

Alvin Theodore Zoch & Ernestine Elizabeth Mertink Marriage

Alvin Zoch's marriage to Ernestine Mertink took place in St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Serbin,. It was a small wedding with only a few neighbors and relatives present.

After a few days, they moved to his father's place about one mile from where he was born and lived and started a new household. The first night when they moved, some young people gathered together some big plow sweeps and big cowbells and gave them a shivaree.

When this newly married couple started out their life together, it was a rather big change and experience for Ernestine. She grew up and lived in an all-white neighborhood. Now she moved into a black neighborhood. The nearest neighbor was black and lived about one-fourth mile away from the house. His name was John Stykes who had a large family of children. Most of them went through high school and college. Four of them were school teachers. They were a good Baptist Christian family. Alvin remembers seeing John Stykes sitting on his porch on Sunday afternoons reading his Bible. The other nearest neighbors were also black Baptist Christians. The nearest white neighbors lived about one mile from the house.

When Alvin and Ernestine started their lives and household together, they only had two horses, one buggy, two cows and calves, two pigs, a few chickens, a few walking farm implements, two beds, one table which was six feet long that his father made for him, one wood cooking stove, some kitchen utensils, and two chairs. When Ernestine grew up, she did not do any planting or handling of horses. She had milked cows, hoed and gathered crops and done all kinds of housework which included caring for her younger brothers and sisters.

When they began their life together, they made their living the best they could by adding a couple more cows, chickens, turkeys, pigs and finally began selling some cream and eggs. Once a week Ernestine hauled them to the Warda Store about six miles one way in the buggy and brought home groceries. Every Sunday, when they could cross the creeks, they attended the Warda church six miles away.

Soon, an exciting event took place. On August 15, 1922, they became parents when their first son, Henry Milton, was born. The other children born on this homestead were Hattie, Irene, Evelyn and Marvin. The buggy became too small. In the fall of 1928, Alvin got hold of a 1925 used Model T Ford touring car which was the family car until 1940.

In 1930 Henry and Hattie started school at Greens Creek Church with Richard Hartfield as the teacher. They walked to school about three miles one way.

At the end of 1930, the family moved to Kasper's farm about 2.5 miles east of Warda and farmed. The crops were cotton, corn and sugar cane from which molasses were made. They raised bountiful gardens. Sweet potatoes and watermelons were plentiful. Born here were the four youngest sons:

Elmer, Rudy, Freddie, and Eugene. The children walked to Warda to attend Holy Cross Lutheran School. August Lange was the teacher and Paul C Eifert was the pastor.

In 1942 the family moved to Herman Lorenz's farm and rented it. This 453 acre farm was bought a few years later. Peanuts became the number one crop.

On Sunday, February 10, 1980, Alvin and Ernestine Zoch celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in La Grange with family, relatives, and fiends by sharing their friendship, joys, and blessings. On the following Thursday, they had the privilege to walk down the aisle and stand at the altar of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Serbin where they had taken their marriage vows 60 years earlier. Two days later, Valentine's Day, February 14, 1980, Alvin Zoch died of a heart attack. Ernestine Zoch died on November 18, 1983. Both were God-fearing persons, had daily family devotions in German, and were faithful and active in the Holy Cross Lutheran Church at Warda. They are buried in the church's cemetery.

As written by Mrs. Irene Zoch Weaver and Dr. Rudy Zoch