

Arlen's recollection of the day his father died

July 14, 1951 Arlen 12 yrs, Elva 37 yrs, Morgan 45 yrs

In July of 1951 we were living at the Brick house, but we were still running the Carmangay farm. It had been raining for a couple of days and was still raining when my Dad put me on the Minneapolis model U tractor. I had to drive it to the Carmangay farm by myself. We needed the tractor at Carmangay so we could run the post hole digger. I remember the tires throwing mud all over when I got the tractor rolling in road gear and that was 5th gear. This tractor had a very fast top gear. I was wet and covered with mud when I got to the farm at Carmangay because that tractor did not have full size fenders.

It was a hot day and our family was planning to go on a holiday when we got the fence built. Dad needed to build some fence down on what we called the "Scott" place, which is directly north of the gravel pit across the river and south of Paul Binning's farm. The fence would run on the west side of the Scott place then along the riverbank on the north to meet the north border fence that goes east and west separating our place from Dave Deals pasture. Paul Binning was not cooperative in sharing the cost of the fence because Dad had bought it when Paul was farming it and the west fence split the flat in two.

We had to pull the truck across the river by the gravel pit because the crossing was in bad shape and the north bank was steep. To stake out the line for the fence Dad stood up on the hill at the gravel pit where he could see the property lines of other fields 2 or 3 miles north. We put in large stakes, one at a time moving them down below on the west border of the Scott place. He signaled by waving one arm or the other. When he waved both arms that was it, the stake was driven in.

The tractor power take off ran the post hole auger to dig the holes. Dad ran the tractor and the hired man ran the auger that had to be lifted out when the hole was dug. We were putting in split cedar posts. Eldon and I got the job of rolling out the wire. It was a four wire fence. Four strands were rolled out beside each other on the ground. I remember Dad prodding me to keep on the job. I was a bit lazy or tired.

We had the fence done on the west and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way on the north by the second or third day on the job. It was nearly noon. Dad lit the coleman stove to boil some eggs for dinner, he liked soft-boiled eggs. While the eggs were boiling Dad and the hired man dug a few more holes.

Eldon and I went for a swim in the river just below the tractor working up on the bank. I remember looking up when the tractor rolled and crashed at the bottom of the river bank. I saw my Dad fall slowly laying backwards straight away from the tractor and the tractor going into the water.

I ran to him and felt for a pulse on his upper arm inside on his bicep. His head was smashed on his forehead in one place with bone pieces showing. I remember his coarse textured work shirt and how hot he felt. I knew he was dead, he never moved.

I crossed the river and ran across the field in my swimming suit to Binning's place. It was a stubble field and the short stubble hurt my feet. The Binning family was just sitting down

to dinner and I told them the tractor tipped over and my Dad was hurt and to go to get a Doctor. They did not have a phone so Paul drove to Carmangay to get the Doctor.

I ran back and the hired man loaded us in the 3 ton truck leaving my Dad dead on the river bank. We could not go south across the river without the tractor to help us across so we went north through Deals pasture. There were no gates so we cut the wires.

The hired man drove the car with mother and the rest of the kids back to the accident. We had a new 51 green Ford car and we were going very fast.

My mother got out of the car and screamed as she ran down the river bank to my Dad. Some people had assembled on the other side of the river. They had come by Binnings road. The doctor with his black bag was trying to find a place to cross on foot. People had to take my mother away from Dad's body and take her home.

I do not remember a thing about the rest of the day or other days after except that one day Henry Toone came to our place to talk to the family and he walked with his hand on my shoulder down to get the milk cow. I can't remember what he said but he was a caring and kind person.

I do not know exactly why Dad's tractor tipped over but I am thinking it started to roll down the hill when my Dad was changing gears from forward to reverse. He stepped on the brake but maybe caught only one pedal, the left or right wheel brake which would have twisted the tractor sideways, the bank was steep and over it went. The tractor hit very hard. I also wonder if he was afraid the tractor was going to run over us in the river if he jumped off and let the tractor go. The tractor was taken out of the river some time later. The road grader cut a trail down and pulled it up on the bank.

Just a little before the accident, we were working around an old granary, gathering up old wire. Dad said to me that he did not have a father when he was growing up and he had to learn everything by experience. I don't know what brought on this comment, all I remember were these few words. Half an hour later he was dead.