelia Wagoner Family

The Thomas Wagoner family represents a four-fifth generation family in the Wood River Community. Wm. Harnon arrived in the early 1870's and settled west of Wood River. His daughter, Mary Ann taught at School District 5 prior to her marriage to Thomas Langan. In 1882 Thomas and Mary Ann acquired land from the Union Pacific and established the family farm. Their daughter, Kathryn, married Arthur Wagoner, who came to Wood River to practice pharmacy. They owned Wagoner Pharmacy in Wood River. Prior to his death, Arthur was associated with the Grand Island Clinic, the pharmacy still carries his name.

Their oldest son, Thomas was born in 1909. Early on Thomas discovered his love for animals and the farm life. He attended Wood River and graduated with the class of 1926. Thomas joined his grandfather in the farm operation.

Cecelia was the oldest daughter of John and Lena Burns of Yuma County, Colo. She was a member of Wray High School Class of 1930. Cecelia came to Grand Island in the fall of 1930 to attend Grand Island Business College. Her grandmother Hattie and John Steiger lived in Wood River. Fate would intervene that the paths of Thomas and Cecelia would cross.

They were married at Wood River St. Mary's on June 18, 1934. They made their home at the former home of Thomas Langan's. To this union seven children were born, five survived, Mary Frances, Thomas, Judith, Dennis and Daniel.

Times were hard but Mother and Dad provided a home filled with faith and love. We were encouraged to do our best. It was only natural that a few of Mom and Dad's "preferences" were passed along. Our home was considered the "Home-place" for the Langan-Wagoner family so it was natural that the family tradition were carried on.

Mary Frances Was involved in the usual "childhood activities" The day before her sixteenth birthday Mae Iams called and asked if she would be interested in working at the Telephone Company as a switchboard operator. She worked after school and weekends as an operator in the pre-dial days. After graduation she went to Denver and worked for an insurance company. Several years later she transferred to Omaha. For the past 20 years she has worked for an Insurance Agency as the Office Manager. On July 22, 1977 she married Joseph Emery of Omaha. They have one daughter, Sarah Frances.

Thomas A. was a member of the W.R. Class of '56. He attended the University of Nebraska, and received his Law Degree in 1963. He served in the Navy from 1963-1968. He received his Masters in International Law from George Washington. Tom returned to Nebraska in 1968. He worked for Northern Natural Gas in Omaha prior to his move to Grand Island to join with his Uncle, John Wagoner, in the practice of Law. In 1966 he married Bernadette Doherty.

They have three children, Thomas (Mick), Nicolette, and Kathryn.

Judith was a member of the W.R. class of '64. After graduation she worked for the Telephone Co. in Omaha, then worked part time while she attended college. She attended Duchesne for two years then switched to Creighton where she received her Law Degree December 1971. In November 1972 she began work with the Internal Revenue as an Estate Tax Attorney. Judy was on the original Foundation Board and assisted with the formation of the Foundation.

Dennis and Dan were the youngest. Being twins they kept everyone guessing. They were members Of the W.R. Class of '66 and attended the University of Neb. for a year they were drafted in January 1968. Ultimately Dennis served a year in Viet Nam and Dan served his foreign duty in Italy.

Dennis returned home and found employment at the Ordnance Plant and farming. In November 1970 he married Jane Olin. To this union four children were born, Darren, Patrick, Shawn and Deanna. At this time Dennis is the W.R. Marshall and farms part-time.

Dan returned home and also found employment at the Ordnance Plant and farming. In April 1970 he married Marlene Hanousek. (After their marriages Marlene and Jane owned and operated the Cinderella Salon in W.R.) Dan and Marlene farm north of town on Marlene's parents' home place. They have four children, Tisha, Simon, Tyson and Sonya.

The Wagoner family was designated as a pioneer family in 1982 that is they have owned the original farm- for a hundred years. The family is active at St.Mary's Church and participate in various activities in the community. With this donation to the Founders Fund the family is looking forward to the next 100 years in the community.