MARTIN LEONARD NELSON

(Written text and photographs provided by William John Krause II). Martin Leonard Nelson was born on May 18, 1898, in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, and was the son of Nels Christ Nelson and Mary Elizabeth (Johannesson/Nelson) Nelson. He came with his parents to homestead the Tampico region of Montana in 1911. Martin Nelson was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Faith. He attended Buggy Creek Grade School of Valley County for eight years and attended Glasgow High School located in Glasgow, Montana.

Martin Leonard Nelson married Mabel Hilda Nelson on December, 1923, at her family’s home in Manfred, North Dakota. Mabel Hilda Nelson was born on November 27, 1899, in Manfred, North Dakota, and was the daughter of Clarence Nelson and Lena (Larson) Nelson. She grew up on a farm in that community and following her education taught school for four years in Mandan, North Dakota.

Martin Leonard and Mabel Hilda (Nelson) Nelson had two children: a daughter, Doris Lorraine Nelson, born March 15, 1927, in Manfred, North Dakota; and a son, Martin Chester Nelson (Jim), born on June 7, 1934, in Anaconda, Montana.

Martin Nelson worked as an electrician on the power lines in North Dakota and Montana. He also worked as an electrician in the communities of Anaconda, Butte, and Fort Peck before moving his family to Glasgow, Montana, in 1934. Martin spent 12 years with the Anaconda Copper Mining Company doing electrical work at Butte and Anaconda. He worked as an electrician at Fort Peck from 1935 to 1942. From 1942 until 1948 he worked for the Montana State Telephone & Telegraph company in Glasgow, Montana. In Glasgow, Martin Nelson opened Glasgow Electric in 1948 and owned and ran this business for more than thirty years. He was a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Whilst working in Fort Peck in 1938 Martin narrowly avoided a landslide. According to the story Martin was driving his pickup truck along a dirt road on the upstream toe of the Fort Peck Dam when, without warning, the earth just ahead suddenly opened and began to slide. With some quick thinking and maneuvering he was able to avoid being swallowed up by the landslide. Eight other men were not as fortunate.

Martin Nelson was a Shriner and belonged to the Masonic Lodge for more than 50 years. Martin Nelson smoked a pipe, enjoyed playing cards, and loved his old dog, a Norwegian Elkhound. Martin liked to tell jokes and tease his nephews and nieces. Mabel Nelson enjoyed watching birds and grooming the yard at their home in Glasgow, Montana. She was an active member of the Order of Eastern Star in Glasgow.

Martin Leonard Nelson died at the Valley View Nursing Home in Glasgow, Montana, on Friday, November 2, 1984. He was 86 years of age. Burial was in the Highland Cemetery, Glasgow, Montana.

A photograph of Martin Leonard Nelson standing with his son, Martin Chester Nelson (Jim) near their residence in Glasgow, Montana. This photo was taken during the summer of 1939.

A photograph of Mabel Hilda (Nelson) Nelson standing with her son, Martin Chester Nelson (Jim) near their residence in Glasgow, Montana. This photo was taken during the summer of 1939.


Martin Leonard and Mabel Hilda (Nelson) Nelson photographed in Glasgow, Montana, during the summer of 1980.

Martin Leonard Nelson photographed at his residence in Glasgow, Montana, during December of 1981.

Martin Leonard Nelson (left) photographed with two of his brothers, Victor Chris Nelson and Floyd Ernest Nelson (far right). Photograph taken at the homestead residence near Buggy Creek, Montana, during the late 1970s.

Martin Leonard Nelson (front) and Mabel Hilda (Nelson) Nelson (far left) photographed with Martin’s sisters and brother from left to right: Anne Mathilda (Nelson) Stull, Victor Chris Nelson, Hazel Ruby (Nelson) Krause. Glasgow, Montana. Date: 1982

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

A photograph taken at the Floyd Ernest Nelson residence in the Highland Community near Tampico, Montana, following Christmas dinner in the early 1950s after a table has been cleared to play cards. Mabel Hilda (Nelson) Nelson seated at the end is looking over her shoulder towards the camera. Around the table from right to left are: Beverly Ann Nelson, Alyce Mae Molvig, Carol Lee Molvig and Galdys Olga Inga (Stensland) Flesjer.

MARTIN LEONARD NELSON

Martin was born on May 18, 1898 at Detroit Lakes, Minn. He came to Montana in 1911 with his parents, Nels Christ and Mary Nelson to homestead in the Tampico area.

In December 1923 Martin married Mabel Nelson, a school teacher from Mandan, N.D. They had two children: Doris Lorraine and Martin Chester (Jim). Doris married Roy K. Christiansen of Glasgow. Jim married Carol Ferrin. Both Doris and Jim have died.

Martin worked as an electrician on the power lines in Montana and North Dakota. He also worked as an electrician in Butte, Anaconda, and Fort Peck before settling in Glasgow.

In September 1938 while working at Fort Peck, Martin was in the immediate vicinity of the earth slide. He was driving his pickup on the upstream toe of the Fort Peck dam when, without any warning, just ahead in the road the earth suddenly opened and began to slide. Martin slammed on the brakes, shifted into reverse and with rapid acceleration (the wheels were spinning and dust flying) he was able to avoid being swallowed up in the slide. Eight men were not as fortunate, they were listed as missing and one man reported dead.

In Glasgow, Martin owned the Glasgow Electric for more than 30 years. He was a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Martin was a Shriner and had belonged to the Masonic Lodge for more than 50 years. Martin died in Glasgow on Nov. 2, 1984. Mabel, his wife, survives him as do four grandchildren: Linda Christiansen Ler- vick, Brian Christiansen, Zane Nelson Clowes and Gregg Ann Nelson Clowes.


A newspaper article announcing the opening of an electrical firm by Martin Leonard Nelson in Glasgow, Montana. The article also traces his previous employment history.

Glasgow Courier. 1948. (Courtesy of Elizabeth (Nelson) Pfiffner).