

## **EZEKIEL KEITH**

### **Family History**

Ezekiel Keith was born at Fort Edmonton on May 31, 1883 and farmed the family land until his death in 1968. His schooling, such as there was in those early days, was all taken in the Clover Bar area. In 1914 he married Edith Hutton, who had come with her parents, the David S. Hutton family, from Carnoustie, Scotland in 1907. They built a cottage on his father William Keith's homestead, and thus started a long career in the community of Clover Bar. First, they bought the S.W. ¼ of 10-53-23 W4 and in 1925 the N.W. ¼ of 10, upon which their new home was established, and a successful mixed dairy and grain farm operated. In 1964 the Keiths celebrated their golden wedding anniversary with an open house at the Old-Timers' Cabin in Edmonton. A host of friends helped them commemorate their 50 years of marriage.

Mr. and Mrs. Keith had four daughters: Edith Margaret, Olive J. (Johnson), D. Gretna A. (Irwin, and Mary B. (Cass). There are six grandchildren, two in each family: eleven great grandchildren and one great, great grandson. As of 2020 six generations of descendants have lived within Strathcona County, and others reside elsewhere in Alberta and British Columbia.

Mr. and Mrs. Keith were active in all phases of the community life, each contributing in their own way. Mrs. Keith with Ladies' Aid and church work. Mr. Keith extended his service, starting early in life with the church and school boards and then to full community involvement. Both were active members of the Homewood Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Keith having played the organ for many years. With church union in 1925 they joined the Clover Bar United Church, of which Mr. Keith was an elder from the time of union.

"Zeke" passed away on September 18, 1968 at his home in Clover Bar and was buried in the family plot in the Clover Bar cemetery, as were his father, brother and daughter Margaret. Mrs. Keith passed away in 1977 and is also buried in Clover Bar Cemetery.

### **Service to the Community`**

Ezekiel was ten years old in 1893, living on his parents' homestead on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, when the North-West Territorial legislature declared the area known as Clover Bar, Statute Labor and Fire District No. 2. This area was the first self governing area in Alberta. The district's function grew from the necessity to protect property from stray cattle, horses, and the ever-present threat of fires.

Ezekiel was 29 in 1912 when Alberta's provincial legislature passed the Rural Municipality Act establishing Improvement Districts (IDs). ID 517, covering most of what is Strathcona County north of Baseline Road in 2020, held its first meeting in February 1913.

August 11, 1917 Council approved the name MD of Clover Bar No. 517.

At the age of 44 in 1927 Ezekiel was elected to the Council of the MD of Clover Bar; a position he held consecutively for sixteen years, during which he served five years as Reeve from 1939 - 1943.

In 1943, when Ezekiel was 60, the MD of Strathcona No. 518 and the MD of Clover Bar No. 517 amalgamated to form the MD of Strathcona. Ezekiel was elected to the Council Division 4 (the area he served in the MD of Clover Bar) for nineteen years, from 1943 until 1962, during which he served as Reeve for seven years. During his thirty-five years as a Councillor, twelve years as Reeve, he served the constituents of Clover Bar and Strathcona.

Zeke, as he was known, also served on the Clover Bar School District, the Edmonton Union of Municipal Districts, the Alberta Federation of Agriculture, and the Edmonton Exhibition Association. He was chairman of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clover Bar Settlement celebrations in 1931. President of the Northern Alberta Old-Timers Association in 1963.

In 1967 Mr. Keith received the Canadian Centennial medal for service to his community.

In 1969 the County of Strathcona Council approved the name Keith Road in the then new Westboro neighbourhood.

#### **WILLIAM KEITH (Zeke's Parents)**

William Keith, a widower, immigrated to Canada from Crimond, Scotland in the 1870s. After spending some time in the Guelph and Winnipeg areas, he moved on to Fort Edmonton in 1881. In 1882 he returned to Winnipeg to marry Sarah J. Wallace who had come from Ireland. With Mr. Keith as wagon train leader, they set out from Winnipeg to come to Fort Edmonton. With them they brought horses, cows, chickens and oxen. Mr. Keith drove the oxen and Mrs. Keith, the horses. The trip took 11 weeks. The remainder of 1882 was spent in Fort Edmonton and in June 1883, they moved to their homestead in Clover Bar. Their land took in about 250 acres of section 20-53-23-W4. Typical for the pioneers of that era, the hardships were many and both worked hard to help build a home and a community. For a time, Mr. Keith was in charge of the post office, which operated in their home. Men panning gold on the Saskatchewan River would come to use the postal scales to weigh their find. Their home was always open to strangers caught in bad weather as well as school classes when a teacher was available, and church services when a minister was passing through. The Keith and Fulton Coal mine, which was located south of the present Clover Bar Bridge, was operated by the two families for a number of years.

While still living in Fort Edmonton their first child, Ezekiel, was born on May 31, 1883. A second son, William Alexander, was born at Clover Bar in 1887. Margaret Ann Keith, a daughter of Mr. Keith's from his first marriage, arrived from Scotland about 1900.

Mrs. Keith passed away in June 1922, and Mr. Keith in January 1927. The homestead was then owned and operated by Wm. A. and Maggie A. Maggie died in Scotland in 1937 and Wm. died in Vancouver, B.C. in 1964.

Since 1938 the homestead has been owned by Wm. and Sarah Keith's granddaughters, daughters of their son, Ezekiel. In 1967 approximately 25 acres was sold to the city of Edmonton, which is the present site of the Clover Bar Generating Plant.