

Subject: Memoirs of Fred V. Welsh, born February 11, 1889, Elba, Nebraska, died Frankenmuth, Michigan, c. 1971 or 1972.

My grandfather's short memoir follows this cover letter. I hope you like it-- if it makes you chuckle, or makes you think, I'd love to know about it.

I don't know where the original is. My mother, who was a schoolteacher, typed the original manuscript onto a mimeograph stencil and ran copies for all of us of the younger generation, as we were at the time. I typed this from the mimeograph because if I didn't it would soon be gone. It is faded and the cheap paper has deteriorated badly, so I had to guess at some of the words.

I don't think anyone edited it much. Some of the language is not what my mom would have chosen, and Grandpa was a very literate man for his day; spent two years at a university, at Lincoln, Nebraska, according to family oral history, and considered himself a failure for life because he was never able to finish his degree.

The "Rod" or "Rodney" referred to is my cousin, Rodney Welsh.

I can remember Grandpa starting this memoir shortly before his last, final decline began. He never finished it beyond the point where this paper ends.

Family oral history says that in 1909 or 1910 the Welsh family left Nebraska and returned to Michigan, where the elder Fred Welsh had been a lumberjack at one time. They bought the farm where Rod lives now for \$9,000, which was big money in those days. I remember my grandfather saying "Dad bought it because it had all those trees growing around it, and in Nebraska any place trees grew was good soil. But that's not true here. The soil wasn't very good. It never produced much until they started using fertilizers; now it will produce about as much as anywhere."

Grandpa was a carpenter, which shows in a lot of his description of construction, I think.

If I remember correctly, Grandpa said his father and his family were actually pretty successful in Elba, Nebraska, once they gave up farming and stayed in town. They were doing well and living a prosperous life, for the time. However, Great-Grandpa had a drinking problem. He could take the booze or leave it alone, but when his friends offered him some he could never turn them down. In order to give up alcohol forever he moved away where nobody knew him, and claimed on arrival to be a teetotaler. He would still drink, sometimes, when hunters gave him a bottle in return for allowing them to hunt his land, or when he had a "toddy" for a cold. But he was generally dry thereafter.

There may be some historical newspaper record of the elder Fred Welsh's stay in Elba. Supposedly he was town constable in Elba and as such was involved in one gunfight. There were a couple of farmhands in town who were acting suspicious. Fred Welsh was carrying a pocket revolver because of this. The farm hands robbed the Elba bank; Great Grandfather opened fire on them in the street as they came out, and they fired back. He claimed he hit one of them in the leg, although this was never proven. In any case he startled them enough that the one carrying the money dropped it. The robbers got away, but the assets of the bank-- some \$400 or so-- were saved. In gratitude the townspeople took up a collection and bought Great-Grandfather

an overcoat. He himself always claimed they collected the patches for a patchwork quilt, but Great Grandmother had to put them together herself. One of my cousins, I forget whom, told me he saw the newspaper clipping about it, though, and the clipping had the part about the overcoat.