

## Charles Woodman Fuller, an Historical Profile



Charles Woodman Fuller was born on 11 Jul 1861 at Dunkirk, Chautauqua, New York, USA.<sup>1,2</sup> When his father, PW, enlisted in the army 18 June 1861 in Ohio, the plan was likely that his pregnant wife would take the children (George 10, Myron 6, Mary A. 4 and 1.5 year old Nackey E.) to her parents' home in Barnard, VT. There certainly were trains operating in the USA before this time, so we assume that Zilpha was traveling to her parents' home when Charles was born on the way. In one of his letters, dated 7 Aug 1861, while in the war, PW said "Kiss to the little ones for me and if the Baby is a boy, call his name Charles W.". We know that she continued on to Vermont and presumably her parents' home, as this is where PW went after the war.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Early Life

We can follow his earlier life through the movements of his father as a Baptist Minister to various small communities. We are sure that after his birth the family traveled to Barnard, VT and lived close to Zilpha's parents. In 1863 he was in Vershire and 1865 in Groton, VT. In 1868 he moved to North Troy, VT and in 1872 the family moved to Reynolds Twp, MN where his father was the Baptist Minister in Long Prairie and where Charles would have spent his teen age years.<sup>5,6,7</sup> He married Harriet Amelia Wade, daughter of John Henry Wade and Jennie "Agnes" Wade, circa 1879 at Minnesota, USA.<sup>8,9</sup> On 5 Jul 1881, Charles bought the S1/2 of SE1/4 of Sec 29, Twp 130, R 34 for \$100. Of this, 80 acres connected directly to the 160 acres that his father had purchased 10 April 1882.<sup>10</sup> The on 6 Jun 1885 census shows Charles and Hattie, with Allen 5, Jessie 3, and Annie 0, living near Grey Eagle, MN. On the 12 May 1885 Charles and Hattie sold the 80 acres purchased in 1881 for \$300 (they carried \$150 mortgage) to Van Coil of Birch Lake, MN.<sup>11,12</sup>

### St. Paul, MN

It has been reported that after his wife died in 1890, Charles' house burned down and the children went to live with grandma Wade and he moved to St. Paul.<sup>13</sup> On 26 Nov 1891 Charles married Grace Déchanet, daughter of Pierre "Alfred" Déchanet and Isabelle Elizabeth Cratte, at St Paul, Ramsey, Minnesota, USA. The ceremony was conducted by his father, PW Fuller.<sup>14</sup> The 1895 census shows them living with his parents and new son Harry as well as Jesse and Annie. The old City Directories for St. Paul show CW working as a car operator and other positions for the Twin City Rapid Transit Company from 1895 to 1900. From 1901-03, Charles worked for the city as well as the James Forrestal Co and lived at 840 Marion Street. Oddly enough the 1900 census shows the family in two locations, one take June 5 and the other June 15. The census reports show that Grace was operating a boarding during these years.<sup>15,16</sup>

### Move To Canada

Dora was born in Calgary in Oct 1904 and we know from his homestead papers that the family lived just outside Carbon, Alberta, Canada on the NW Sec 2, Twp 29, Rng 23 W4 continuously from Nov 1904 until March 31, 1908, when he made application for land ownership. The land title for this quarter section was granted 23 June 1908 and he was granted Canadian citizenship 23 April 1908. Life was difficult in the beginning; they lived in tents on the homestead until the first house was built of logs. They planted big gardens and had a large root cellar to keep vegetables over the winter. There were plenty of rabbits and prairie chickens for hunting and CW went to Calgary a few times to work.

In 1917 CW purchased the school land portion of NE11, Twp29, Rng 23 W4 which was above the ravine down to the coal mine entrances and the Knee Hill Creek. The area along the creek contained several coal mines and CW is named on a lease in 1920 when the family started the 'Fuller' coal mine and extracted coal from this mine for some years. The mine had a rail system where ponies pulled coal cars in and out of the mine at the bottom of the coulee and a cable winch system driven by horses pulled the cars up the hill to a tippie which dumped the coal into horse drawn wagons. They would haul coal to Calgary with horse drawn wagons and then bring back supplies. Babe Fuller said that everything came in barrels, rice, beans, coffee, flour and dried fruit. Charles built a house at the top of the hill where the family stayed. He also built a two story rooming house down on the flats below the mine, where the miners stayed and where there was always a big family atmosphere. This was especially true at meal time as the family also ate at the rooming house where Grace did the cooking and rooming house activities with the help of her girls. In 1923 the railroad connected Carbon and ran along the creek near the mines. We know the family owned and ran the mine until 1926 and we know that coal was mined until 1930, when Alfred Fox owned it. At some point a rail spur and a system for loading rail cars directly from the mine was installed. One story was that Charles borrowed money and mortgaged this expansion, but we have not found

evidence of that. Another story is that the mine may have run into another existing mine to the west. The Fullers of Carbon were part of the mining community with tragic results; Alfred lost his life in a mine accident and both Jesse and Harry lost their lives as a result of mining incidents.<sup>17,18,19,20</sup>

## Disaster Strikes the Family

Harry received a homestead option on a quarter section of land near Acme, through a Government program for WWI veterans. In the beginning he used this land to grow vegetables for the family, however he and his wife lived close to the mine where he worked. In 1923 Jesse was murdered and although there was an inquest and a coroner's investigation that included 16 witnesses, the jury found that the wounds were caused by an unknown person. There has even been a book written about this murder, however it has gone into the books as an unsolved homicide. Charles and his boys used the borrowed money and built the rail spur and were building the new entrance to the Fuller mine when the mine ran out of coal. Everything was lost and Charles was left with nothing. They decided to build a house on Harry's homestead and spent a great deal of time and money with this plan and even to the extent of living on this new farm. The family helped build a barn and it was nearly complete in the fall of 1928. At that time, Harry had his arm in a sling because of an injury in one of the mines and was therefore off work. On 7 Oct 1928, Harry drove to Carbon with his horse drawn wagon filled with sacks of potatoes. On the way he had to ford the creek and when he did not arrive, a search party found him dead in the river by the ford. The conclusion was that the wagon had hit a rock and as the horses lunged forward the potatoes shifted and knocked Harry down in such a way that one of the wheels ran over his head. He died in the hospital the next day. Sometime after, Charles found that Harry had not fulfilled his obligation under the homestead contract and in fact did not have title to the land, so upon his death the land and all improvements reverted to the government. In 1929 Charles, Grace and the two boys at home moved back to Carbon and eventually to a little old house down by the river on the flats by his old mine where he retired. They seemed content as they enjoyed visiting neighbours in their one horse small carriage. Grace died prematurely in 1932 at the age of 66 and Babe and Ralph batched for a while with their father until his death.<sup>21,22,23,24</sup>

Charles Woodman Fuller died on 7 Oct 1937 at Calgary, Alberta, Canada, at age 76<sup>25</sup> and was buried on 10 Oct 1937 in the Carbon town cemetery.<sup>26,27</sup>

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup>Province of Alberta, *Vital Records, Alberta, Canada* (8555 Roper Road, Edmonton, AB: Province of Alberta, Canada), The death certificate of Charles shows that he was born in Dunkirk, NY and we know that the year has to be 1861, because of the PW letters to his wife while in the Civil War.

Hereinafter cited as *Vital Records, Alberta*.

<sup>2</sup>"Death takes Farmer of Carbon District," *Carbon Chronicle*, Carbon, Alberta, 14 October 1937, Page 1, The Obit shows his birth place as Dunkirk, New York. Hereinafter cited as Obituary, The Carbon Chronicle.

<sup>3</sup>US Federal & State Census Data, *USA Federal & State Census data showing our Fuller Family* (Obtained from Ancestry or NEHGS: USA Federal & State), The 1860 Federal census dated July 9, 1860 taken in Hamilton County, Columbia Twp, Montauk Post office; names the children and shows PW as head of the household as a Baptist Minister. PW had already enlisted at this time so this must have been taken just before Zilpha left for her parents home in Vermont. Hereinafter cited as *Census data for the Fuller Family*.

<sup>4</sup>"Pulaski Woodman Fuller Journal; June 1861 to October 1861," (MS, June - October, 1861; Written on location during the Civil War), The information quoted is from Letter #6 to Mrs. Fuller from Camp Beverly and dated 7 Aug 1861, page 18; Ful- PW4, Research Notes, W. Fuller; Canada. Hereinafter cited as "Journal, PW Fuller, 1861."

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., In letter #7 to Mrs. Fuller from Camp Beverly and dated 13 Aug 1861, page 21, he states "I feel greatly relieved now that I know you are near your Mother, and shall feel better when I learn that your goods have reached you safely. You forgot to inform me about your Father and Mother, how are they and who is at home with them."

<sup>6</sup>"Baptist Church Records Research - PW Fuller", March, 2003, Baptist Historical Society (Pennsylvania, USA), to W Fuller (Canada), This research shows PW's ministry postings as shown above; American Baptist Historical Records, 3100 Mercer University Dr., Atlanta, Fulton, Georgia 30341, USA, 678/547-6680. Hereinafter cited as "Research by the Baptist Church re PW Fuller."

<sup>7</sup>*Census data for the Fuller Family*, This census of 1875 for Reynolds, Todd Co. shows CW at 13 years old with his parents and Myron 18, Mary Ann 15, Nackey 6, Dana Tufts 18, George S. Fuller 21 and the 1880 census Charles was 18 living with his parents and his sister Nackey.

<sup>8</sup>Allen was born in Sauk Centre 1880.

<sup>9</sup>Carbon Historical Committee, *Carbon, Alberta Canada - Our History and Heritage* (3016, 19 St. NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Friesen Printers, 1986), Page 442. Hereinafter cited as *Book, Carbon, History and Heritage 1986*.

<sup>10</sup>Charles W Fuller -1881, Land Purchase S1/2 of SE1/4 of Sec 29, Twp130, R34, W5, MN, USA, Minnesota Historical Society and State Archives, 345 W Kellogg Blvd - 55102-1906, St Paul, Ramsey, Minnesota, USA, 651-259-3000. Hereinafter cited as Deed, Land Purchase Charles W Fuller 1881.

<sup>11</sup>*Census data for the Fuller Family*, The 1885 for the inhabitants of Birchdale, Todd Co. with the Post Office of Grey Eagle.

<sup>12</sup>Deed, Land Purchase Charles W Fuller 1881: This is the sales Deed for the sale of the land purchased in 1881.

Also a document from the land office that says that Charles owned Lots 4,5,6 of Section 6, Twp 137, Rng 33, W5 in Wadena County, MN - which is just north of Todd County. The date of this document is 1905. It carries a homestead certificate #12434 and an application #20058. It is for 140 + 78/100 th

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Acre. It was issued by the St. Cloud Land Office so it must have to do with a federal homestead. We do not know anything about this document, Minnesota Historical Society and State Archives.

<sup>13</sup>"Research Notes by Babe Fuller and Family," Author: Babe Fuller & Family (Canada), to J Ward & W Fuller (Canada); Research Notes , W. Fuller, Canada. Hereinafter cited as "Research Notes Babe Fuller & Family."

<sup>14</sup>Charles Woodman Fuller and Grace Dechanet marriage, Filed 23 Dec 1891, Vital Records, Minnesota, USA, MN Dept of Health, Office of the State Registrar of Vital Records, PO Box 64882, St Paul, Ramsey, Minnesota, USA 55164-0082, 651-201-5970.. Document #417, The Certificate portion of this document is signed by PW Fuller. The witnesses were: Fred S. Johnson and Mamie Dechanet. Grace may not of hesitated to married a man with 4 kids because her father had done the same. Also LDS source film #1314519, Indexing Project #M02043-3.

<sup>15</sup>*Census data for the Fuller Family*, The census of 1895 for St. Paul Reynolds Co. shows CW 33 & Grace 24 with PW 72 and Zilpha 71 with Jesse 12 and Annie 10 and little Harry 1.

The census of 1900 shows the family in two locations:

June 5, 1900 - #70 Hatch Street, Charles 38, Grace 30, Jesse 17, Annie 18, Harry 6, Roy 4, Glen 1 and Agnes Dechanet 26.

June 15, 1900 - Broadway Ave., Charles 39, Grace 29, Jessie 17, Harry 6, Roy 4, Milton(Glen) 1, Agnes Dechanet 22, boarder - along with 4 other boarders.

<sup>16</sup>"Research Notes and Data from the MN Historical Society," Minnesota Historical Society (St Paul, MN), to J Ward (Canada), The Historical Society had researched the City Directories for St. Paul and the name Fuller from 1887-1904. CW entries are listed as shown above, however for the year 1903 Grace Fuller was running a boarding house at 694 Rice St. in St Paul and the people staying there were, Annie (weighing), Allen (timekeeper), George (Barber), George L. (teamster for CW), Jesse (driver for CW), CW (teaming contractor). 1904 shows that CW moved to Duluth, George moved to Chicago and Grace moved to Wabasha. Research also shows that the Twin City Rapid Transit had the first electric streetcars in 1888 and by 1890 they ran between the two cities; Minnesota Historical Society and State Archives, 345 W Kellogg Blvd - 55102-1906, St Paul, Ramsey, Minnesota, USA, 651-259-3000. Hereinafter cited as "Research Notes, MN Historical Society."

<sup>17</sup>Charles Woodman Fuller, 1904-1908 Homestead, NW2, Twp29, R23, W4 Canada: Alberta Homestead #1567303. The supporting affidavits of 1908 indicate that the family had lived on this quarter and they had farmed it continuously 1904-08. In 1908 they had 24 cattle, 4 horses, 1 hog, a building 18X18, 10 acres of fencing, a stable and a well all worth \$1100. There are two sworn statement to these facts date 31 March 1908; Harold Jarvis and C.M. Ross in addition to one signed by CW, Alberta Provincial Archives, Alberta Archives, 8555 Roper Road, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 5W1, (780) 427-1056. Hereinafter cited as Homestead Papers CW Fuller 1904-08.

<sup>18</sup>Author: Babe Fuller & Family, "Research Notes Babe Fuller & Family", Written by Babe Fuller. An interesting side note is that Grace must have been a good teacher as both daughters Dora and Belle had boarding houses. (also see Babe's notes in Ful-CW3 p6).

<sup>19</sup>Fuller Charles Woodman Naturalization, Certificate of Naturalization, Dominion of Canada, File No. 158028, Signed by the Clerk of the Supreme Court (23 April 1908); Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 360 Laurier Ave West (10th floor), Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1L1.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with Sebastian (Babe) Fuller (Strathmore, Alberta), by W Fuller, Date: 1998. Research Notes , W. Fuller (Canada), Babe said: Charles was a kind person, but not a business man. He never turned down people who needed coal but did not keep account of who owed him money. Sometimes farmers would drop off a pig or chickens as payment.

<sup>21</sup>Frank W. Anderson, *Carbon Murders Mystery* (3518 - 3 Ave. SW, Calgary, AB, Canada: Frontier Publishing Ltd, Published 1973), The account of the death of Jesse Fuller is on page 37-40. There is a lot of detail about the circumstances and the people involved. There are three murders reported in this 40 page booklet. In the Forward section the author writes "If the Carbon Murders had taken place in England or the United States, they would have undoubtedly have at lease three books devoted to them, as well as thirty magazine articles, and deserved mention in volumes devoted to the science of Criminology. In Canada, unfortunately, they are practically unknown."

In conclusion the author writes, "Whatever conclusion the reader arrives at privately, it seems evident that the Carbon murders present one of the most puzzling and baffling crime dramas in Canada". Hereinafter cited as *Book, Carbon Murders Mystery*.

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Jack Balderson (Acme, Alberta), by W Fuller, Over a period from 1998-2004 - events that he remembered about the Charles Fuller Family. Research Notes , W. Fuller (Canada), W. Fuller picked up Jack on several occasions on our way to Carbon to look for the Fuller mine and also to sort out the Fuller graves at the cemetery. On Aug 19, 2004, Jack took me to Harry's homestead quarter - it is just south of the cross roads at Twp 29, Rng 25W4. At that time there were three buildings - small barns or large granaries. The area had some trees around the buildings and the rest of the quarter was farm land. Charles really had counted on this farm as he had lost everything when the mine ran out of coal, so they moved back to a shake down on the flats by the river.

In Sept 1998, Jack, Margaret Giles and W Fuller went to find the Fuller mine in the Carbon Valley. The valley land was owned by Mary & B. Cadman, who drove his truck down the old rail track land and we found the place where the Fuller mine was located and located the small track line area where the coal cars where pulled up to the top of the hill to be loaded onto wagons. We also found several old foundation locations down in the flats where the two story Fuller rooming house and several minor's shacks were located. We had taken along some of Babe Fuller's old pictures and B Cadman was able to take us to the spot where the picture had been taken just by looking at the hills in the background. It turned out to be a very informative day... see the pictures in the back of Ful-CW1 Book.

<sup>23</sup>Interview, Sebastian (Babe) Fuller, Date: 1998.

<sup>24</sup>Author: Babe Fuller & Family, "Research Notes Babe Fuller & Family."

<sup>25</sup>*Vital Records, Alberta* (published), The death certificate of Charles shows that he was died in Calgary and that he was a farmer from Carbon.

Registration date was 15 Oct, 1837 and the Registration Number was 39-08-202638. Signed by A.H. Hersom, Director of Vital Statistics, Edmonton.

<sup>26</sup>*Obituary, The Carbon Chronicle*, 14 October 1937, Page 1, The Obit shows that there was a service at the United Church in Carbon, AB at 1:15 on Sunday and that burial was in the Carbon cemetery. Fuller Family Plot #197.

<sup>27</sup>Carbon Town Cemetery Records and Markers, Carbon, Alberta, Ful-CW1, photo section, Research Notes , W. Fuller, Canada; photos by W Fuller, Sept 2005,

FULLER  
GRACE  
1870-1932  
CHARLES  
1861-1937  
REST IN PEACE.