

Charles David “Buck” Curry



Charles David “Buck” Curry was born 31 August 1899 in Hastings. He was a son of James Dabney Curry (1859-1933) and Phoebe Emma or Ella Branson (1863-1943) who came to Hastings in the spring of 1885 from Rockingham County, Virginia. They lived at 4th & River Streets in Hastings where James built a house. Nine of their ten children graduated from Hastings High School, including “Buck” who graduated with the Class of 1907. After James Curry’s death in 1933, Emma moved to Minneapolis where some of her children had preceded her.

Charles joined the service in August 1918 and served as a Private in Headquarters Company of the all-Black 809th Pioneer Infantry. His brothers Gilbert and Paul also served in this Infantry. In those days, the troops were segregated. The men of the 809th were trained in infantry tactics, but were assigned primarily to non-combat jobs including construction of hospitals, roads, bridges and railroad lines. Twenty of the thirty-seven Pioneer Infantry Regiments were filled with African-American soldiers. The 809th Infantry arrived in France in September of 1918. During the 14-day voyage aboard the *USS President Grant*, about half of the five thousand men on board became ill with influenza, and many died en route. Within two months of the 809th’s arrival, Armistice was declared on 11 November. Curry returned to the United States in July 1919 on the *USS Scranton*.

After the War, Charles “Buck” Curry married Hazel Lorraine Busey (1896-1957), the daughter of Jacob and Wilhelmina Busey, a native of Iowa. Charles worked as a parcel post worker for the United States Postal Service, and Hazel was a teacher. They had eight children: James Webster, Charles, Marion “Junior,” Carolyn, Carlotta, Charlotte, Yvonne and Lorraine.

Charles died on 12 April 1978 in Minneapolis and is buried in Fort Snelling National Cemetery.