

Bonnors Ferry Herald, Thursday, August 5, 2004

Charles “Chuck” Castles, 87, of Bonnors Ferry passed away quietly on July 25, 2004 after an extended illness at the Boundary County Nursing Home.

Castles was born on April 4, 1917 in Hiko, Nev. To Charles and Urba Eta Castles. They lived on his father’s cattle ranch there until his father’s death.

He often told the story of how hard everyone had to work and that didn’t leave any time for someone to watch him when he was a toddler. They decided that they had the perfect solution – an old horse called “Nellie” that Chuck dearly loved to sit on.

All went well until the horse got hungry. When she would eat, she would pull the reins out of Chuck’s hands. He would start bellowing until someone came and pulled her head back up and gave the reins back to him.

One day she came up with the plan to put a feedbag on Nellie so she couldn’t eat. All was well until the sun started beating down on them and Nellie decided to go get a drink. The poor horse almost drowned itself all the while little Chuck was screaming bloody murder and hanging on for dear life...

Castles learned a lot on the ranch from the ranch hands. He said he started smoking when he was just seven and burned down the bunkhouse while practicing. He learned a work ethic that stayed with him the rest of his life and he always spoke fondly of those days.

After his father’s death, Chuck and his mother moved around trying to survive by working odd jobs. They lived in California and Nevada before moving to Bonnors Ferry. Chuck attended high school in Bonnors Ferry and then went back to Nevada and worked as a carpenter on some of the first casinos in Las Vegas.

He also spent time in the CC Camps as a heavy equipment operator and eventually bought his own dozer and worked in the logging industry.

He met Peggy Sinclair and they were together for over 13 years. He kept busy trying to help her raise six children. Peggy passed away and Chuck was then a grandfather and was very proud to be known as “Pa Puck” for many years.

As the years passed, Chuck started noticing a pretty little lady that he used to know when he was a teenager. He finally got up the nerve to ask her to go to dinner with him and she accepted. That was the beginning of a short, but wonderful life with Wanda Johnson.

They danced, traveled, laughed and had a special kind of love. They were together for eight short years until Wanda passed away with cancer.

Chuck went into the nursing home at that time. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and spent many days feeling very sad, but not remembering what exactly he had lost. He knew it was something pretty rare and wonderful.

Although Chuck couldn’t remember a lot of things, he didn’t forget how to dance. His stepdaughter Jenny would go over to the nursing home and they would dance when they would have entertainment of music. They would go on walks and visit with people in the Community Restorium across the street. Chuck always enjoyed the people.

He never lost his sense of humor and even when you would look at him and think to yourself, “There’s nobody home in there, “ he would surprise people and say something funny. This happened right up until the end with the girls who worked at the nursing home.

Chuck is survived by a son Ken Castles, stepchildren Marla Bohne of Post Falls, Mary Ann Ames of Horseshoe Bend, Idaho, Ron Sinclair of Post Falls, Jenny Fessler of Bonnors Ferry and Randy Sinclair of Mt. Vernon, Wash. His stepson Hugh Sinclair passed away on June 10. He had several grandchildren and a great grandchild. Huck leaves us with a lot of memories. He always was an honest man who could be counted on when needed. He had earned the love and respect of many whom have passed on before him and those of us who are left.

We will miss you Chuck.