

Charles J Vondrachek

*25 Nov 1879 - †16 Mar 1959

Father: Joseph Frank Vondrachek (*1847 - †1933)

Mother: Anna Hayek (*1851 - †1942)

Siblings: Joseph Anton Vondrachek (*1875 - †1957)
John Vondrachek (*1877 - †1964)
Wencil Francis Vondrachek (*1882 - †1920)
Mary Vondrachek (*1885 - †1898)
Albert Edward Vondrachek (*1887 - †1977)
Caroline Anna Vondrachek (*1889 - †1978)
Emil Edward Vondrachek (*1892 - †1980)
Louis Francis Vondrachek (*1895 - †1950)

Wife: Caroline Safranek (*1889 - †1950)

Children: Bernard Vondrachek (*? - †2013)
Marie Vondrachek (*? - †2004)
Anna A Vondrachek (*1912 - †2013)
Adele Lucy Vondrachek (*1914 - †2014)
Edward Charles Vondrachek (*1917 - †1998)
Norbert W Vondrachek (*1922 - †1999)

Birth: 25 Nov 1879
Reedsville

Death: 16 Mar 1959
Waterford

Note: ^{a)} Charles Vondrachek's family arrived in Montana in 1909 from Wisconsin. Caroline Vondrachek was born in a small village near Prague. After her mother's death, she came to the United States in 1903 along with her brother to live with her uncle and aunt. The uncle was running a boarding house in Milwaukee catering exclusively to the Bohemians. There Caroline met and married Charles Vondrachek, however, soon after the wedding he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. It was recommended to them to move to a dry place. They chose Montana, where land was still available and the climate was dry. While building their first shack, they lived in a tent. They had to dig a well three hundred feet deep only to find water so alkaline, that the whole project had to be abandoned. The water was then hauled in the buckets on a wagon half a mile to the house from a small well. Times were hard. Caroline's and Charles' daughter, Adele, remembers her mother turning to her Bohemian Bible, the only possession she kept from her homeland. The crops were continuously threatened by dust storms, cyclones, and grasshoppers. Unfortunately, there was little the farmers could do except spread poison and pray. Firewood was also scarce. The family had to travel miles to gather timber for winter supply. Everybody was anxiously waiting for springtime. Soon the Chinook winds of early spring began to blow "making the snow become honeycomb, and causing it to disappear overnight. The coulees began to run full, like rivers, almost the only running water we ever saw" reminisces Adele. By 1925 the Vondrachek family was well exhausted and defeated by the elements, and after the last poor harvest, they decided to return to the midwest, first to North Dakota, where Charles' parents farmed. But the small farm could not sustain another family, so they moved on to Milwaukee. Charles went to work for a steel factory, but in a year he developed cyanide poisoning. He took up farming once again renting a farm in West Bend, Wisconsin. The stock market crash forced the farmers to sell their crops for 15 cents a bushel. The family again lost everything.