

## A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ALFRED RASICOT

(Written by his daughter, Martha Hermine Rasicot Groberg and typed by a g.dau., Hermine Groberg Barker.)

My father, Alfred Rasicot was born March 21, 1830 in Chambly, Quebec Province, Canada. He was the third child of Dominique Rasicot and Marie Millet. Father's ancestors helped colonize Canada.

In the Genealogical Library of Utah, is a book compiled by Tanguay on the origin of French Families in Canada. In it is stated that the first record of Rasicot's is in south western France. They are of royal birth and were Feudal land owners. They lived in Ville de Chateau Gontier in Mayenne, France, where Jacques Rasicot, father's third great grandparent was born about 1692. His father was Michel Rasicot. Jacques Rasicot came to Canada in 1715 and lived in Quebec. Father's mother's people, the Millets, came from France in 1611. His mother, Marie Millet, was the daughter of Paschal Millet and Catherine Trudeau. (also spelled Truteau)

Father's father, Dominique Rasicot, was a blacksmith by trade, and was doing quite well in the little town of Chambly, but like so many early settlers of the new world, he had a great ambition to acquire land and when father was a small boy, the family moved on a farm forty miles away, in what was termed the wilderness. Here was a growth of large trees and thick underbrush, which had to be cleared off the land before it could be farmed. They suffered hardships before they could clear sufficient land to raise crops for food. Of course, the summers are short in Canada and they were located about 30 miles northeast of Montreal, so they were pretty far north, and the winters were long and cold.

Father was a very plucky little boy. I have often heard him tell of hardships he endured and pleasures he enjoyed. Once when his older brothers were chasing a deer, running with their dogs, father started out with them and being barefooted he found it rather severe traveling; he said he stubbed his toe and tore his big toe-nail loose, but kept on the chase all day in spite of the pain. When he reached home that night he had a very sore toe, which pained him a great deal. Another experience he related which I marveled at was when he was ten years old. His father promised him a trip to Montreal. Early in the spring, just before the ice went off the river, they planned to skate to the city. The evening before they left, the father told his small son that they would have to be ready to leave at three o'clock the next morning. Father said he awoke at the right time for the start without having to be called. Father skated that long 30 miles, getting the thrill of his life in the big city at the end of the journey.

During father's youth, his father and family, which now numbered eight children, six boys and two girls, immigrated to the United States of America. One of the girls died soon after this move. While here, father was very desirous of learning the English language, and he got a chance to work for his board and go to school. The man for whom he worked was a minister of one of the sectarian churches. The minister and his family were very proud and treated father as though he were a common servant. One of father's duties was to arise early Monday morning to put on the wash water, so the lady of the house could start washing at three A.M. and have her washing on the line before her neighbors were out of bed so that they would not know that she did her own washing. All went well until one morning the minister was planning on an early journey and told my father to have his horse ready for him. Father started caring for the horse, when the lady called to him to hurry the wash water. Father answered, in his broken English, that as soon as he cared for the horse he would get the water. This displeased the lady and she complained to her husband that father had been uncivil to her. The minister hurriedly climbed out of bed, drew on his trousers, without pulling up his suspenders and with suspenders flying, rushed to the barn, giving my father a good shaking. Father was very angry and felt unjustly punished. He dropped the pitchfork and started to walk to his home, a distance of twenty miles. Later the minister tried to get father to return, but he refused. So ended his schooling for that winter. However, he availed himself other opportunities, for an education not only attending an English school but he also spent two years in French school so he was

able to read, write and speak Parisian French, as well as English.

A few years later, the family moved to Little Falls, Morrison County, Minnesota, and obtained land on Belle Prairie. Here more hardships were in store for the courageous settlers, not only war with grasshoppers, but war with Indians as well. Here father served in the State Militia for protection against Indians. He was also county recorder of Morrison County for some time.

Father procured a four-hundred acre farm and was doing quite well. He was able to send his unfortunate brother, Vital, to a deafmute school in New York to be educated. His brother lost his hearing while a baby due to having measles and whooping cough together. There was no school for deaf mutes nearer than New York, so his brother was sent there. This cost my father considerable, but all his life he was ever ready to help unfortunates. Nothing disgusted him so much as to hear of someone cheating a widow or an orphan.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, father and his older brother, William, offered their services to their country, but due to rheumatism contracted while he was working in a brickyard some years previous, father was unable to pass the physical examination. However, his brother served in the army until the end of the war and was in many battles, returning home broken in health and without means of supporting his wife and family. In 1864, father decided to move west, so he left his farm in Minnesota to his brother William, when he should return from the war, with the understanding that he help their parents run the farm. Later, when their parents were too old to run their farm land, they gave it to William and lived with him until they died. The father died in 1862 and the mother a year later.

At this time, every man going out on the frontier was required to get a permit from the government because the civil war was still in progress, and men being drafted. Father obtained a permit and crossed the plains in the spring of 1864, going to Montana. He procured some land near Virginia City, Montana, which was a thriving mining town at the time.

Father brought some pedigreed horses, and some dairy cattle with him, and engaged in the raising of good draft horses and butter-making. Although a bachelor, he was very neat and clean in keeping his house tidy and in making first class butter. He also raised vegetables to sell. Later, when prices were not so good for butter and vegetables, he went into the freighting business. In this way he helped in the settling of Utah, for he bought the much needed gold dust from Montana and exchanged it for fruit, molasses and honey. He received many an Indian scare while freighting. He passed through Blackfoot, Idaho, just after Bob Hull and his companion were shot by a drunken Indian. Another time, a horseman asked to travel with father because the Indians around Blackfoot were on the war path, and he was afraid to take the risk through Indian country. By the time they were in safe territory, father became interested in farming land of southern Idaho, so about 1870, he sold his land in Montana and moved to Clifton, Idaho, where he joined the L.D.S. Church in 1874. About this time he procured a farm on Battle Creek, which was afterward bought by the L.D.S. Church and known as the Church ranch. I understand the school

in that place is called the Rasicot School district in honor of my father.

September 10, 1874 father married Martha Thomas Taylor, the widow of David Taylor. Father and mother lived on this farm near Oxford, Idaho, until 1884. Here five of their children were born; they had the misfortune of loosing their first born, a boy, named Alfred Jr.

In the spring of 1884, father and family moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho, at which time was called Eagle Rock and was a lively railroad town. Here was situated Anderson Brothers toll bridge across Snake River. Later, the railroad moved their shops to Pocatello and Eagle Rock almost became a ghost town. In a few years, Eastern capitalists boomed the town and changed it's name to Idaho Falls. While here, two more children were born to father and mother.

Father procured a large farm four miles north of Idaho Falls, also using his land right under the desert-act and proved up on another one-hundred-sixty acres, three miles north-east of the town. At the same time, father moved there, it was a new settlement. The land was in sage brush, which had to be cleared off, and irrigation canals and ditches had to be made. The country was overrun with gophers and rabbits. Coyotes, mink, weasles, and various chicken thieves were plentiful also. Here father and family endured many hardships and privations. They lived the first year in a two room adobe house, then father built a large lumber house. One of father's first acts was to set out shade and fruit trees. He spent a great deal of money to beautify his home and started a nursery of a thousand choice trees. The first winter after the orchard was set out the rabbits ate the bark from the trees and killed them. The next spring father set out more fruit trees and that fall wrapped every tree trunk with cloth. It was a winter with high winds and drifting snow. The snow piled up in the orchard to the branches of the trees and the rabbits barked the trees once more but this did not kill the trees, so father sawed them off about a foot from the ground and the trees put out new shoots, which in time made sturdy trees, but it was much longer before they produced fruit, due to the interference. (I would like to digress here a little and relate that while father was visiting his relatives in Minnesota, in 1884, he ate cherries from the trees he had planted over twenty years before. He used to say that it wasn't every frontiersman that was permitted to enjoy the fruits of his labor as he had done.)

During the panic of '93, father became very dissatisfied trying to provide for his growing family, with such poor market for his farm products as Idaho Falls provided. Then too, father and mother greived over the loss of their second son, a lad of thirteen years, who died in 1889, after an illness of two years of rehumatism and heart trouble. They felt that a change would help to lessen their grief. Father tried to sell his land, but there was no market. However, he succeeded in selling one hundred sixty acres of his farm and in 1894, he rented the rest of his land and moved to Montana. Here he leased land in the Deerlodge Valley and went into the dairy business on quite a large scale. After living on the rented farms for four years, he sold eighty acres of the Idaho farm and bought a hundred and sixty acre farm three miles west of Anaconda, and lived there for five years. The Smelting Co. built a tall smoke stack,

which they hoped would free the lower valley from dangerous gases and arsenic which were ruining the vegetation. This proved detrimental to our farm; the smoke settled on it killing the vegetation and stock. Father shipped hay for his livestock from Idaho, but this was so expensive, he decided to move back to the old home near Idaho Falls, Idaho. So he sold the farm in Montana at a loss and left Montana in November, 1903. Here father lived the rest of his life. He died April 25, 1911.

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Father was an honest man and a good father. He had high ideals and ever strove to teach his family to be courteous and kind and to instill into their hearts a love for right living and fair dealing. He loved beautiful horses and kept a string of race horses before we went to Montana. He had a half-mile circular track on his place on which to train his horses. He had planned to turn this part of his farm into a park, but the move to Montana prevented this, and his renters plowed under the race track. On our return, father sold eighty eight acres of land to pay off a mortgage which had been steadily growing for twenty years. In his old age he was free from debt and worry, with a hundred-sixty acre farm, some money in the bank and the love and respect of all his friends and neighbors.