



Century Farms

Historic Sites



Historic Sites

The first historic site survey was conducted in Traverse County in 1983-84 by the Minnesota Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office. The survey was concentrated on pre-1940 structures, and a total of 108 properties were photographed, mapped and documented in the survey. Research was conducted on approximately twenty-five percent of the selected sites. Sites chosen for the inventory included buildings known to possess local historical significance, sites which represented major themes in the county's history, buildings important to the governmental, religious, economic and educational development of the area, buildings of note, intact examples of the architecture of various periods, and buildings which were among the area's oldest standing structures, very representative of the area, or unusual for the survey area.

Upon reviewal by the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office in February, 1985, five sites were nominated to the National Register of Historic Sites. Three of these were named to the Register — the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Depot (now the museum in Wheaton), Larson's Hunters Resort, and the Carnegie Library in Browns Valley. Following is a description of the sites:

CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE AND ST. PAUL DEPOT

Built circa 1906 after the previous depot was destroyed by fire, the depot was probably designed by the company's Bridge and Building Department located in Chicago, and was undoubtedly based on one of the railroad's standardized depot plans. The building stands on the original site and is an intact and well preserved example of a turn-of-the-century wood frame combination depot. It is a long, one-story building with a tall double pitched hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafters. It is sheeted with clapboard siding and has rectangular 6-6 sash. The west facade has a bay window with double hung sash which provided depot personnel with a clear view of the track area, two passenger doors with transoms, and two large freight doors. The interior was arranged with separate men's and women's waiting rooms, separated by an office, and a freight room was located at the north end. The interior is basically intact and retains original woodwork, wainscoting, and some furnishings. The building is now used as a museum.



One of three sites in Traverse County named to the National Register of Historic Sites was the Larson Hunting Lodge on the shores of Mud Lake. The photo of the lodge was taken near the turn of the century, one of the most modern buildings in the area and an inviting setting for visiting hunters from the Twin Cities. Pictured on the porch are the Andrew Larson family — daughter Gertrude on the far left, then Bertha and Andrew, and sons Edward and Louis.

LARSON'S HUNTERS RESORT

Larson's Hunters Resort, also known as the Andrew and Bertha Larson farmstead, is historically and architecturally significant as one of Traverse County's most well known hunting resorts and as a site which represents the importance of hunting as a recreational industry to early residents of western Minnesota. It is an especially well preserved site and illustrates the phenomenon of the farmer-resort owner. It was one of the largest and most expensive farm dwellings constructed in Traverse County at the turn of the century.

The site is located in the western portion of Lake Valley Township and is situated on the eastern shore of Upper Lake Traverse

(now known as Mud Lake). The largest and most important building on the Larson's Hunters Resort site is the house, a two and one-half story, brick building designed and constructed by Wheaton architect-contractor Alfred Setterlund and built in 1901. The house sits on a hill overlooking Upper Lake Traverse. The fourteen-room building is a handsome structure faced with stretcher bonded smooth light brown pressed brick which was manufactured in St. Louis, Missouri, shipped by rail to Herman, Minnesota, and hauled by wagon to the site. The building sits on a boulder foundation and has a hipped roof with a projecting gable clad in wood shingles on the west facade. A long, deep, hipped-roof porch supported by Tuscan columns spans the west and south

facades. It has rectangular 1-1 sash, simple decorative patterning in the brickwork, and smooth limestone sills and lintels.

The exterior has been altered only with the removal of the porch balustrade and installation of porch screens. The interior is also largely intact and retains oak flooring and woodwork.

The property remained in the family until 1979 and the building site is now owned by four hunting enthusiasts from the Twin Cities, who use the house seasonally for private hunting.



The F. W. Murphy home, built in Wheaton in about 1899. A lavish home in its time, the building remains in excellent condition today, located on Broadway and Eighth Street. The home is occupied today by the Richard Roberts family.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY

The Browns Valley Carnegie Library, built in 1915-16, illustrates the efforts of the Andrew Carnegie Corporation to provide free public library service and architecturally sophisticated public library buildings to small rural Minnesota communities. Construction of the \$5,480 building was started by McClure Construction Company of Minneapolis and was finished by local builders. The library is a modest, one-story Classical Revival building with a three bay main facade and two bay sidewalls. The exterior

walls are faced with soft light brown and cream colored brick, laid to form decorative patterns on all facades. The building continues to be in good condition and serves as Browns Valley's public library.



The David Neumann farmstead as it appeared at the turn of the century. The farm located in Redpath Township is the home of the Don and Anne Hansen family today.

Century Farms

There are several farms in this community which have been in the same family for one hundred or more years, and the present owners have proudly furnished the following historical data. Many of these have received the official "Century Farm" certification from the State of Minnesota, along with a plaque jointly presented by **The Farmer** magazine and the Minnesota State Fair. To qualify a farm must have remained in a family for a hundred years or more.

BENSON-BENSON

Andrew Benson and his family were among the early settlers of Traverse County. He and his wife and six children had lived in Boston, where he had owned and operated a freight ship between Boston and the Scandinavian countries. For health reasons he left that profession and moved westward, settling first on a farm at Lake Crystal, Minnesota in 1872. After losing his entire crop to grasshoppers for two years in a row, he again moved his family, traveling by team and wagon to Lake Traverse and settling on the shore of the lake in 1877. Their home was established on the northeast quarter of section one in Folsom Township. Like many early families, they spent the first winter living in a dirt dugout in the side of the hill near the location of the present farm home.

A son, Edward, remained on the home farm and operated it until his death in 1947. His wife Clara (Johnson) Benson is the present owner and the farm is operated by her son, Leland.

The original home built in 1878 is a part of the present home and is still in use. Remains of the old oxen trail between Morris, Lake Traverse, Browns Valley and Fort Wadsworth (later Fort Sisseton) are still visible just behind the farmstead, and just to the southeast was the location of Hoff's post office, one of the early stage coach stops.



The Cunningham home on that century farm located in Walls township.

CUNNINGHAM-CUNNINGHAM

John Cunningham was born in Canada in 1857. His father Patrick moved to Canada from Ireland. The family moved to Wright County, Minnesota, when John was a boy. He grew up there and in 1884 came to Traverse County where he homesteaded on section 29 in Walls Township, built a claim shanty, and broke the land with oxen. His parents made their home with him most of the time until his father's death in 1896 and his mother's in 1906.

In 1896 fire burned the house, horses and other property valued at \$1400.00, a serious loss at that time. In 1900 another fire burned five stacks of wheat. In 1912 the house was remodeled and enlarged and was the same house where his children and grandchildren grew up.

John Cunningham married Emma Mader from Chokio in 1898. Her father, Peter Mader, had served in the Union Army in the Civil War. John and Emma had two sons, Thomas and William. William remained on the farm all his life. He married Agnes O'Leary in 1935, and to them were born five children: James, Mary Ann (deceased), John, William (deceased), and Raymond.

After his father's death in 1962, John farmed the family farm until 1968. None of the family is currently engaged in farming, but the remaining sons own the land. There are no buildings left on the farm at this writing.

ERICKSON-ERICKSON

In the spring of 1882 Mr. and Mrs. John Erickson and their sons, Charles and Ernst, left their native Sweden and sailed to the United States. They finally arrived at Herman, where they were met by Mrs. Erickson's brother, E. J. Ax.

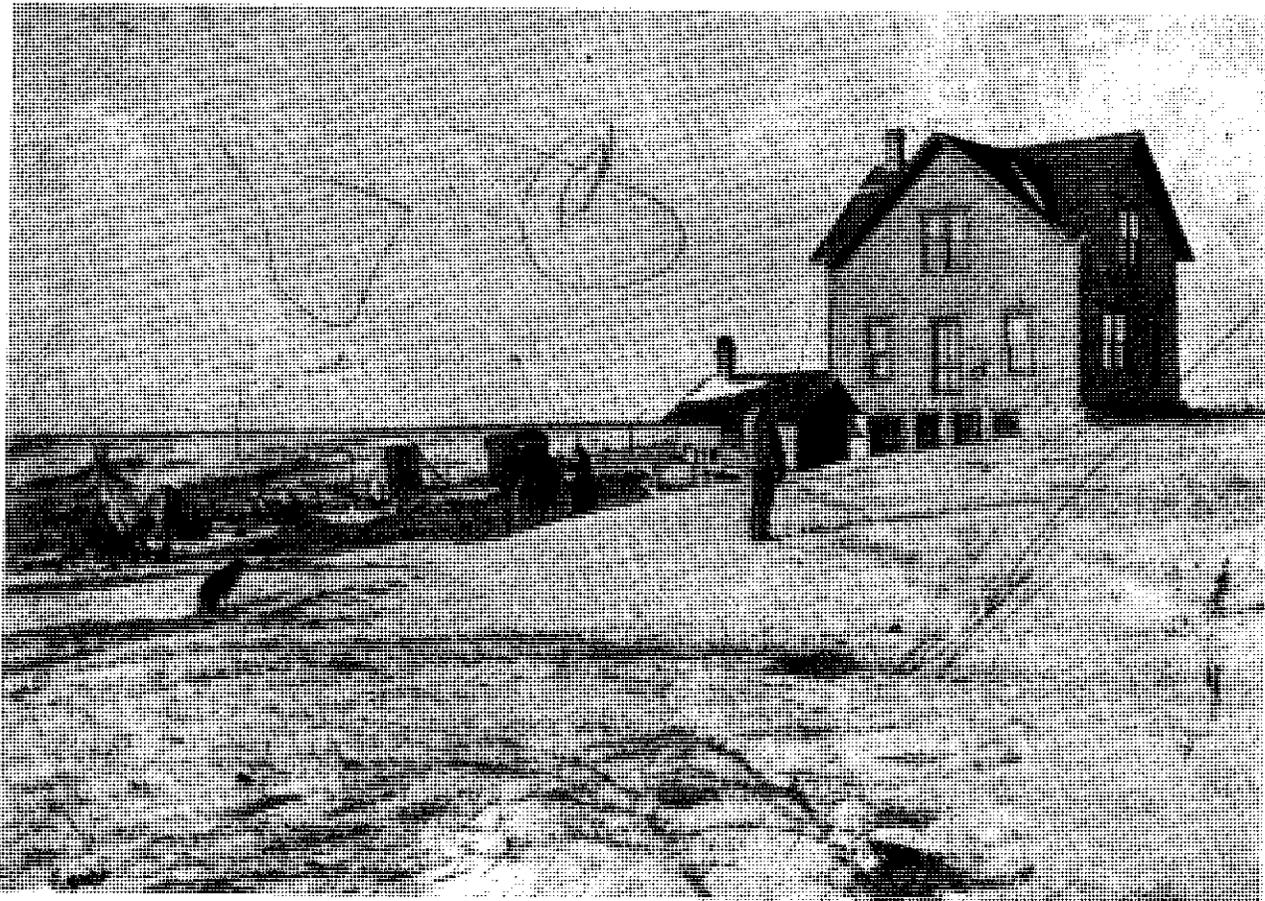
The Ericksons immediately bought 160 acres of land at \$5.00 an acre from the Great Northern Railway (northwest quarter of section four, Clifton township), where they built a two-room house with a small attic and settled in. After having four additional children (Edward, Arthur, Hugo and Hildur), another room was added to the house and an

extra building was built which became a cook house. Here the meals were prepared and served in the dining room of the main house.

In 1898 the Ericksons helped start the Zion Mission Covenant Church in Clifton Township. School was a challenge for the children attending School District 48, as the Swedish language was spoken at home, and they heard nothing but English at school.

The only one of the children to marry, Ed O. B. Erickson, married Lydia Nelson in 1913. Their seven-room house was built about thirty feet from the original house and is still in use as the home of their son, Sanford and family.

Ed and Lydia had five children (Willard, Sanford, Evelyn, Pearl, and Paul). Ed Erickson died in 1958 and Sanford, who had married Irma Hernvall in 1946, purchased the farm a year later. Sanford and Irma still reside on the farm.



The Erick Erickson farm home was built on top of a hill. The pioneer settler is visible standing in the snow-covered yard, while his wife is just visible near a wagon off to the left of the house. (See history on next page.)

ERICKSON-GAUGER

Erick M. Erickson (1838-1902) and wife Carrie (1846-1902) came by covered wagon from Red Wing, Minnesota, in 1881 to homestead the south half of section 34, township 127, range 47. When they first came, they lived in a kind of dugout in the side of a hill, evidence of which can still be seen on the farm site. Building of a house followed shortly. The basement served as living quarters for many years. The completed house burned to the ground in March, 1955, and was never rebuilt.

Both Erick and Carrie died in 1902 within four months of each other from tetanus poisoning, having stepped on nails. The land passed on to their children: Selma Odenborg, Lily Erickson, Emma Erickson, and Edwin M. Erickson.

By 1907 Edwin and Hannah (Hoglund) Erickson became owners. Hannah died in 1925 and Edwin in 1939. His will left 80 acres of land to each of his grandsons, sons of his daughter Evelyn and her husband Russell Gauger. The rest of the land went to Edwin's son Merwin Erickson. When Merwin died in 1947, leaving no children, the land went to Evelyn, since Edwin's will stated that the farm should be kept in the family. It now is the property of Ronald Gauger of Waseca, Minnesota, grandson of Edwin M. Erickson and son of Evelyn Erickson and Russell Gauger, who has also purchased the two eighty-acre plots of land belonging to his brothers, Dean (deceased) and Duane Gauger.



The Erickson farm as it appeared a few years after its construction. Note the additions of porches and decorative woodwork.

GEURTS-GEURTS

Cornelius Geurts (1851-1938) was born at Vellingbush, Holland, and immigrated to America in 1865, going first to Dupree, Wisconsin. He arrived in Traverse County in the spring of 1876, received his homestead papers in the year of 1878, and became a U.S. citizen on June 14, 1883, at Ortonville, Minnesota. The land which he homesteaded was the northwest quarter of section 19, Arthur Township.

His son Arnold was born in 1889. After serving in France and Germany in World War I, Arnold took over the farming in 1920, later buying it in the fall of 1938. After Arnold's death in 1952, his son Gerald rented the farm for a few years, then bought it from the Geurts estate and is living on and operating this land at the present time.

GRAY-GRAY

William A. Gray came to Minnesota from River Falls, Wisconsin, by train to Morris, thence on foot to Leonardsville township to establish a homestead claim. He built a sod house to live in while proving his claim. John Neil lived in section two also.

The frame house he built and where four children (Ella, James, Grace and William) were born sufficed until 1903 when a new two-story square house was built. William died in 1906 at the age of 47. His wife Elizabeth (Staples) survived him by only one year, leaving James to run 400 acres. Some of this land had been purchased from the railroad. Son James R. Gray inherited the homestead 100 acres. He died in 1956, leaving the homestead to his wife Elizabeth (Blood). It was purchased by James W. and Edna M. (Geyer) Gray in 1957. Present residents on the farm are their daughter and son-in-law, Correen and Lyle Pederson, and their four children.

HEIDELBERGER-KOCH

The farm which Henry Heidelbergger homesteaded around 1878 is two miles north and one mile east of Dumont (northwest quarter of section twelve, Croke Township). The deed was not recorded until May 9, 1885.

Henry lived on this farm until 1916.



A typical house on the prairie in the early 1900s is portrayed by the Erick Lundquist home, located in Clifton Township, east of Wheaton. The house remains in use today, home of the Tom Monson Jr. family.

When his son Edward married Agnes Werner, he moved to Wheaton. The farm was deeded to Edward in 1929. Edward and Agnes had one daughter, Clalia. She lived with her parents until she married William Koch in 1949. Ed and Agnes continued living there until he was taken sick and died after surgery in 1961. Later that year Agnes moved to Wheton.

The farm was deeded to Clalia Koch in 1962, and in 1975 it was passed on to Glenn Koch, son of Clalia and William Koch. It became a century farm in 1985.

GRAHAM-GRAHAM

Arthur M. Graham (1842-1893) and Jane Brackin (1849-1937) were married in Wisconsin in January, 1878, and came immediately to Browns Valley. Arthur was a farmer and carpenter and Traverse County Register of Deeds from 1887 to 1893, until his sudden death at 53, leaving Jane with a farm to manage and five children to raise. In addition, she raised a neighbor's daughter, Minnie Anthoney, whose mother had died.

Arthur was reported to have made all the coffins in the area. Jane was called far and wide as a mid-wife.

The Grahams homesteaded one quarter in 1883 and acquired another tract in 1888 through the tree claim process, with the land located in sections 27 and 28 in Windsor Township. The youngest son, George (1888-1961), was the next owner of the land. He married Ellen (Nellie) O'Neill (1892-1973), and they had four children, one of whom still lives on the home farm with his wife (Richard and Patricia). Other descendants of the Arthur Grahams include Art and Jim Graham of Windsor Township.

Many other related families came to the area at the same time, and many are buried in the Lakeview Cemetery at the top of the Shady Dell hill, reputed to be the oldest cemetery in the county. Jane Graham was at the organizational meeting of the cemetery. She told that because of hard times, people were often buried during the night. An area "over the fence" to the west side of the cemetery was used for burial of "ineligibles".

HENRY-PUTNAM

All of section 10 west of the Great Northern Railway in Tintah Township has been in the Henry-Putnam family since July 22, 1881. James Henry was the first owner. In 1888 the property was transferred to his daughter, Ida, and her husband, Parker Putnam.

Born in New Hampshire in 1852, Parker was the second of eight children belonging to Lonzo W. Putnam. Educated in New Hampshire, at the age of twenty-one he took a job as a lumberman and also as a farmer until 1882. He had married Ida Henry in 1875 there in the East. Two children, George and Bessie, were born to Ida and Parker in New Hampshire.

After 1882, Ida and Parker Putnam came to Traverse County, where they eventually took over a large plot of land owned by Ida's father. One more son, Charles, was born to the Putnams near Tintah where the Henry land was located. Parker Putnam at one time had from eighteen to thirty men in his employ, and by 1888 had purchased the Henry land. He owned five sections of land as his home farm and also owned other tracts of a quarter section each. He had three sets of farm buildings and a residence in Tintah. There was a boarding house for his employees, two barns, and a granary. On his home farm he kept one hundred fifty head of cattle, four hundred fifty sheep, and fifty horses. He established the first store in Tintah and was the postmaster for many years, as well as assisting in the organization of his school district.

The homesteaded land was transferred to Parker Putnam's three children in 1926. The following year Charles, the youngest son, took over the land. His children were Doris, James, and Joyce. The James Henry farm was transferred to James Putnam on July 29, 1977. Today James and his wife Betty (Fortune) own this century farm. Their three children are Nancy, Linda, and James, Jr.

JACKSON-BUSS

Andrew Jackson arrived in America in 1869 and homesteaded on lots 2, 3, 4 and 5 of section 30, range 45 in Redpath Township. It

was nearly winter, so Andrew and three friends hurriedly built a homestead shack in such a way that it sat on the corner of each man's quarter of land. There were four doors, each of which faced toward each owner's land. This method met the requirements for homesteading at the time. Their animals lived with the new owners, and it was necessary for the emigrants to walk to Fergus Falls for needed supplies until the town of Herman was started. The homestead shacks were added onto the following year and at various other times.

Andrew Jackson married Ida Magnuson. They had nine children: Edla, Anna, Olga, Edith, Oscar, Harry, Art, and twins Celeste and Clarice. Clarice died as a young child, and Andrew's wife died as a young woman. Most of the children left home to homestead their own land in Montana. Anna and Olga died of flu while homesteading. Edith also went to Montana where she married Ralph Haverfield. She had one son, Leslie (Jackson), and died giving birth to her second son, Verle.

Harry Jackson returned to the farm in Redpath Township. He and his wife Nimie also made a home for sister Edith's sons, Leslie and Verle. One daughter VerNell was born to Harry and Nimie.

The home Andrew Jackson built on his homestead is still intact. It is now owned and occupied by his granddaughter, Vernell Jackson, and her husband, William Buss. The present living room of the house is actually the original homestead shack of 1869. In August, 1985, this land was registered with the State of Minnesota as a century farm under the ownership of VerNell and William Buss. They raised three children, Keith, Karen, and RaeNell.

JOHANSON-JOHANSON

On October 16, 1880, after a homestead shanty had been put up in less than two weeks time, Christina and Peter Johanson moved in with their small daughter. They had emigrated from Sweden two years previously. The shanty consisted of two rooms; one was for the cow. The family room was furnished with little besides a stove. This day, October 16, marked the beginning of the famous three-day blizzard that left the land flooded in the spring. A new house was built



The Peter Johanson farmstead as it appeared in 1904. On the horses are Oscar, Algot and Helmer Johanson, with Peter shown on foot in the fur coat.

in 1890 and a barn in 1899.

The Johansons lost several children but raised eight to maturity. They were Alma, Oscar, Algot, Helmer, Clarence, Chester, Arthur, and Alvin.

Peter Johanson farmed until 1913. From that time until 1929 various combinations of his sons farmed. In 1929 Clarence and his wife Lucita took over and eventually purchased the farm. They had two children, Portia and Peyton. Clarence and Lucita moved to Wheaton in 1962 after their son Peyton began to farm and eventually purchased it.

Peyton and his wife Henrietta built a new house on the farm in 1977-78. They live there at the present time and have raised eight children: Julie, Janet, Douglas, Nancy, Bradley, Kimberly, Gregory, and Amy.

JOHNSON-JOHNSON

Peter Johnson came from Sweden, and after living first in Illinois and Red Wing, Minnesota, he settled in Traverse County in the late 1870's. He got homestead rights on November 12, 1880, and began his farm eight miles north of Wheaton just off Highway 75 (southeast quarter of section 6, range 46, East Monson Township).

Peter was a bachelor for fifteen years when he first moved to this area. He helped other relatives and friends from Sweden homestead here. In the late 1800's when several families had moved into the region, Peter had the male school teacher live with him in order that school could be held in his home because there was no school building at the time.

Bena Hanson was one of the young

ladies coming from Sweden to make her home here. Her family lived in Herman, and her first job was working in a hotel there as a cook. Peter and Bena were married in the mid-1890's and had seven children. Three of them are still living. They are Walter, Elmer and Ida.

Peter farmed until his death in 1917.

Then his sons Walter and Fritz took over.

In the early days the nearest town was Herman. Early settlers walked there, crossing over creeks and rivers on the way. Sometimes a boat was available, but usually it was on the other side of the water. Sometimes the twenty-seven mile trip to Herman was made by oxen. Families raised their



Standing in front of their century home on their farmstead are Walter and Albertine Johnson in a photo taken in June, 1985. A portion of the home is 106 years old. The farm was homesteaded by Walter's father, Peter, who was one of the early settlers of Traverse County.



The Olaf Larson home, built in Lake Valley Township in 1906. In the photo are Olaf and wife Katharina, together with their children, from left: Ida, Selma, Lydia, Ella, and Clarissa. And standing in front, Gladys and Richard. The building, richly refurbished, is today the home of Gordon and Pearl Lewis, the latter a descendent of the Olaf Larsons.

own meat and made their own flour out of grain. Sometimes they managed to live through the winter with as little money as five dollars.

Peter Johnson's son Walter, present owner of this century farm, met his future wife Albertine at a children's school program in District 52 near White Rock, but in Traverse County, in the year 1915. She was from Nashua and had done housework for \$2.50 a week prior to her marriage to Walter. They were married in White Rock in 1925. Walter and Albertine had one child, Delphine, who lives in California. They have a grandson, Douglas, and a great grandson, Clayton.

Walter continued farming until 1963 when he retired and rented out the land. The Johnsons recently observed their 60th wedding anniversary.

LARSON-LEWIS

This century farm was homesteaded by Olaf Larson who came from Dala Jarna, Sweden, in 1879, with his father, brother and sister. He left behind in Sweden a brother and memories of his mother and sister, who had died earlier. They came destined for Cokato, Minnesota. Hearing of opportunities in western Minnesota, they bought a wagon, oxen, and horses and proceeded on the last portion of their journey. The Larsons were an exception to many settlers because they reached western Traverse County before the railroad came.

Olaf Larson homesteaded the northeast quarter of section 21 in West Lake Valley Township. He bought the northwest quarter of the same section from the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway Company. When first settling the homesteaded

land, Olaf lived in a dugout. He later built a four-room house consisting of a kitchen-living room area and a bedroom downstairs. There were two bedrooms upstairs.

Olaf brought his bride Katharina Johnson to this farm after their February 11, 1891, wedding. Katharina was also from Dala Jarna, Sweden and emigrated to America in 1888. Six girls and one boy were born to the Larsons. They were Clarissa, Ella, Ida, Richard, Lydia, Selma and Gladys.

In 1906, Olaf and Katharina built the present home on the farm. Carl Jacobson, their future son-in-law, helped make the cement blocks for the building. It remains today with the original oak woodwork in excellent condition. From 1879 to 1906 Olaf had tamed the treeless frontier prairie, broken the land, built a cement block house, a four-room house, a barn, a granary, a hog house, a chicken house, and a pump house.

Olaf and Katharina's daughter Clarissa married Carl Jacobson, who had emigrated from Leksand, Sweden, in 1903. They bought the Olaf Larson farm in 1937. They had five children, Lawrence, Alice, LaVera, Muriel, and Pearl.

In 1968, Olaf Larson's granddaughter, Pearl and her husband Gordon Lewis, bought the farm he homesteaded. They have two sons, Bradley and Mitchell.

NEIL-HONZO

John Neil and his two older brothers came from Ireland to River Falls, Wisconsin. John married Mary Gray there in 1879. They came to Minnesota in 1880 and settled on the northeast quarter of section two, Leonardsville Township. Today John Neil's grandson, Harry Honzo, owns the west eighty acres of the original homestead.

O'NEILL-O'NEILL

Peter O'Neill was born in County Leitrem, Ireland, on April 1, 1846. He later immigrated to America for a period of three years but returned to Ireland to care for his parents when they became ill. After their deaths seven years later, Peter again came to America. The trip took five weeks on a sailing ship, and once he was almost swept

overboard in a storm. He first settled in Billerica, Massachusetts, where his sister and husband lived. Peter shoveled gravel into dump wagons for the building of gravel roads there, earning \$1.00 for a ten-hour day. Later the wages increased to \$1.25, then \$1.50.

Peter's future wife, Mary Sloan, was born in County Louth, Ireland, on September 18, 1846. She came to America at the age of fourteen and worked as a second maid at a priest's house in Troy, New York, for three years. She then moved to Lowell, Massachusetts, to work for the Couliey family, makers of steel rollers for printing presses. Her work included washing and ironing clothes, for which she received \$1.50 per week. Although the Couliey family was rich, Mary was not allowed to have as much sugar for baking as she wanted. It was while she was hanging out the wash that a cowhand came by with a bandaged hand. Mary inquired about it and later learned that the name of the young man was Peter O'Neill.

Peter left Billerica and planned to settle in western Iowa. While passing through Chicago, he heard about Archbishop John Ireland in Minnesota and also about the Homestead Act. He went to St. Paul and took a train as far as Morris. There were no restaurants or cafes at that time, but there were saloons where beer could be bought for five cents, and the buyer would be given a free lunch.

Peter walked from Morris to Graceville, a distance of twenty-five miles. There he met a man with a wagon and horses who was taking men out to find land. As there was no more room in the wagon, Peter continued walking for another fifteen miles until he came to a place near a small lake that reminded him of Ireland. A man named Terpena serving as a locator helped Peter claim the 160 acres that had reminded him of Ireland.

For a sum of \$25.00 Mr. Terpena took Peter O'Neill to the land office in Fergus Falls to make his claim. Other men also went along. The Homestead Act gave new landowners seven years to prove themselves. They were required to break ten acres of land the first year. The men worked together to accomplish this difficult task. It took two men and four oxen to pull the

breaking plow, one man leading and the other driving the plow.

Peter built a twelve foot by twelve foot shanty to live in. It was hard to find enough lumber in those days. He drank water from a slough that again reminded him of Ireland. Later a neighbor who was fortunate enough to get a well sold Peter water for five cents a barrel.

After Peter was settled on his new land, he called for Mary Sloan to come out from Massachusetts. He met her in St. Paul and they were married. They took a train to Morris where he bought her a rocking chair for a wedding present. She sat in the chair in the back of the wagon all the way home.

Seven children were born to the O'Neills. They were Daniel, John, Peter Joe, Ellen, Rose, Thomas, and Richard. It was John who took over the family farm after Peter's time. John is past 96 years of age, but still remembers things told to him by his father. John's children were Philip, Patrick, Eugene, Agnes, Rose, Helen, and Claire. Son Philip took over the O'Neill farm after John retired. His children include Kevin, Maureen, Linda, Michael, Philip Jr., Margaret Ann, Laurie, and Kerrey.

The house that Peter O'Neill built in 1879 is still on the farm and is being lived in. When Philip retires from farming, his sons will continue the operation, making it a four-generation century farm located near Beard-sley, Minnesota.

PETERSON-PETERSON

John H. Peterson was born in 1853 in Sinaland, Sweden, where his father was a farmer. He was the second of five children. After being reared and educated there, he served his time in the Swedish army and assisted his father on the home farm.

In 1878 John came to America and worked in Minneapolis. On April 7, 1880, he took a homestead on section two in the western part of Monson Township. He hauled lumber from Herman for a two-room home-stead house and a small barn.

The trip was made with a team of oxen and required two days for completion of the journey. The roads were swampy and almost impassable. Peterson was once in a

snowstorm for five days until he found a shanty and took shelter there for him and his weakened oxen.

John Peterson married Carrie Heggberg on April 2, 1881. She, too, had been born in Sweden. Two sons were born to the Petersons, George W. and Aaron W. (Walter).

By 1885 John had complied with the rules of homesteading which required that a home be built and a certain number of acres of sod be plowed and seeded to crops. The family had little money and burned slough hay for fuel in their stove with a little wood used at night. The wood was hauled from Tintah.

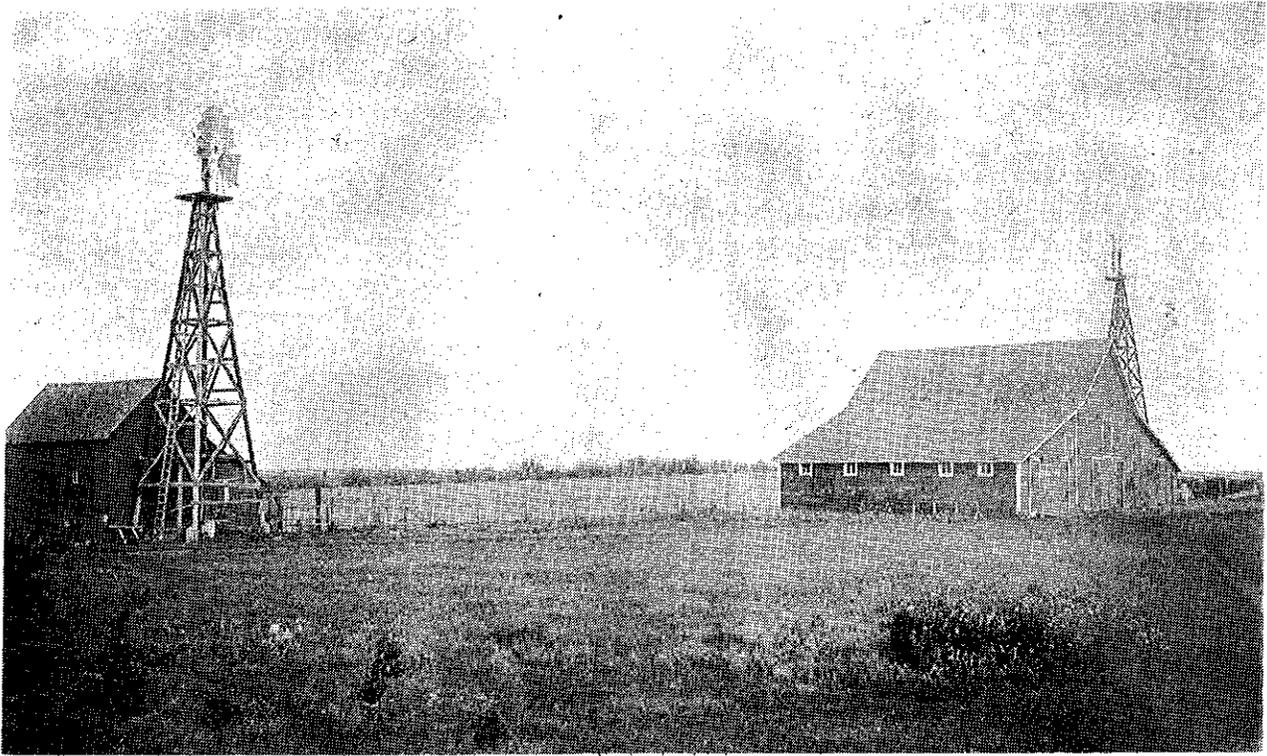
Carrie Peterson died in 1895, leaving John alone with his two sons. In 1899-1900 he visited Sweden, returning home in March, 1900. He helped establish and build the Swedish Lutheran Church at White Rock, where he served as treasurer, deacon, and Sunday School teacher. He served as a township supervisor and school director. During his lifetime he acquired the quarter section of land on which he lived as well as two more quarters of land which he farmed until his death in 1907.

The land then went to John's son Walter, who farmed it and built a five-bedroom house, a 32 foot by 60 foot barn, and other buildings on the farmstead. In 1910 he married Bettie Goranson. They raised five children, three of whom survive. Walter Peterson was active in community affairs, serving on the town board, church board, and ASCS committee. The family was active in the Augustana Lutheran Church in White Rock.

A. W. Peterson died in April 1956, at which time the farm became the property of Albin Peterson, his son. Albin has lived on the farm and operated it until the present time. The farm was named Pleasant Hill Farm.

PEYTON-PEYTON

Michael F. Peyton was born in Ireland in 1854 to Thomas and Bridget (Cahill) Peyton. He had six brothers and two sisters. Michael was educated in Ireland and came to the United States in 1871, first living in Iowa where he worked until moving to Walls



The Mike Peyton farm as it appeared around 1900.

Township in 1882, where he homesteaded land. At one time he owned more than eight hundred acres, mainly used for farming and stock raising.

Michael married twice, first to Mary Quigley and then to Mrs. Catherine Mullaney, widow of Patrick Mullaney. Mary and Michael had a daughter Ella who taught school in Traverse County. Catherine and Michael had four children: Agnes, Frank, Willie, and Columbus. Catherine also had a daughter Mary by her first marriage.

Today William Peyton's son Michael and his wife Patty (Honzo) Peyton live on the Michael F. Peyton farm with their two children, Kelly and Kari. The land is being farmed by Michael, his brothers, and his father William. The original farm home no longer exists.

SMITH-SMITH

One Traverse County family can boast of tracing their ancestry back to 440 A.D. Furthermore, four generations of this family

are buried in the Valley View Cemetery near Browns Valley.

The Smith farm located in sections 29 and 32 of Windsor Township had its beginnings in 1876 when William J. Smith (1829-1901) came to that area and plowed the first land the following year. In 1878 he moved his wife Elizabeth (1839-1887) and family from Prescott, Wisconsin, where they had lived after coming from Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Following William's death, one of his five sons, Frank D. Smith (1862-1934), succeeded in the ownership of the farm. He had married Serena Fossen of Big Stone County, and to their union were born ten children, including Arthur W. Smith (1891-1959), the next owner. Emily Moland (1896-1974), a Browns Valley teacher, became his bride and their children were William Moland and James Secord Smith. Secord and Catherine (Bourland) Smith are the present owners and their sons Larry and Gary live on the farm.

The township of Windsor was organized in the Smith kitchen and was named in memory of the area of Canada from which they had emigrated.