



## Clair A. Michels

August 13, 1917 - December 8, 2022

Clair Michels, family patriarch and last surviving member of 1909 Sheridan County Montana pioneer family died recently at Fort Collins, Colorado at age 105.

Clair was born August 13, 1917, on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, 16 miles west of Reserve, Montana to parents James & Anna (Fugle) Michels at the family homestead on Wolf Creek, arriving prior to arrival of the midwife, Mrs. Benson, from Outlook. He attended rural schools through the 8th grade and graduated from Plentywood High School in 1935 and later attended Northern Montana College at Havre. He then taught one term at a one room country school known as Lower Paradise Valley #1 near Harlem, MT prior to serving 42 months in the U.S. Army Air Corp during WWII.

He was married to Lois Kent in 1939, a union which lasted 53 years, until her death in 1992.

Following his military service Clair acted for the next two years as a farm manager for his brother, Lloyd, during which time he also served one term in the 1947 session of the Montana Legislature as Representative from Sheridan County.

Seeking to resume his education, he took advantage of the "GI Bill" and

enrolled at Montana State College from which he graduated in 1950 with a B.S. degree in Agricultural Education. Following graduation, he taught agriculture & supervised Future Farmer activities at Whitehall High School for two years prior to becoming the Beaverhead County Extension Agent and 4-H supervisor at Dillon for the next three years. At that time, he was recruited by the American Hereford Journal and traveled the Rocky Mountain States and the Canadian province of Alberta as Field Agent for the Hereford Journal, living and operating out of Sheridan, Wyoming.

In 1958 Clair and Lois moved to Bismarck, ND where their daughter, Mary Ann was born. He became the Executive Vice President of the ND Stockmen's Association. He served the beef cattle and livestock industry faithfully for the next 25 years in many State and National capacities including brand inspection, law enforcement, beef promotion, public relations, legislation and administration. Upon retirement he was honored with commendation from many sources including 1982 Agriculturist of the Year by the Saddle & Sirloin Club at NDSU; named in 1982 to Northern International Livestock Exposition Hall of Fame at Billings, MT; honored by the National Cattlemen's Association, Denver: and Lifetime Honorary Membership in appreciation from the N.D. Stockmen's Association.

Upon retirement among Clair's many interests were travel with Lois; silversmithing and turquoise jewelry-making; volunteer service in community projects; and preservation of antique farm machinery and family history.

In 2010, Clair relocated to Fort Collins, Colorado to live with daughter Mary Ann & son-in-law Peter Stackhouse. What a sweet 12 years for the family, to have Clair so close and be a part of the daily fabric of their lives. He remained interested in the many facets of life until the very end. Family history and staying in touch through hundreds of letters written every year kept him focused on the meaning of life. A peanut brittle wizard, he made his last

batches at Christmas in 2021.

He was preceded in death by his parents; by his wife, Lois; by sisters, Leah Aasheim and Elsie Medders; by brothers, Vernon, Joseph, Lloyd, Roy, Andy, Fred, Jack, Mark and Jim.

He is survived by his daughter, Mary Ann and son-in-law, Peter Stackhouse; grandchildren Maxfield (Dorothy) and Teresa Stackhouse (Erin), great-granddaughters Elliot Clair and Jade; 10 nephews; 10 nieces and numerous grand nieces and nephews; and several cousins located throughout the US & Canada.

A memorial celebration will be on Monday, January 2, 2023, at 10AM at First United Methodist Church, 1005 Stover Street; Fort Collins. The service will also be live streamed so you can join us from afar at <https://vimeo.com/event/1687830/15800dbfc2>.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Larimer County Food Bank; 1301 Blue Spruce Drive; Ft Collins, CO 80524.

We ask that Memorials be made to First United Methodist Church or the Larimer County Food Bank.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Celebration

JAN 2. 10:00 AM (MT)

First United Methodist Church  
1005 Stover Street  
80524

# Tribute Wall

SM

“ Thank you so much for sharing the celebration of Uncle Claire he was such a special person I sat here and cried for the world lost a beautiful person I used to call him and just about the time I would hang up there would almost be a letter in my mailbox from him wasn't a note it was the front and back sometimes of a large yellow lined paper and pictures of different things he has done or members families or something like do you remember this I am I am also honored to have had him make me a ring I wear it quite often it is beautiful turquoise I know the family is going to miss him just like all the rest of us too we all loved him very much and may he rest in peace as he brought peace it to the world

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**Sue Michels** - January 02, 2023 at 01:55 PM

TH

“ First off I want to give to to my deepest sympathy on the loss of Uncle Clair. Each one of the brothers had thier special personalities, I have visited Uncle Clair at various places during my life First in Bismarck on our way to an FFA Convention with my mom. He was so interested in our chapter and activities.. The last time to visit Clair was when Peter brought him to, where else but Uncle Jim's for the Bucking horse sale. So many stories!! I have pictures and videos of that evening that I still watch and will treasure forever. What a gentleman. He always made me feel special as he did to everyone he wrote his letters too. I want to thank you for the live broadcast. I am in SD I went up on a hill to get cell service. Shut the truck off rolled down the windows and looked out over the rolling hills as I watched the service. I remembered my dad talking about one of Grampa Verns horses. Dad had to go feed with him as well. The horses name was Jerry. Love and prayers to your family, and to all that will miss our special Clair.

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**Teri Hove** - January 02, 2023 at 01:11 PM

JH

“ We crossed paths with Clair many times, of course, being family. Those uncles not living in Sheridan county made it back for so many family events. Then, when we were also living in North Dakota, we stopped in Bismarck for a break or a hand-off of people or goods. I visited with him several times during the Miles City years, where he, Jim and Fred had girlfriends when well into their eighties. What discussions we had about old times and new! One day when I came, the girlfriend of one had just died, and Clair was baking a chocolate Cake. He said chocolate cake made people feel better. After he moved to Colorado, stopping to see him was often a part of the trip to Nebraska to see the grandchildren. He was the uncle most like my dad, and talking with him transported me back to times with my dad. He was the last of the siblings, and carried on the family history and legacy. It's the end of an era. And we have Peter and Mary Anne to thank for their loving care of him.

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**Jacquelyn Heath** - January 02, 2023 at 01:09 PM

GM

“ Clair had a couple stints as a teacher. He taught me a lot about farming in the 1920-1940s. And a lot about extended Michels family history. I expect he taught many others more important things.

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**gary michels** - January 01, 2023 at 11:55 PM

SM

“ Uncle Clair was a true gentleman. We looked forward to receiving his letters and pictures. He was a true blessing.

*All our love to Mary Ann, Peter and family.  
D.A. and Stefanie Michels*

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**Stefanie Michels** - January 01, 2023 at 01:20 PM

KM

“ Our dear Uncle Clair the last of the original Michels Clan. A great man, uncle and historian who wrote a great letter always filled with Michels history and images of early times of days gone by. I will miss our phone visits and his letters and cherish everyone he sent, I kept them all.

*Love to Mary Ann, Peter and family. Kirk Michels and Nancy Hatfield Livingston, MT*

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**Kirk Michels** - December 31, 2022 at 11:54 AM

LJ

“ It’s hard for me to feel sad because I am touched today with an overwhelming sense of gratitude to have such great memories of a life well lived! Clair was a man of integrity . . kindness . . brilliant mind yet shared his wisdom with humility . . always looking for the best in people . . family man . . diligent seeker after God . . the best neighbor you could ever have . . Incredible example to follow on my life’s journey . . A great friend to me and my family. My prayers go out to all of the family! Like Bob Hope always said . . "Thanks for the memories." LarryJahnke

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**Larry Jahnke** - December 27, 2022 at 03:58 PM

RC

“ Clair was my first boss and mentor. What I learned from him I carried on throughout life. He was a gentleman that was well respected by everyone that knew him. Coreen and I thoroughly enjoyed seeing and visiting him a few years ago in Billings. I will miss his xmas cards that always had a message, hand written as sharp as 50 years ago. Bob and Coreen Cook

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**ROBERT B COOK** - December 27, 2022 at 12:18 PM

RM

“ My deepest sympathies to Mary Ann and family. Clair was an honorable man who lived a remarkable life! I have early memories of the Michels family from our membership in the Methodist church in Bismarck, ND. But I learned more about Clair from my Dad. Clair was his mentor and friend as their paths were similar in the careers and interests they pursued. I have fond memories of reconnecting with Mary Ann and Clair more recently after my move to Fort Collins, and I feel honored to have had time with him to listen to his remarkable and entertaining stories of his life. No doubt he's riding the range in Heaven! Rynell Mitchel Mather

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**Rynell Mather** - December 27, 2022 at 11:29 AM

AG

“ I have such fond memories of Clair. What a great man, a true gentleman. As a young reporter I called on him often. He was always gracious, always helpful. I was honored to prepare and deliver a tribute to him upon his retirement. Beyond that, Clair and Lois lived across the alley from us and were wonderful neighbors. Mary Anne babysat our girls. Our deepest condolences. Al and Peggy Gustin.

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**Allan G Gustin** - December 21, 2022 at 09:12 PM

TB

Your cabin at Brush Lake brought our families together. I will never forget the warmth that we experienced from your family. With my sincere condolences. Twyla Presser Balstad

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**Twyla Balstad** - December 22, 2022 at 01:44 AM

RC

“ I had the privilege of knowing Clair, Lois and Mary Ann as family friends in Bismarck. My parents were close friends of this beautiful couple, so I was called on to watch after and play with Mary Ann from time to time. I even got to travel with them a couple times. Mary Ann and family, I am so sorry for your loss. It is never easy to loose a loved one, but know your dad, father in law, and grandpa lived a wonderful, full, enjoyable life. Clair was an incredible man who touched many, many lives.  
God's blessings to all of you 🙏

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**Rita Seidler Charlebois** - December 21, 2022 at 09:03 PM

WM

“ Clair was a very well respected man that contributed greatly to the cattle industry in North Dakota. I was fortunate enough to have had the chance to now him. Wade Moser

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**Wade Moser** - December 20, 2022 at 09:33 AM