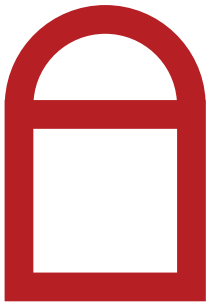


LARSON FARM

N9633 Tyvand Road
Blanchardville, Wisconsin, U.S.A.
53516

'... come as soon as you can, stay as long as you can...'

"Once you have lived on the land,
been a partner with its moods, secrets and seasons,
you cannot leave. The living land remembers,
touching you in unguarded moments, saying,
'I am here. You are part of me.'"
Ben Logan, *The Land Remembers:*
The Story of a Farm and Its People.

"We come and go, but the land is always here.
And the people who love it and understand are the
people who own it – for a little while."
Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*

"If a man can't be happy on a little farm in Wisconsin,
he hasn't the makings of happiness in his soul."
Nick Englebert, dairy farmer and artist, Grandview Farm,
Hollandale, Wisconsin

February, 2017

Contents

Larson Farm History

Larson Farm was settled by Knut and Gunhild Syse, Norwegian immigrants, in 1854.

Their first home was a dugout; a log cabin soon replaced it.

The present stone house and barn replaced the original cabin in the 1860s.

The Syses raised wheat at first, and transitioned to dairying around 1880.

Larson Farm remained in the Syse family until 1912.

Anton and Lena Knudtson, dairy farmers, lived on the property until 1937.

In 1938, Milton and Gladys Erickson purchased Larson Farm.

The Erickson family lived on the farm for ten years, and continued dairying here until 1968.

Gerald and Barbara Larson family bought the property in 1975, spending summers here.

In 1986, the Larson Family completed the frame addition to the main residence.

Larson Farm thereafter served as full-time residence for Gerald and Barbara, through 2007.

The Joseph and Josephine Hynek log cabin was moved to Larson Farm in 2003.

Since 2006, Todd Larson has been owner and steward of Larson Farm.

Chronology of Ownership

19 February 1854 to 24 November 1855	Knut Olsson Syse and Gunhild (Ellingsdatter) Syse acquire all but 4 acres of the approximately 200 acres that make up Larson Farm (last 4 acres in NW ¼ of NW ¼ Sec 2, Green County, purchased 6 February 1857).
25 January 1886	Knut and Gunhild sell the farm to their son, Elling Olaus Syse (called "Olaus").
10 July 1893	Olaus Syse transfers the farm to his wife, Andrinne (Stugaarden) Syse; Olaus passes away.
1 August 1894	Andrinne Syse passes away, and the farm goes to her estate. Martin and Karen Lokken family rented the farm until ca. 1901.
13 June 1906	Lawrence Wilhelm Syse, son of Olaus and Andrinne Syse, becomes sole owner of the farm. John B. and Kristine Lund family rented the farm for a year ca. 1911.
11 November 1911	Lawrence Syse signs a land contract with Anton Knudtson on the Dane County portion of the farm.
11 November 1912	Lawrence Syse signs a land contract with Anton Knudtson on the Green County portion of the farm.

1 March 1917	Lawrence and Theolina (Kittleson) Syse sell the farm to Anton Knudtson.
24 February 1937	Anton Knudtson sells the farm to Martha Nessa (widow of Nels Nessa).
17 January 1938	Martha Nessa sells the farm to Milton Wilmer and Gladys (Venden) Erickson.
5 November 1968	Milton and Gladys Erickson sign a land contract with Charles A. Jones and J. Robert Corneille.
1 March 1972	Charles A. Jones and J. Robert Corneille buy the farm from the Ericksons, and sell it to Robert B. and Marjorie A. Noren of Chicago.
10 November 1975	Robert Noren transfers his interest to Marjorie Noren.
December 1976	Gerald Lee and Barbara Ann (Moraw) Larson buy the farm from Marjorie Noren.
July 2006	Gerald and Barbara Larson sell the farm to their son, Todd Wendell Moraw Larson.

Building Descriptions and Histories

There are three principal buildings on Larson Farm: the **house**, the **barn**, and the **log cabin**. There are also several outbuildings and structures: a ca. 1920 machine shed (which incorporates planks from Larson Farm oaks) and a ca. 2006 carport at the driveway entrance; three small ca. 2010 mobile livestock shelters in the valley pastures; a ca. 2006 yurt set on a wooden deck, on the north-facing side of the valley, in a cross-ravine; beyond the barn, a sculpture garden made out of the remains of a combination hog shed/corn crib; a ca. 2000 wooden tree house is nearby.

The **house** is believed to be the third on the farm, following a temporary sod/cave dugout, and a log cabin, all built for the Knut and Gunhild Syse family. The dugout was tiny, and the family moved into better quarters as soon as they could. The log cabin was larger, measuring 12 feet by 14 feet, and one and one-half stories tall, but still cramped for a growing family. The stone section of the existing house was probably built in two phases during the 1860s, and may have re-used some of the timbers from the dismantled log cabin. The limestone was quarried nearby. The stone section is a vernacular form called the Gable-Ell, named for the gable roofs, and the L-shaped footprint of the home. The side-gabled (eastern) section was probably built first, and the front-gabled (western) section followed soon after.

The frame addition to the stone house was constructed in 1986 for the Gerald and Barbara Larson family, built by Roger Nodorft construction of New Glarus. At the same time, the interior of the stone sections were remodeled, the gabled dormer on the front slope of the original roof added, to match the one on the addition, and the original front porch reconfigured to match the porch on the addition.

The house sets the tone for two themes that unify the structures throughout Larson Farm. The first is color: the deep reddish-brown of the frame addition, combined with the organic, golden-beige color of the natural sandstone of the original section of the farmhouse. The second is the original window configuration found in the east gable end of the stone section – a rectangular, sash window, accented with a lunette. This window configuration is found, enlarged, in the gable end of the frame addition, and has been transformed into an abstract symbol, reproduced on each of the buildings in the early 2000s.

Todd Larson chose the window configuration to symbolize Larson Farm in honor of the Syse family. When the Syses settled the property in the 1850s, they had little money, living first in a sod dugout, and then a log cabin, before erecting the stone house in the 1860s. The sole architectural flourish the original stone house possesses is the rectangular sash window with a lunette, looking to the east. This emblem also appears on Todd Larson's right shoulder as a tattoo, and is now a registered trademark in both the U.S.A. and Canada.

The **barn** likely dates to the same period as the stone house, the 1860s. It is a Wisconsin bank barn, so called because it is built into the side of a hill, with entrances into the stone basement at the bottom of the hill, and into the timber-frame main floor at the top of the slope. The roofline is reminiscent of Norwegian barns of the mid 1800s. The frame sections are clad with vertical boards, and board-and-batten siding. The board-and-batten siding at the east end (granary) is original; that at the west end was installed in the early 2000s, because the original boards had weathered significantly. The barn was renovated between 1980 and 2000, by Gerald, Todd, and Kurt Larson, and John Murry and Bob Weiland.

There is a small addition, complete with stone foundation, at the west end of the barn. The wooden section above grade was originally a corn crib and was been converted into a chicken coop and aviary ca. 2000. The stone foundation dates to ca. 1920, and originally served as a calf pen. Since ca. 2000, it has served as a run-in shelter for the livestock. In 2010, a shed-roofed canopy was built onto the south façade of the barn at basement level. The east end has been enclosed, to

serve as a greenhouse. Kennel runs are found west of the greenhouse, each with interior access. The cupola vent that perches on the ridge of the original section of the barn also dates to ca. 2000.

The barn repeats the color scheme of the house, with the natural stone foundation, and the exterior boards painted a deep red. The barn received its first ever coat of pain about the time of its 150th birthday, although used engine oil had been applied to the south-facing façade during the first half of the 20th century. The rectangular-window-with-lunette symbol can be seen in the gable ends, and on the barn quilt on the south face of the building. The barn quilt was designed by the Kansas-born and Italian-based abstract geometric artist, Gary Jo Gardenhire. It is number 99 on the Green County tour of barn quilts.

Todd Larson states, with pride, that "my hands have touched every square foot of this barn, on multiple occasions," over the years of repair, restoration and upgrade of the barn.

The **log cabin** was moved to Larson Farm from its original site in Union Township, Vernon County, Wisconsin, in 2004, to commemorate the sesquicentennial of Larson Farm. The cabin was built by Joseph and Josephine (Jakis) Hynek, Czech immigrants, probably in 1861, because that is the year they filed a claim on an 80-acre parcel in Union Township near the community of Hillsboro. The Hynek family had arrived in New York City on September 26, 1859, on the *Ellen & Elena*, which sailed from the port of Bremerhaven, Germany. Their son Lawrence was born on the voyage.

Todd Larson bought the cabin from John Popejoy in 2003. John Underwood disassembled and moved the cabin from Union township to its present site. Karl Crave Painting & Repair of Waterloo, Wisconsin, undertook the reconstruction, and Todd Larson served as general contractor. The cabin was originally two stories tall. It is now three stories, with the present concrete basement poured by Dave Lehr of In-Line Concrete, Monticello, Wisconsin. The Spanish-inspired balcony on the south façade of the cabin marks the original ground level entrance. The repeating Larson Farm color theme is represented in the natural timber and synthetic mortar (originally mud) of the log walls, and the deep red vertical boards with battens on the gable end. The gable ends also feature the trademarked repeating Larson Farm window configuration, enlarged, with rectangular sash windows surmounted by a grand lunette.

Memories of Life on Larson Farm

Syse Family

The earliest recorded memories of life on Larson Farm were told by Olin Fjelstad, grandson of Knut and Gunild Syse. Olin's mother, Julia (Gurine Syse) Fjelstad, was born in the dugout, the family's first home on Larson Farm, on July 12, 1855. In a 1949 interview with columnist Alexius Baas of the Madison newspaper, *Capital Times*, Olin Fjelstad recalled hearing that the roof of the dugout leaked constantly in the rain, and that an umbrella was used indoors to keep the newborn baby dry.

Olin Fjelstad also recounted that his grandfather, Knut Syse, made two trips a year by oxcart to Milwaukee, to sell or barter the grain he harvested in exchange for cloth and other provisions. The 1870 census provides a few interesting details. In 1869, Syse harvested 397 bushels of wheat, about average for surrounding farms in Perry Township. He also produced 170 bushels of oats. Syse probably kept a bit for home consumption, selling the majority of both crops. In the early 1860s, wheat could be sold for about 60 cents a bushel, and oats for about 25 cents a bushel. Syse also had four milk cows, which produced 300 pounds of butter, two "working" oxen (for plowing as well as carting), six other cattle (presumably for beef), nine sheep (which produced 36 pounds of wool), and two swine. In addition, Syse produced 40 bushels of Indian corn, 40 bushels of potatoes, 30 tons of hay, and 25 bushels of barley. The potatoes, at least, were likely for home consumption, in addition to produce from the kitchen garden, such as carrots and pumpkins.

The Wisconsin farm diet of the mid nineteenth century was quite different from the Norwegian diet. In Norway, milk, porridge, lefse (unleavened bread made from potatoes), flat bread, fish, and dried meat were typical. In contrast, Wisconsin farmers commonly ate salted pork daily, sometimes at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with bread or potatoes. As one Norwegian immigrant to Wisconsin commented, in a letter written to family back home, "The large amount of pork which the Americans consume is not good for people unaccustomed to such a heavy diet…it is very injurious, especially when eaten without an abundance of

vegetables." Wild game and fish did supplement the Wisconsin farm diet, but as Andre Stortroen wrote from Pierce County in 1861, "There is an abundance of game around here, but time is too short to hunt much, and it does not pay to do too much of that kind of work."

Olin Fjelstad's father, Gunnar Fjelstad (husband of Julia Syse Fjelstad), was elected Dane County Clerk in 1908. The family, which had farmed near Larson Farm, moved into Madison. Gunnar Fjelstad served as Dane County Clerk, with his daughter, Selma Fjelstad as deputy County Clerk until 1924. Gunnar Fjelstad was a large man, weighing nearly 300 pounds, and needed a special desk, with a half-moon cut out of it, so he could work comfortably. After Gunnar Fjelstad passed away in 1926, Selma Fjelstad was elected Dane County Clerk, serving several terms. She was the first woman to hold that position.

Long-time residents of the area recalled hearing their grandparents tell of Native Americans passing through along Lee Valley Road, north of Larson Farm, in the days before the Civil War, and sometimes stopping and knocking on the door. Another anecdote tells that there was a hideaway on the Underground Railroad in a tiny log building behind a barn (both demolished ca. the late 1970s) on Lee Valley Road, for fugitives fleeing slavery. Lee Valley Road runs on top of the ridge north of Tyvand Road, with views extending in all directions, including of Blue Mounds.

Lily Ness (1901-1990, a neighbor who knew the Syse and Knudtson families) shared several memories with Barbara Larson in an interview in the late 1970s. Lily recalled that the teachers at Tyvand School (at 256 Tyvand Road, now a residence) often boarded with her family, that her family boarded about 30 teachers over the years. She remembered that Tyvand School, a one-room school, had one teacher with 30 to 35 pupils, sometimes more. Lily also recounted that Mrs. Anton Knudtson had told her she had come into the parlor (presently called "New York Room")of the main residence on Larson Farm one day, and saw something along the wall. She thought, 'oh, where did that pretty ribbon come from?' And when she went to pick it up, she discovered it wasn't a ribbon at all, it was a snake!

Erickson Family

The Erickson Family ca. 1944. Front row, left to right: Junior, Shirley, Rae, Stanley. Back row: Milton, Gladys holding Frank, Gloria, Marcia, and Dwayne

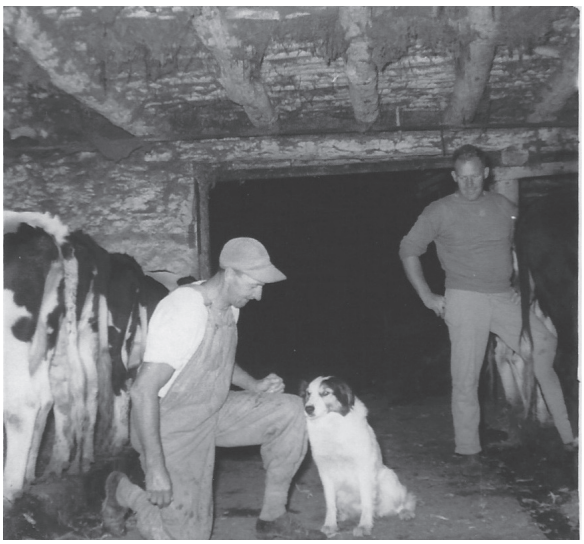
Stanley Erickson, who was born on Larson Farm shortly after the family moved there in 1938, and later farmed the property, remembered there was no electricity at Larson Farm until 1947. He experienced the transition from kerosene lamps, to battery-operated lanterns, and then to electric lights. He recalled his surprise the first night the family turned on the electric lights – it was like daylight!

Gloria (Erickson) Treuthardt, born in Iowa County in 1930, remembered the many farm chores on Larson Farm. She started milking, by hand, at the age of seven. The family raised hogs, as well as dairying, and Gloria would take the hogs out of their pen, and up the hill behind the house so that they could eat the acorns, almost every day until they were ready for market. The family would keep

a couple of hogs, and butcher them in the winter. Gladys Erickson would fry the meat, and store it in big jars, pouring the lard over it to seal it in and preserve it, unrefrigerated.

Frank Erickson was born on Larson Farm in 1944. He operated the property as a dairy farm from 1962 to 1968, the last of the Erickson family to do so. Frank recounted the story of a bull snake in the milk house. One morning, Frank had come into the milk house to wash the equipment after milking. He looked into the sink and saw a bull snake. He knew that bull snakes eat mice and other rodents, and didn't want to hurt it. So, he got a pitchfork and slipped it under the snake's midsection and carefully raised it up into the air. Frank had the snake about six feet of the ground, and the head and tail were still touching the floor. Frank thought the snake must have been up to 12 feet long, the biggest snake he had ever seen, but very calm, it didn't hurt anyone.

Frank also told a story about Uncle Leonard Erickson, Milton Erickson's bachelor brother who farmed with the family, and lived in the Larson Farm residence after the Ericksons moved to another farm, on Moscow Road off State Highway 78 near Blanchardville. One day, Uncle Leonard was up on the lamppost at Larson Farm, and a salesman drove up and tried to sell him insurance. Uncle Leonard told the insurance salesman that he was feeling dizzy, and might fall on the salesman, so the salesman better leave right away. The salesman came back a few times, but Uncle Leonard would get rid of him, telling the salesman that he was still feeling a bit dizzy from the salesman's previous visit. Uncle Leonard never did buy any insurance.



Uncle Leonard in Larson Farm barn, with dog Butch, and Dwayne, 1956

Terry Erickson was also born on Larson Farm, in 1946. After the Erickson family moved to the Moscow Road farm, they continued the dairying operation at Larson Farm. Dwayne, the oldest brother, was the first sibling to run Larson Farm. As a child, Terry frequently helped Dwayne. He remembered one time when the two of them were haying at the top of the hill north of the house (presently known as the "38-acre field"). Terry, aged five, drove the tractor, and Dwayne was in the wagon, spreading the hay out in the wagon bed, to get a full load, as the hay came up the chute. Terry remembered turning around and seeing Dwayne dancing around in the wagon, and thinking he was joking. He wasn't joking; a bee's nest had been pulled up into the wagon with the hay. Terry was laughing at Dwayne, when all of a sudden the bees were all over Terry. Dwayne jumped onto the tractor and brushed the bees off Terry, but Terry got stung 13 times. Terry was stung so badly, that his dad (Milton) took him to the doctor, who told them that one more bee sting could have been the end of Terry.

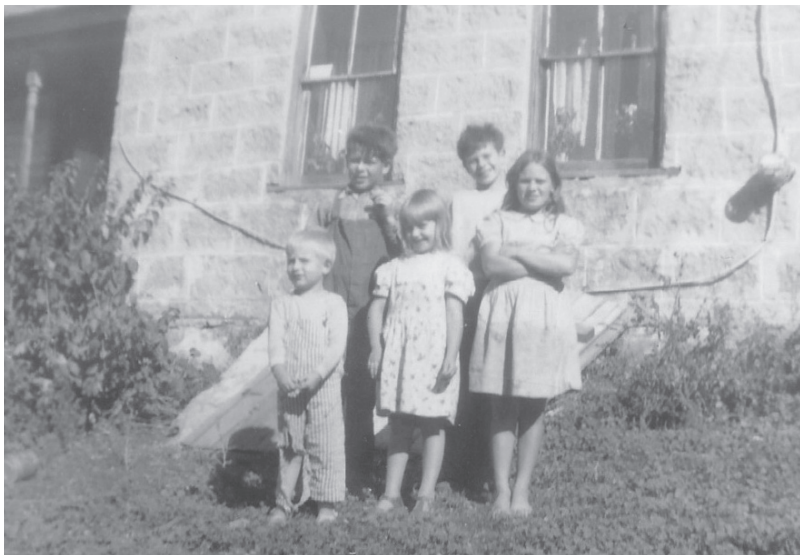
Rae (Erickson) Boeshaar, who was born on Larson Farm in 1942, and lived there until about 1948, wrote some of her recollections in 2013. She recalled the idyllic beauty of the farm, playing in the stream below the house, watching the tadpoles and listening to the frogs. The wooded area north of the house was full of wild flowers. Rae remembered collecting walnuts in the pasture with her siblings, and helping out during haying season. She also recalled that a neighbor kept breeding bulls in a pasture across the road. The bulls and their bellowing were scary, and indeed they were dangerous and better observed from inside the house looking out the window.

Rae also remembered putting on plays with and for her siblings, and attending Tyvand School (256 Tyvand Road) as a first grader, in the single classroom together with her brothers Junior and Stanley, and sister Shirley. She and Shirley built houses out of fall leaves during recess. One time another girl, who didn't want Rae to play with Shirley, messed up the leaf house they had just built. So Rae took the milk from her lunch and poured it on the other girl's shoe. And Rae recounted her disappointment the following year, when they were sent to school in Blanchardville, each grade in its own separate classroom.

Rona (Erickson) Gant, Dwayne Erickson's daughter, never lived on Larson Farm, but used to help her father when he ran the farm. Rona recalled stopping

at the farm on one occasion, and going into the house. Uncle Leonard Erickson was living in the farmhouse at the time. Uncle Leonard took good care of the cows, keeping them very clean, but he was not much of a housekeeper. He was a bachelor, and the house had become dilapidated, and messy. Rona recalled going into the kitchen, and seeing the cupboards dusty and open, with doors hanging off. All of a sudden, a cat jumped out of one of the upper cupboards, and then more cats came out of the lower cupboards. Rona, who was three or four at the time, remembered being startled, and wondering whether the cats lived in the cupboards! Either way, Uncle Leonard didn't seem to mind.

The Erickson men, 1956. Left to right: Jerry, Dwayne, Frank, Terry, Stan, Junior, and Milton



Erickson children ca. 1946. Back row, left to right: Junior, Stanley. Front row: Frank, Rae, Shirley

Larson Family

The Larson family ca. 2000, left to right: Todd, LeAnn, Barbara, Dawn, Jerry, and Kurt

Jerry and Barbara Larson love the country. Both were working in Madison, and owned land near Hollandale, but were looking for a farm to be their summer home. A realtor told them that a farm on Tyvand Road was for sale. Jerry and Barbara and their children drove out to see it. When they came around the curve driving south into the valley on Tyvand Road and caught their first sight of the farm, they were enchanted. Barbara said to Jerry "That will be just fine!" The Larsons bought the property from Marjorie Noren in December 1976, after four months of delicate negotiations in which Ms. Noren changed her mind, wanted to split the property, and finally agreed to selling all of Larson Farm for $91,000.

Dawn on the front porch, ca. 1978

Todd tries to keep the bats out, 1976

The farmhouse had been unoccupied from 1968 to 1972, and the Norens used it as a vacation place. They may not have stayed very often, because by the time the Larson family acquired the farm, bats had become accustomed to roosting under the fascia board. There was a narrow space between the top of the stone wall and the wooden eaves, which was a perfect spot for bats. So many bats roosted under the eaves that the windows were thick with their droppings. One night, when the bats were out, Todd climbed up and installed insulation and boards over the space to keep the bats out. The family went to sleep and were wakened in the morning by bats flying around upstairs – a few had managed to get in!

Kurt and Moonshine, ca. 1977

When the Larsons bought the farm, a cat named Moonshine was living there. Moonshine had a crooked back, and a crooked tail, and was a very sweet cat. She would bring the family mice, and scratch at the door to let them know her gift had been delivered. When the kids slept outside under the stars, Moonshine would sleep at their feet, as if to protect them. One rainy day, when the Larsons were renting the farmhouse out, the renters called to say Moonshine wasn't doing well. Kurt Larson came and took her to vet, but she couldn't be saved. Moonshine was the first to be buried in the pet cemetery on Larson Farm, on the other side of the stream across from the house (near the yurt).

LeAnn on Taboo, ca. 1982

Dude and Taboo, ca. 1985

The Larson family also kept two horses. One was a large quarter horse, named Dude. The other was a smaller, part-Arabian horse, named Taboo. The Larson family enjoyed riding on the farm and have many happy memories of Dude and Taboo. One day, when Jerry and Barbara were out riding Dude and Taboo, they came to a field where crop strips had been planted the previous season. These are used to control erosion, and alternate hay with other crops. As they were cantering across the crop strips, with Taboo in the lead, they suddenly came upon a broad, mucky, furrow as wide as a moat. Barbara had no time to think anything more than, "Taboo will know what to do," and Taboo sailed over the moat. For Barbara it was a surprise, and a thrill.

When Dude died in 1993, Taboo was left sad and lonely. Taboo became attached to Barbara, and would run to the fence to see her when Barbara got home from work. In 1998, Taboo became ill. Barbara stayed with Taboo, talking to her and comforting her for hours. Finally, Barbara went into the house for a moment, and when she came back out, Taboo had died. Taboo was buried behind the barn. When Dude died, a renderer had come for his body and dragged it away. The Larsons couldn't bear for that to happen to Taboo.

Todd and the ducklings, ca. 1981

Todd converted the concrete block milk house into a chicken coop ca. 1980. When it was torn down years later, Todd discovered that the milk house ceiling had been reinforced, rather cleverly, with three metal wheels from an old horse-drawn hay rake; the wheels can be found on display near the east end of the barn.

For several years in a row after the chicken coop was complete, the family would buy wild mallard ducklings and raise them. They would let the ducks out of the chicken coop during the day. The ducks grew and then would fly around the valley, a little further each time. The ducks would come back to the chicken coop until fall, when they would fly away. Nesting pairs of wild mallards have come back to the stream on the farm many springs. The Larson family can't be quite sure, but they could have been descendants of ducks that they had raised.

The Larson family also had a Weimaraner named, 'Suru' ('dog' in the language of the Kabye people of Togo, where Todd Larson served in the Peace Corps). Barbara walked a lot, and the dog often accompanied her. One day, Barbara was walking toward 38-acre field north of the house with Suru. There were people standing by the gate into the field. At the time, the police were on the lookout for murder suspects, and these people were strangers to Barbara. She and Suru walked right by them, into the field, and the dog, sensing Barbara's fear, growled and her fur stood on end. The dog had never acted that way before. The people got in their car and left in a hurry.

From 1977 until 1985, the Larson family lived in Madison during the school year and spent the summer at Larson Farm. In 1986, the Larson family decided to restore and expand the farmhouse, so they could live there year-round. The Larsons developed a plan that would preserve the farmhouse and as much of its original material as possible. They worked with Roger Nodorft Construction (of New Glarus). Architect Arlan Kay (of Oregon) provided some ideas, and Dennis Ostrick (of the Monroe area) prepared drawings.

The whole family, Jerry and Barbara and their children, LeAnn, Todd, Dawn, and Kurt, pitched in, carrying out the back-breaking labor of demolition, sandblasting the stone on the interior, removing plaster from the interior of the stone walls with hammer and chisel, and doing as much of the grunt work as they could. The old summer kitchen was removed, a new basement excavated, and a family room and master bedroom were added to the house. A few of the original windows in the stone sections had been replaced prior to reconstruction, generally two each year. New windows replaced the remaining originals during the reconstruction.

Two south-facing dormers were not originally part of the plan. The addition included a dormer to provide more light and height to the interior of the master bedroom. A dormer was then added to the roof of the original stone section to match the appearance of the addition. Jerry recalls the exciting moment when Todd broke an opening in the wall from the farmhouse into the addition with a sledgehammer.

During the reconstruction, the family found many different artifacts, including remnants of old Norwegian language newspapers inside the walls, a child's tooth, and a tool for pulling on ladies' shoes. In the kitchen, the family removed a false ceiling and discovered the timber beam, with original hatchet marks, that is still present. When they pulled up the floor boards in the parlor, they discovered the floor was sitting directly on soil – which explains why Mrs. Knudtson had found a snake in the room (as Lily Ness recalled on page 18)! The reconstruction and addition were completed, and the family moved in, on December 18, 1986.

Todd working on the house in what is presently known as the "Seattle Room," ca. 1985

Work on the barn was carried out piecemeal, most of it after the house was reconstructed. The Larsons installed a plank floor in the top of the barn, where hay bales set on top of tree limbs had previously served as flooring. Cable ties and laser-cut plates were added to bolster the original mortise and tenon joints. In the 1990s, the dirt floor of the milking parlor was replaced with concrete and most of the stanchions were removed. The area north of the barn was also re-contoured, to divert rainwater and melting snow around it. Concrete abutments were installed to better support the barn's foundation. A root cellar was tucked in between abutments inside the basement of the barn. A shed-roofed canopy was built onto the south façade of the barn at basement level, in 2010. The east end of the canopy has been enclosed to serve as a greenhouse.

The internal field access roads on the farm were overgrown when the Larsons took ownership. The family identified and re-established the access roads, which lead to views and striking sandstone outcroppings, mementos of the era 520 million years ago when Wisconsin was an inland sea. Many tons of breaker rock were laid on the roads in 2016, an antidote to spring mud and slippage.

After the reconstruction and addition to the house were finished, the driveway that runs in front of the house to the barn was moved farther away from the house, to provide the house more of a setting. The main fields were rented for some years, and later placed in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and planted with native prairie species. New pasture fencing was installed in the valley.

Kurt working on the barn, ca. 1982

Barbara watering flowers, ca. 1978

The Larson family has worked assiduously for many years on prairie and oak savanna restoration on much of the acreage at Larson Farm. This has included, for example, removal of invasive species, over-seeding, and semi-regular burns.

Steve Fabos of Indigenous Restoration has been a particularly close partner in these efforts. Jerry Larson often says, "enhancing the land at Larson Farm is a prime element of our legacy," a statement with which Barbara concurs. It is the Larson family commitment that Larson Farm forever remain intact, as a natural setting, devoid of housing development.

Jerry remembers how beautiful Christmas was at Larson Farm, with the snow, and the house decorated with ribbons inside and out. Every year, the children would come home to the farm, and the addition of grandchildren made each year more joyful than the previous. The grandchildren enjoyed helping Jerry in the summer, picking up sticks and other simple chores, and riding with him on the tractor and in the truck.

Jerry working on a fence, ca. 1980

Although Larson Farm is lovely in the snow, the hilly roads can be slippery and treacherous in the winter. Barbara recalls coming home from Madison with a friend from work. Jerry was out of the country in Africa visiting Todd. Barbara and her co-worker were driving on Highway 39, and the road was sheer ice. They crept along down the hill south of the farm, and arrived safely. Another day, Jerry and Barbara were driving north on Tyvand Road, going to work after a snowstorm, and ran off the road. Sylvan Erickson, a neighbor who had much experience with country winters, came by but was afraid to pull out the car for fear of turning it over, so Barbara had to call a tow truck.

From time to time, passers-by would come to the door and ask to see the house. Many of the Erickson family members visited over the years. Barbara would always stop what she was doing and invite them in. The number of visitors has increased with the addition of Gary Gardenhire's barn quilt, on the south face of the barn. Larson Farm is number 99 on the Green County Barn Quilt Tour.

For Todd Larson, throughout his decades-long career with the United Nations in trouble hotspots around the world and as a presidential appointee with the Obama administration, Larson Farm has always represented a place of safety and connection. Todd recalls an assignment in Gorazde, Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Bosnian War (1992-1995). Gorazde was home to many Muslim Bosnians, under attack by Bosnian Serbs, who sought to remove (ethnically cleanse) all Muslims from Bosnia. United Nations diplomat, Sergio Vieira de Mello, of Brazil, and Todd had negotiated a cease-fire agreement, but conditions remained extremely dangerous. United Nations representatives had to sleep in a bank vault for safety. As colleagues around him were writing ostensibly last letters to their families, Todd would close his eyes and think of Larson Farm, and feel calm and secure.

When Todd retired from the United Nations to return to Larson Farm, friends and colleagues were concerned that he would miss the hustle-and-bustle of New York, and the excitement of international politics. But for Todd, coming back to Larson Farm was truly coming home. The 3-1/2 years he subsequently spent at Larson Farm, building the greenhouse and carrying out various capital improvement projects, were the best years of his life, so far. Todd takes his role as steward of Larson Farm very seriously, connected to the farm and caring for it, even as his career and other passions have taken him away from it. He plans to be buried on Larson Farm, and has placed his gravestone atop a rock outcropping with one of the most majestic views of Larson Farm.

Genealogy of the Syse, Knudtson, Erickson, and Larson Families

Syse Family: 1854-1912

Knut Olsson Syse was born on February 6, 1818, on the Syse farm in Granvin, Ulvick, Hardanger district, Hordaland county, Norway. Knut was the fifth of six children born to Ole Ivarsson Syse and Barni Tolleivsdatter Oppheim. On October 18, 1849, Knut married Gunhild Ellingsdatter. Gunhild was born in Granvin on February 21, 1821, the daughter of Elling Vigliekson and Gunhild Halgrimsdatter.

According to the *History of Green County, Wisconsin* (Springfield, Illinois: Union Publishing Company, 1884, 1107), Knut and Gunhild Syse left Norway when their daughter, Catharine (Marianne Katrina), was two weeks old. She was born May 22, 1850, placing the date of their departure for the U.S.A. in the second week of June, 1850 and their arrival at New York, after a ten-to-twelve week voyage, around September 1, 1850. The Syse family then traveled to the Koshkonong (Wisconsin) settlement, purchasing 120 acres near the village of Stoughton. According to other sources, the Syses journeyed from New York by way of the Erie Canal, and the Great Lakes, to Milwaukee, and then overland. This would place their arrival near Stoughton around about October 1, 1850.

While living near Stoughton, Knut Syse taught school, as well as farming. Knut and Gunhild's second child, Bertina Syse, was born March 25, 1853 and baptized in the Koshkonong Lutheran Church near Stoughton. In 1854-1855, Knut and Gunhild Syse sold their property near Stoughton, and bought most of the approximately 200 acres that make up Larson Farm today. The next child of Knut and Gunhild, Julia (Gurine) Syse, was born on July 12, 1855. The Syse family was living in the first home they built on the Larson Farm, a cave/sod dugout. By the birth of their next child, Olena (Lena) Syse, on May 7, 1859, the log house must surely have replaced the dugout. Son Elling Olaus Syse was born March 31, 1862. Daughter Susan (Synneva) followed on December 23, 1864. The original section, and maybe both sections, of the existing stone farmhouse had likely been built by April 7, 1868, when son Carl Gustav Syse was born. Gust was the seventh and last child of Knut and Gunhild.

Knut and Gunhild Syse sold the farm to their son, Elling Olaus Syse, on January 25, 1886. The elder Syses continued to help on the farm, by then primarily a dairy operation. Gunhild Syse passed away on March 22, 1891. In 1896, Knut Syse retired from farming, and moved into the village of Blanchardville, where he lived with his daughter, Catherine Syse, on Church Street. Knut Syse died on February 26, 1909, in Blanchardville. Both Knut and Gunhild Syse are buried in Old York Lutheran Cemetery (south side of Highway 39, east of intersection with Highway 78, and east of the York Memorial Lutheran Church), Green County, Wisconsin. Crayon rubbings of their gravestones are prominently displayed at Larson Farm.

Catherine Syse, Knut and Gunhild's oldest child, worked as a domestic servant in her youth. She never married. Catherine had moved to Blanchardville by 1900. She remained there through at least 1910, and then moved to Madison to live with her sister, Julia. Catherine passed away on October 3, 1927, probably in Madison. She is buried in Old York Lutheran Cemetery (south side of Highway 39, east of the intersection with Highway 78 and east of York Memorial Lutheran Church), Green County, Wisconsin.

Bertina Syse, Knut and Gunhild's second child, married Tosten A. Eidsmoe on December 27, 1876 in York Township, Green County. The Eidsmoes had two daughters. Bertina (Syse) Eidsmoe died December 28, 1880, and is buried in the Old York Lutheran Cemetery (south side of Highway 39, east of intersection with Highway 78 and east of York Memorial Lutheran Church), Green County, Wisconsin.

Julia Syse, Knut and Gunhild's third child, married George (Gunnar) Johnson Fjelstad, a Norwegian immigrant, in Daleyville, Dane County, on November 15, 1875. The Fjelstads farmed in Perry Township, Dane County until 1908, when George Fjelstad was elected Dane County Clerk. The family then moved to Madison. The Fjelstads had eight children, all born in Perry Township: Joseph Clarence (1876-1942); Gustfine (1879-1879); Melvin Adolph (1879-1951); Gerhard Bennett (1883-1961); Selma Irene (1888-1973); George Gustaf (1891-1930); and Olin Calmer (1894-1973). George Fjelstad served as Dane County Clerk, with his daughter Selma as deputy clerk, until 1924. In 1926, George Fjelstad died. Julia lived with Selma in Madison until she passed away on May

29, 1949. George and Julia (Syse) Fjelstad are both buried in West Primrose Cemetery, northeast of Larson Farm, in Dane County, Wisconsin.

Olena Syse, called Lena, Knut and Gunhild's fourth child, married Herman William Ennen in 1890, possibly in Wisconsin. The couple had two daughters, born in Garfield County, Colorado: Cora Julia Ennen (1891-1970); and Katherine Ennen (1897-1986). The daughters were both baptized at Bethel Lutheran Church in Madison. Herman Ennen was a waiter in a restaurant in Leadville, Colorado in 1889, and would eventually open his own restaurant in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. After Herman's death in 1909, Lena (Syse) Ennen took over operation of the restaurant. By 1930, Lena had returned to Wisconsin, living in Blanchardville with family. She was living with her daughter, Cora, in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, in 1940. Lena (Syse) Ennen died on February 1, 1947, in Los Angeles, California.

Elling Olaus Syse, called Olaus, Knut and Gunhild's fifth child, married Andrinne Stugaarden on October 21, 1884 at the York Memorial Lutheran Church (N9407 Highway 78, north side of Highways 78 and 39, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), where the Larson family gravestone sits, southwest of Larson Farm. Olaus and Andrinne acquired Larson Farm on January 25, 1886. The couple had three children: Arthur C (1885-1903); Lawrence Wilhelm (1886-1963); and George Robert (1889-1906). Olaus passed away on August 24, 1893 and Andrinne followed on August 1, 1894. Arthur, Lawrence, and George were left orphans, and all were under the age of ten. Julia (Gunhild) Stugaarden, a sister of Andrinne's took the boys in. Gust Syse, a brother of Olaus, was their legal guardian. He rented the farm to the Martin and Karen Lokken family until about 1901. For at least part of that time, the Syse boys lived in part of the house, and the Lokkens lived in part of the house. From 1901 to about 1907, Gust operated Larson Farm (as well as his own farm, nearby). In 1903, Arthur passed away, and in 1906, George Robert died, too. Oral history (from Lily Ness) tells that both boys and their parents died of tuberculosis. All four are buried in the cemetery of the York Memorial Lutheran Church (north side of Highways 39 and 78, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), Green County, Wisconsin.

Lawrence inherited Larson Farm in 1906, and married Theoline Amanda Kittleson on December 18, 1907. Lawrence and Theoline Syse farmed for about four years. The first of their five children was born on the Larson Farm. Their children were: Orville Elroy (1909-1974); Thelma Lenore (1913-2007); Percival Odell (1914-1991); Virginia C. (1920-); and Audrey Jane (1922-). In 1912, Lawrence and Theoline signed a land contract with Anton Knudtson, whose family would engage in dairying on Larson Farm for the next 25 years. Lawrence and Theoline Syse moved into Blanchardville, where Lawrence owned an automobile dealership and garage until the early 1930s. By 1935, Lawrence was farming in Moscow Township, Iowa County and by 1942, he was farming near Mount Horeb, Dane County. Lawrence died in 1963. He and Theoline (Kittleson) Syse are buried in the Perry Lutheran Cemetery in Daleyville, Wisconsin.

Susan (Synneva) Syse, Knut and Gunhild's sixth child, married Carl Albert Hult on June 12, 1890 in Dane County. Hult had immigrated from Sweden in 1885. Susan and Carl Albert had four children, all born in Madison: Ralph Albert Hult (1891-1966); Cora Amelia Hult (1892-1957); May Victoria Hult (1895-1957); and Clarence Sanford Hult (1898-1933). Carl worked as a foreman and a designer in a machine shop in Madison, and later had his own garage. Carl passed away in 1931. Susan died on February 16, 1934. Both are buried in Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison, Wisconsin.

Carl Gustav Syse (called Gust), Knut and Gunhild's seventh child, married Anna Sophie Stugaarden in Blanchardville on August 15, 1893. She was a sister of Andrinne Stugaarden, who married Olaus Syse. Gust and Anna farmed in York Township, and by 1905 had moved to a farm in Moscow Township, Iowa County. Gust became the legal guardian of Olaus and Andrinne's children following her death in 1894, and took care of Larson Farm, in addition to his own, until about 1907. Gust and Anna had six children: Glenn Bennett (1894-1978); Sanford (1896-1943); Olin Amos (1897-1970); Rebecca Clara (1899-1988); Esther Wilma (1901-1956); and Burnell Elmer (1905-1968). Gust's wife Anna passed away in 1947; he died on July 7, 1959. They are buried in York Memorial Lutheran Cemetery (north side of Highways 39 and 78, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), in Green County, Wisconsin.

Knudtson Family: 1912-1937

Lena, Clara and Anton Knudtson, ca. 1920s

Anton Knudtson was born in Norway on January 30, 1870. He married Lena Nilson Lund/Brote, born in Norway in 1883. They had one daughter, Clara, born in 1905. According to oral and local histories, the family had no other children. The Knudtsons were dairy farmers. They left one visible mark on the Larson Farm barn - the initials A.K. and the date, 1927, are spelled out with nails on the exterior of the eastern basement barn door. Lena Knudtson passed away in 1935, and Anton Knudtson died in 1959. They are buried in York Memorial Lutheran Cemetery (north side of Highways 39 and 78, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), Green County, Wisconsin.

Erickson Family: 1938 - 1968

Larson Farm during the 1920s, when the Knudtson family lived here. Note the machine shed, which has since been moved near the driveway by the Tyvand Road entrance.

Milton Wilmer Erickson was born May 30, 1904 to Ole and Sophia (Johnson) Erickson, Norwegian immigrants, in Finley, Juneau County, Wisconsin. Ole (1863-1950) and Sophia (1863-1925) Erickson immigrated from Norway to the U.S.A. in 1893. The Ericksons farmed near Argyle, Wisconsin, (southwest of Larson Farm) where they had relocated after a tragic fire on their Finley farm. Mrs. Erickson had taken the oldest child to school, leaving three younger ones at home alone. The children were playing with matches, and accidentally started a fire. At least one of the children died. The Ericksons were broken hearted, and moved to Argyle for a fresh start. Ole and Sophia Erickson are buried in the Old Argyle Cemetery, in Argyle.

On January 11, 1927, Milton Erickson married Gladys Clara Venden, in Freeport, Illinois. She was the daughter of Ole Bernt Olson Venden (called Ben) and Sophia Venden, and was born in York Township on August 15, 1909. Ben Venden (1876-1959) had immigrated from Norway in 1892. Sophia (Lindokken) Venden was born in Wisconsin of Norwegian immigrant parents in 1880. Ben and Sophia Venden married in 1898, and farmed near Dodgeville, Wisconsin. They are buried in York Memorial Lutheran Cemetery, (north side of Highways 39 and 78, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), Green County, Wisconsin.

Milton and Gladys Erickson rented a dairy farm in Waldwick Township near Hollandale in Iowa County until purchasing and moving to Larson Farm in 1938. They moved to another dairy farm, at 588 Moscow Road near Hollandale in Iowa County, around 1947, and then into the village of Blanchardville in 1971, after selling both Larson Farm (1968) and the Moscow Road farm (1971). Milton and Gladys Erickson had twelve children: Dwayne Norman Erickson (1927-2003); Marcia Colleen Erickson (1929-2016); Gloria (1930-); Milton Wilmer Erickson, Jr. (1936-2005); Stanley Erickson (1938-); Shirley Erickson (1940-); Rae Erickson (1942-); Frank Erickson (1944-); Terry Erickson (1946-); Jerry Erickson (1946-2013); Linda Erickson (1949-); and Wendy Erickson (1951-).

Shirley, Rae, Frank, Terry, and Jerry were all born on Larson Farm. After the Erickson family moved to the farm at 588 Moscow Road in Iowa County, Leonard Erickson (brother of Milton Erickson) lived at Larson Farm. Dwayne, Stanley, and then Frank Erickson each ran Larson Farm, while living on the family farm in Iowa County. Milton Erickson died in 1982, and Gladys Erickson passed away in 1985. Both are buried in York Memorial Lutheran Cemetery (north side of Highways 39 and 78, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), in Green County, Wisconsin.

Dwayne Norman Erickson was the oldest child of Milton and Gladys Erickson. He was born in Waldwick Township near Hollandale in Iowa County. Dwayne farmed Larson Farm, with the help of Uncle Leonard Erickson, after the Erickson family relocated to the farm at 588 Moscow Road. In 1957, he married Mary Magdalene Larson, and they moved to a farm on Gunderson Road near Blanchardville, living there until his death in 2003. Mary continues to work at the Argyle Lumber Company. Dwayne and Mary had two children, Larry O. and Rona, and seven grandchildren. Dwayne is buried in Yellowstone Lutheran Church Cemetery, on Yellowstone Church Road, southwest of Blanchardville.

Marcia Colleen Erickson, the second child of Milton and Gladys Erickson, was born in Waldwick Township near Hollandale in Iowa County. She married Delbert L. Peterson in 1947, and they farmed near Barneveld, Wisconsin. Delbert and Marcia had five children, Leland, Vicki, Juanita, Debi, and Todd. They have nine grandchildren. Delbert Peterson died in 2014. Marcia (Erickson) Peterson passed away in 2016. Both are buried in Perry Lutheran Cemetery, Daleyville, Wisconsin.

Gloria Erickson, the third child of Milton and Gladys Erickson, was born in Waldwick Township near Hollandale in Iowa County. Gloria married Robert Treuthardt in 1952, and they farmed in Clarno Township near Monroe, Wisconsin. Gloria and Bob had four children, Susan, Sherri, Robert Jr., and Paul. They have six grandchildren. Bob Treuthardt died in 2012, and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Monroe, Wisconsin.

Milton Wilmer Erickson, Jr., known as Junior, was born in Waldwick Township near Hollandale in Iowa County, the fourth child of Milton and Gladys Erickson. He married Shirley Nybroten, and they had four children, Shelly, Lori, Shawn, and Darrin. Junior and Shirley have nine grandchildren. Junior passed away in 2005, and is buried in York Memorial Lutheran Cemetery (north side of Highways 39 and 78, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), in Green County, Wisconsin.

Stanley Erickson, the fifth child of Milton and Gladys Erickson, was born in Waldwick Township near Hollandale in Iowa County. In 1962, he married Carol Halverson. Stanley farmed Larson Farm after his brother Dwight, then worked as a police officer in Madison, and then bought the Moscow Road farm from his parents around 1971. Stanley and Carol had two children, Rod and Amy, and five grandchildren.

Shirley Erickson was born on Larson Farm, the sixth child of Milton and Gladys Erickson. She married Dale Barth in 1963, and they farmed near Monroe, Wisconsin. He died in 2015, and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Monroe, Wisconsin. Shirley and Dale had two children, Connie and Angie, and two grandchildren.

Rae Erickson, the seventh child of Milton and Gladys Erickson, was born on Larson Farm. She married Earl Boeshaar in 1976, and they lived near Atlanta, Georgia and will be living in Middleton, Wisconsin.

Frank Erickson, called Pete, was born on Larson Farm, the eighth child of Milton and Gladys Erickson. He farmed Larson Farm after Junior did, 1962-1969, milked 30-35 cows, and then continued farming with his father and brothers. Frank eventually moved to a farm near Darlington, Wisconsin. Frank is divorced and has two children, Tonia and Christine, and four grandchildren.

Terry Erickson, the ninth child of Milton and Gladys Erickson, was born on Larson Farm, with his twin, Jerry. He married Karen Schneider in 1970, and they farmed near New Glarus. Terry and Karen had three children, Kevin, Kim, and Carissa. They have ten grandchildren.

Jerry Kendall Erickson was born on Larson Farm, with his twin, Terry, the tenth child of Milton and Gladys Erickson. Jerry farmed with his father and brothers, eventually buying one of the Erickson family farms (not Larson Farm), near Blanchardville. In 1979, he married Patricia (Allhands) Burch, gaining a son, Matthew. They lived in Blanchardville. Jerry passed away in 2013, and is buried in York Memorial Lutheran Cemetery (north side of Highways 39 and 78, west of where Highway 78 separates from Highway 39 and runs north), in Green County, Wisconsin.

Linda Erickson was born on the Moscow Road farm near Hollandale in Iowa County, the eleventh child of Milton and Gladys Erickson. She married Dale Bernhardt in 1972, and they lived in Platteville, Wisconsin. Linda and Dale (called Bernie) have two children, Jessie and Sarah.

Wendy Erickson, the twelfth and last child of Milton and Gladys Erickson, was born on the Moscow Road farm near Hollandale in Iowa County. She married Ray Spellman in 1976. They lived in Darlington, Wisconsin. Wendy and Ray have two children, Emily and Elizabeth.

Leonard Erickson, the brother of Milton Erickson, was born in Finley, Juneau County, Wisconsin on April 2, 1902. He was a life-long bachelor, and dairy farmer. In 1940, Lenard was living with Milton and Gladys Erickson on Larson Farm; he likely farmed with them through the 1930s as well. Leonard served in the U.S. Army during World War II, returning to live on Larson Farm, helping operate Larson Farm and living in the farmhouse after Milton and Gladys moved to the Moscow Road farm in 1947. Leonard was living in Monroe, Wisconsin at the time of his death in 1976. He is buried in the Old Argyle Cemetery, Argyle, Wisconsin, southwest of Larson Farm.

Larson Family: 1976 - Present

Gust and Anna (Anderson) Larson, wedding, ca. 1904

The paternal side of the Larson family descends from Gustaf (Gust) Adolph Larson and Anna Wilhemla Anderson. Gust Larson was born October 12, 1880 in Kumla, Örebrö County (Öreberga), Sweden, the son of Lars Erik Andersson and Anna Sofia Larsdotter. Gust was a farmworker in Örebrö, Sweden. He departed Sweden on November 1, 1901, leaving from Alvestad, Östergötland, Sweden. He settled in Garden Prairie (Bonus Township), Boone County, Illinois, working as a farm laborer. Gust married Anna Anderson after settling in Illinois, about 1904. She was born December 4, 1879, in Östergötland, Sweden and immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1903.

By 1920, Gust and Anna Larson owned their own farm, in Garden Prairie, an area with many Swedish immigrants. By 1930, the Larson family had sold the farm and was living in Rockford, where Gust worked for a coal company.

Gust and Anna had eight children, all born in Garden Prairie, Illinois: Fritz (1905-1999), Effie (1906-1977), Helmer (1908-1921), Harry (1910-1977), Violet (1912-1958), Floyd (1913-1922), George (1916-1982), and Wayne (1921-1974). Anna passed away in 1940, and Gust lived with their son, George, in Rockford, continuing to work for the coal company. Gust remarried not long before he

died in 1946. Gust and Anna are buried in the Garden Prairie Cemetery, Garden Prairie, Illinois, as are their sons, Helmer, Floyd, and Wayne Larson.

Fritz Larson worked on the family's Garden Prairie farm. As the eldest of nine children, and in light of his father's poor health, Fritz left school after sixth grade to provide support at home. When he left the family farm in Garden Prairie, he worked at Roy's Auto in Rockford as an attendant and car mechanic, eventually working his way to co-owner of the Dale-Fritz Sinclair Station in Rockford. He served as president of the 7th Street Business and Professional Men's Association. In his long retirement, Fritz spent much time and energy growing and selling African violets and tinkering on his expansive train board (ever popular with the grandchildren and great grandchildren).

Fritz Nelson married Rhoda Nelson in 1931. They were the parents of Gerald (1936-), Randall (1939-), and Wendell Larson (1943-). Fritz and Rhoda (Nelson) Larson raised their family in Rockford, Illinois, but always maintained a close connection to the Garden Prairie farm.

Rhoda Hildur Karalina Nelson was born March 30, 1910, in Rockford, Illinois, the daughter of Carl Johan Albert Nilson and Karalina Simmonsson (Carolina Simonson Peterson). They were married in Rockford in 1906. Mr. Nilson was born in Kristdala, Småland, Sweden in 1881. He arrived in the U.S.A. in 1903, becoming a citizen in 1909, changing the spelling of his name to Nelson. Karalina (Simonson) Nelson was born in 1877, in Öland, Sandby, Sweden, and immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1889. Mr. and Mrs. Nelson both passed away in 1954. In addition to Rhoda, the Nilsons had another daughter, Ruth Edith Nelson, born December 13, 1911. She married Clifford Arvid Kjellstrom (1908-1984). Ruth (Nelson) Kjelstrom died in 1984. The Kjelstroms had three children: Jean, Rhoda, and Margaret.

Rhoda (Nelson) Larson graduated from high school in Rockford. In addition to working at home and raising three boys, Rhoda worked for many years at the church in Rockford of which the Larson family had been loyal congregants for many years: the largely Swedish-American First Lutheran Church on Oak Street.

In her retirement years, Rhoda also made and sold festive Mr. and Mrs. Santa Clause dolls to serve as holiday table centerpieces. She and Fritz also traveled in their retirement, including to Egypt.

The Garden Prairie farm barn was destroyed by a tornado in the 1960s, and burned in the 1970s. Todd Larson salvaged some elements from the Garden Prairie farm for Larson Farm. The hinges on the shutters in the east gable end of the Larson Farm aviary came from the Garden Prairie farm barn. Soil from the Garden Prairie farm fields was spread near the cabin on Larson Farm in 2004. In the mid-1980s, Fritz Larson planted a willow tree opposite the barn on Larson Farm. The willow tree was grown from a slip from the Larson's home in Madison, and is still thriving on Larson Farm. Rhoda Larson passed away February 16, 1998, and Fritz Larson died on July 7, 1999.

Fritz Larson and Rhoda (Nelson) Larson, June 9, 1931

Rhoda and Fritz Larson

Fritz and Rhoda Larson

Jerry and Barbara (Moraw) Larson

Gerald Larson married Barbara Ann Moraw in Cook County, Illinois on September 22, 1956. Their children are LeAnn Janet (1958-), Todd Wendell Moraw (1960-), Dawn Ellen (1962-), and Kurt Randall (1968-) Larson.

Gerald (Jerry) started his career as a paperboy. He worked his way through college and dental school in a variety of jobs, including at a hardware store in Rockford and in construction, at the Wrigley Building in Chicago, under the supervision of his father-in-law, Kenneth Moraw. He also worked as night chef during dental school at Cavallini's in Midlothian, Illinois (a period when daughter LeAnn was born). Jerry spent three years at Augustana College, and received his undergrad and dental degrees from the University of Illinois. Jerry is proud to have served as captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps. After a year-long internship at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. (where son Todd was born), and two-year tour of duty at Ford Ord, California (where daughter Dawn was born), Jerry and family settled in Madison, Wisconsin (where son Kurt was born). He practiced dentistry in Madison for 39 years, and derived pleasure above all from the loyal friendships he formed with both staff and patients.

As a young girl in Evergreen Park, Illinois, Barbara (Moraw) Larson was a bit of a tomboy, and into sports. She was also an avid speller and once represented her grade school in the city spelling bee. When prompted by a radio announcer on

the sidewalk in downtown Chicago, as a young girl Barbara successfully spelled 'antidisestablishmentarianism.' Barbara attended Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, for two years. It was here that she met Jerry. Over the years and across the country, wherever the family was located, Barbara took additional college courses and completed her degree in Madison, Wisconsin at age 40. She worked initially as a school teacher in Verona, Wisconsin, and went on to an 18 year career at the University of Wisconsin – Madison as a Research Program Manager. Barbara was in large part the origin of the family commitment to prairie restoration at Larson Farm.

LeAnn Larson was a highly successful scholar in both high school and college. She graduated from St. Olaf College at the head of her class with a degree in chemistry, and went on to medical school at Washington, University, St. Louis, Missouri. LeAnn specialized in ophthalmology and practiced in Madison, Wisconsin; Cleveland, Ohio; and Iowa City, Iowa, where she practices to date. LeAnn and consistently carved time out of her practice and greatly enjoyed providing gratis eye treatment and surgery in lesser-developed settings around the world, including in Central America, India, and Haiti. LeAnn has two sons attending undergraduate school in Iowa: Matthew Larson Murry (1995-) and Peter Larson Murry (1997-).

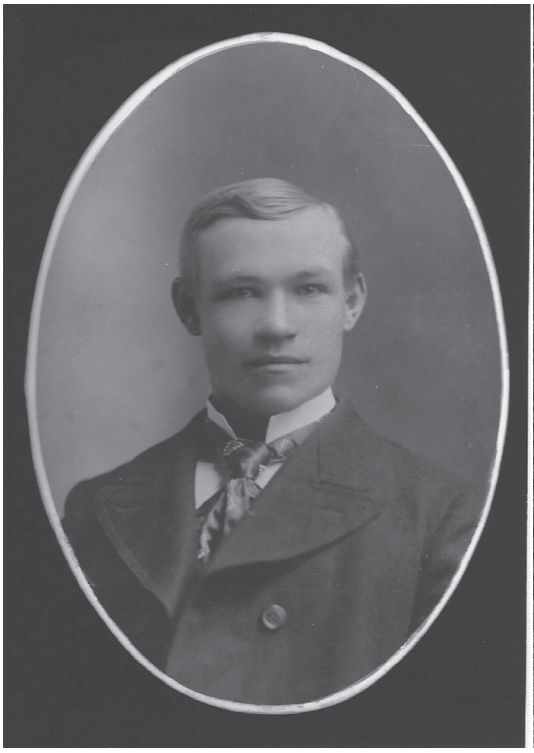
Todd was into theatrics in high school and college (Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota). However, his interest in international affairs took priority following a junior year of study abroad (Pau, France). After completing his undergrad major in history, he served for two years in the Peace Corps in Togo, West Africa. After law and grad schools (University of Washington, Seattle), Todd served for two decades with the United Nations, around the world, in a variety of legal and administrative capacities. After his first retirement to Larson Farm, Todd received a presidential appointment with the Obama administration to work on an emerging US foreign policy priority – the international human rights and development of LGBTI persons.

Dawn, like her mother, was a bit of a tomboy as a child, and into sports. She went on to a long career as a tennis teaching professional in the Chicago area, as well as a high school tennis coach. Dawn earned her undergrad degree in psychology

at Augustana College – the third Larson family member to attend, and the first to graduate from that school. She earned her master's degree at the University of Wisconsin – Madison in industrial relations. Dawn has been a community leader in the sports and other involvements of her children: Delaney Ann Weiland (1997-) and Robert Gerald Weiland (1998-). Dawn (Larson) Weiland is married to Robert Weiland, who is originally from Pennsylvania.

Kurt, as a young boy, was always drawn to nature and animals. In the family Christmas card of 1977, he said at age nine, "I… enjoy plants." Kurt spent his early time on Larson Farm particularly connected with animals, raising goats and ducks, for example. During high school and college vacations, he worked as a park ranger in the New Glarus Woods State Park. He graduated from University of Wisconsin-Madison with an undergrad degree in political science and a professional degree from the School of Veterinary Medicine. After a stint practicing veterinary medicine in Vermont, Kurt settled into practice as a small animal veterinarian in the Chicago area. He continues to practice in and call Chicago his home. Kurt is married to Kathleen Darley, who is originally from Texas.

Turning to the maternal side of the Larson family, Barbara (Moraw) Larson is half Swedish-American. Her paternal grandfather, John Albin Moraw was born in Ängelholm, Skåne County, Sweden on March 28, 1878, the son of Johannes Moreau and (mother's name unknown). John Moraw immigrated to the U.S.A., arriving in New York on March 2, 1896. He changed the spelling of his name from "Moreau" to "Moraw" so that it would be simpler for immigration officials to pronounce. John Moraw became a citizen in 1906.



John Albin Moraw, ca. 1905

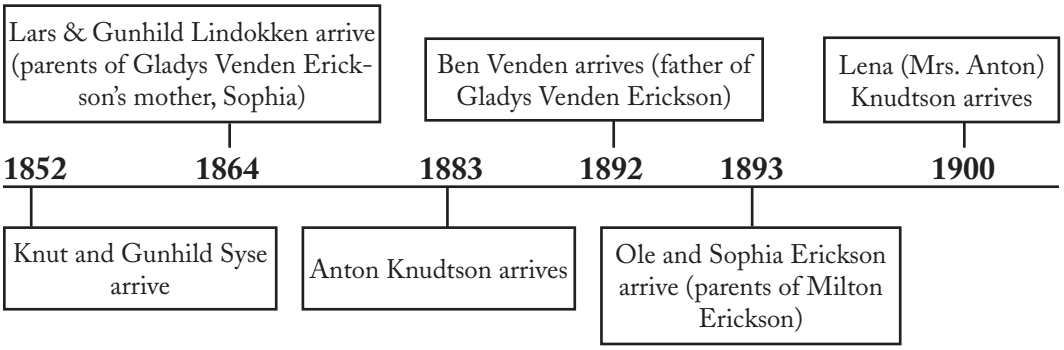
Eva (Johnson) Moraw, ca. 1905

John married Eva Matilda Johnson on December 2, 1905 in Chicago. She was also a Swedish immigrant, born October 19, 1877 in Säby, Jönköping County, Sweden. They had four children: Kenneth (1909-1979), Jeanette (1914-2012), Ethel (1915-1997), and Ruth (1918-2011). John Moraw was a cabinet-maker, and by the late 1920s had a thriving business, with a number of employees. However, he lost the business during the Depression, although, unlike many, he did not lose his home. He recovered financially during the 1940s, establishing his own contracting firm in Chicago, the Moraw Building Company. Eva Moraw passed away in 1957. John Albin Moraw was murdered in May 1972, at age 94, when a group of teenagers broke into his Chicago home to rob him, and shot him.

Kenneth Moraw and Esther (Corbin) Moraw, ca. 1932

Kenneth Moraw married Esther V. Corbin (1911-1994) in Chicago, Illinois. Esther was of English descent and had ancestors who fought in the Civil War (Matthew Corbin), and the Revolutionary War (Joshua Brown). Kenneth and Esther had two daughters Janet Lee (1933-) and Barbara Ann (1936-) Moraw. The girls were raised in Evergreen Park, Illinois, in a house Kenneth built himself. Kenneth was a skilled carpenter, employed in construction for many years at the Wrigley Building in Chicago. Kenneth would take the "L" (elevated) train from the Flossmoor Station into the city every weekday. He worked on, and supervised, office renovations and other projects in the Wrigley Building, and also helped with early repairs to the Larson Farm main residence. Kenneth Moraw died July 11, 1979 in Chicago. Esther Moraw died in New Glarus, Wisconsin, on June 19, 1994.

Immigration from Norway



More than 800,000 Norwegians immigrated to the U.S.A. between 1835 and 1935, arriving in four waves. Some 45,000 Norwegians settled in the U.S.A. prior to the Civil War, about half of them in Wisconsin. All immigration to the U.S.A. plummeted during the Civil War, picking up steam afterwards. Between 1866 and 1873, more than 111,000 Norwegians moved to the U.S.A. Immigration decreased substantially during the severe economic recession that lasted from 1873 to 1879. The third wave of Norwegian emigration took place between 1879 and 1893, when more than 260,000 settled in the U.S.A. Another economic recession beginning in 1893 again stalled immigration. The last wave of substantial immigration from Norway occurred between 1900 and 1914. Norwegians have arrived in smaller numbers since the end of World War I. In 1990, there were 3.9 million Norwegian-Americans in the U.S.A., concentrated in the upper Midwest. More than 400,000 lived in Wisconsin, second only to Minnesota, where 750,000 Norwegian-Americans resided.

What caused Norwegians to emigrate? For the most part, Norwegians were searching for better economic opportunity. Norway is a mountainous country, and only three percent of the land can be cultivated. Yet, during the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries, 85 percent of the population lived on farms. During the late eighteenth century, Norway, and much of Europe, began to experience a rising birth rate. By the early nineteenth century, Norway was becoming overpopulated. This expansion was the result of the availability of new foods, especially the potato, and advances in sanitation and medicine, notably the smallpox vaccine, which was mandatory for all Norwegians beginning in 1810.

In 1814, Norway and Sweden formed a union, and the new government raised taxes. Many Norwegian families could not afford to pay the taxes, and tithe (pay the equivalent of ten percent of family income) to the Lutheran church, and at the same time maintain their farms. Farms were sold, or divided and subdivided, such that they were too small to produce enough food for everyone who lived there. Agriculture continued to dominate the economy, unlike other European nations, such as England, where the agrarian society rapidly transformed to an industrial-mercantile one, providing many job opportunities for the growing population.

Industry, trade, and urban occupations would begin to develop very slowly in Norway in the second half of nineteenth century. Meanwhile, Norway began exporting agricultural products to industrializing European nations, stimulating a change in the Norwegian agricultural system from traditional subsistence farming to one of raising crops for profit. Many Norwegians living in rural areas realized that they would need to go elsewhere to provide for their families. There were few jobs in Norwegian towns or cities; they would have to leave their homeland to get ahead. The opportunity to secure land at very low prices drew thousands of Norwegian immigrants to the U.S.A. during the nineteenth century. Family and community ties brought many to Wisconsin and Minnesota. A larger proportion of the Norwegian population emigrated than did the population of any other European country, with the exception of Ireland.

The first Norwegian immigrants to the U.S.A. were a group of 10 families escaping religious persecution by the Lutheran church. Numbering 45 persons, they were "Haugeans," evangelical protestants from the area around Stavanger, Norway. (A Hauge log church stands today on County Highway Z near Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, north of Larson Farm, and is open to the public). The Sloopers, as they are also sometimes called, sailed on the ship, *Restauration.* They arrived in 1825 and established an agricultural settlement in Kendall Township, New York. However, the land proved less than ideal for farming. In 1834, six of the ten families followed Cleng Peerson, one of the group's leaders, to the Fox River Valley in what is now LaSalle County, in northern Illinois.

From the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s, the Illinois settlement expanded. However, much of the land was low-lying and did not drain well, and a series of malaria epidemics devastated the Illinois settlement. By this time, the southern part of Wisconsin Territory had opened to Euro-Americans. The first Norwegian settler in Wisconsin was Ole Nattestad, who first came to Illinois in 1837, but, looking for better farmland and healthier conditions, relocated to Jefferson Prairie (Clinton Township), Rock County, Wisconsin, in 1838. In 1839, other Norwegians joined Nattestad at Jefferson Prairie, and his brother, Ansten Nattestad, brought a small group to Rock Prairie (just west of Jefferson Prairie), Rock County, Wisconsin. Ole Nattestad wrote about Jefferson Prairie, and published his writings in Norway, where they were widely circulated and garnered intense interest in the Wisconsin settlements.

During the 1840s, Wisconsin became the leading destination for Norwegians, who traveled directly to Wisconsin from ports on the east coast via the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes to Milwaukee. The first to follow this route established a community in southeastern Waukesha County, Wisconsin, near Lake Muskego, in 1840. The Muskego settlement was the dispersal point for hundreds of Norwegian immigrants in the early 1840s. Muskego was also the site of the first Norwegian Lutheran Church in the U.S.A. (1844), and the first Norwegian newspaper in the country, *Nordlyset*, published from 1847 to 1849. However, the area was marshy, and epidemics of malaria and cholera in the late 1840s and early 1850s killed many.

As more Norwegians arrived in the late 1840s, they began settling north and west of the earlier settlements, looking for fertile farmland away from marshes. They established Koshkonong (1840), in eastern Dane and western Jefferson counties, Wisconsin. They also settled Blue Mounds (1848), extending about 40 miles from Black Earth in Dane County, south-southwest into Moscow Township in southeastern Iowa County, and York Township in northwestern Green County, and south through eastern Lafayette County to Gratiot, all in Wisconsin. Larson Farm is located in the Blue Mounds region, in an area known as the Perry settlement (named for Perry Township).

The Syse, Knudtson, and Erickson families were all Norwegian-Americans. Knut and Gunhild Syse immigrated to Wisconsin in the early period of Norwegian settlement, arriving in 1850, living first in the Koshkonong settlement, and moving to Larson Farm in 1854-55. The immigrant ancestors of the Knudtson and Erickson families arrived later, after the Civil War. Norwegians spread north and west so quickly that by 1850, only three Wisconsin counties lacked Norwegians. In 1850, the largest settlements were at Rock Prairie, with a population of 1,000; and at Koshkonong, which spread over 12 townships in Dane and Jefferson counties and numbered 2,670 persons.

By 1860, in addition to the Blue Mounds settlement, there were significant concentrations of Norwegians farming in the westernmost counties in Wisconsin, especially in Coon Valley and Coon Prairie, Vernon County, as well as in Columbia, Juneau, Adams, and Waupaca counties. Norwegian farming and fishing families settled around Manitowoc and on the Door County peninsula. The Civil War stopped most immigration to the U.S.A., but Norwegian immigration began in earnest following famine in Norway in 1866-1868.

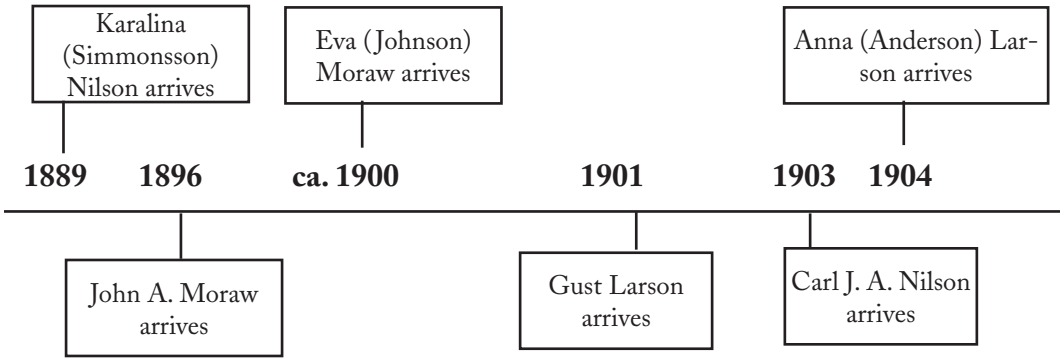
The Homestead Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862, granting land in the west (including western Wisconsin) to encourage settlement, drew Norwegian immigrants to western Wisconsin, and into Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas. Those coming to Wisconsin located near family and friends, and spread north along the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers and into the northwestern corner of Wisconsin, including Barron, Polk, St. Croix, Dunn, Douglas, and Bayfield counties. Norwegians settling in Wisconsin during the third wave, 1879-1893, followed the same pattern. Wisconsin was mostly bypassed during the fourth wave, 1900-1914, as fewer Norwegians came from rural areas, and most located in west coast cities, or homesteaded farmlands in the western plains.

In the U.S.A., Norwegians formed enclaves that were not only Norwegian, but were made up of families from the same valley or parish in Norway. The Lutheran church in Norway generally opposed emigration, and did not send ministers during the early years of Norwegian settlement. In response, some Norwegian settlers became lay preachers. In 1844, the first Norwegian American Lutheran church was established in Muskego. Although Norwegians predominantly formed Lutheran churches, some did convert to other protestant denominations.

Norwegians supported education, both public and parochial, and established schools wherever they settled. Norwegians also founded a variety of cultural and fraternal associations. Singing societies, such as the Grieg Chorus (in Madison), were organized beginning around 1880, and other associations involved sports such as skiing, folk dancing, fiddling, and Norwegian literature. People from the same region in Norway formed organizations known as "bygdelag," which celebrated and promoted Norwegian heritage, several of which are still active in Wisconsin. "Lag" means "society," and a "bygd" is a district or region. For example, "Sognalaget" is the society of people originating from Sogn, Norway. The largest Norwegian organization is the Sons of Norway, which was founded as a mutual aid society in Minneapolis in 1895. The Sons of Norway currently preserves and promotes Norwegian heritage, in addition to providing insurance to its members. There are Sons of Norway lodges in 33 communities in Wisconsin, including Stoughton, Mount Horeb, and Monroe.

Norwegian-American associations also established orphanages, nursing homes, hospitals, and medical clinics. The Norwegian language press was also active in the U.S.A. until World War I. The museum of the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society, at 100 South Second Street in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, is located about 15 miles north of Larson Farm. The museum features an exhibit on the different groups that settled southern Wisconsin, including the Ho-Chungra (Ho-Chunk, Native Americans), New Englanders, Scots, Germans, Irish, Swiss, and Norwegians.

Immigration from Sweden



About 1.2 million Swedes immigrated to the U.S.A. between 1845 and 1920. The timing was similar to that of the Norwegians, with a small number arriving before the Civil War, and larger waves between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the 1873 recession, and again between 1879 and the 1893 recession, with the final wave of immigration between 1900 and World War I. The Larson family's Swedish immigrant ancestors immigrated to the U.S.A. between 1896 and 1903, establishing themselves in northern Illinois. In 2000, there were four million Swedish-Americans in the U.S.A. The greatest number by far were found in Minnesota, where some 500,000 Americans of Swedish descent lived. In addition, more than 100,000 Swedish-Americans resided in each of Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, California, Texas, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, and Florida.

What prompted Swedish emigration? As with the Norwegians, Swedes largely left their home country looking for better economic opportunities, as Sweden transitioned from a predominantly agrarian economy to an industrial-mercantile society. Interestingly, although three-quarters of the Swedish immigrants came from rural areas, many settled in American cities and towns, often working in lumber mills, the building trades, and other similar occupations, as well as on the railroad. John Albin Moraw, Barbara (Moraw) Larson's grandfather, was one of the many Swedish immigrants working in the building trades. He had a cabinet-making company in Chicago from at least 1920 and into the 1930s, lost it during the Depression, and then re-established himself as a building contractor with his own company until his death in 1972.

The earliest group of Swedish immigrants were "Eric Jansonists," religious dissenters who arrived in Chicago in 1846, and founded the Bishop Hill colony in Henry County, west of Chicago. Swedish immigration to the U.S.A. prior to the Civil War was dominated by the Jansonists, 1,500 of whom traveled through Chicago to Bishop Hill, Henry County, Illinois. Other Swedish immigrants stayed in Chicago, and that city played a leading role in Swedish migration that followed the end of the Civil War. Swedish immigrants first settled farmlands in western Illinois, western Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, spreading into Nebraska and Kansas by 1870. The cities of Chicago, Minneapolis, and St. Paul were the prime urban destinations.

The period of greatest Swedish settlement in Wisconsin fell between 1865 and 1890, when much of the best agricultural land had already been claimed. Swedes in Wisconsin mostly settled in the northwestern part of the state, on farms and in communities bordering the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers. By 1900, Swedish immigration to Wisconsin had mostly ended, and Swedes accounted for only a small part of the foreign-born residents of the state. Wisconsin ended up between the two areas of greatest Swedish settlement in the U.S.A. - Chicago/northern Illinois, and that most Swedish of states, Minnesota.

In 1910, just a few years after Gust Larson, Anna Anderson, John Albin Moraw, and Eva Mathilda Johnson arrived, some 100,000 Swedes lived in Chicago, more than any other city in the world, except of Stockholm. John Moraw and Eva (Johnson) Moraw lived in Chicago for most of their lives. Gust Larson and Anna (Anderson) Larson farmed near the community of Garden Prairie, in Boone County, Illinois into the 1920s. Boone County lies west of Rockford, Illinois, and just south of Rock County, Wisconsin. Although the first Euro-Americans to settle Boone County were Yankees from New England and New York, a great many Swedes lived in the area by the time Gust and Anna Larson settled there directly from Sweden.

The Swedish American Museum at 5211 North Clark Street in Chicago highlights the history of Swedish immigration with an emphasis on Swedish-Americans in Chicago. The Swedish Historical Society at 404 South 3rd Street in Rockford, Illinois, also endeavors to preserve Swedish culture in the U.S.A. and features exhibits and a library for genealogical research. Jerry Larson's brother, Randy, is active in both organizations.

Perry Township, Dane County and York Township, Green County

Larson Farm straddles two townships in two different counties. The south portion of the farm, including all the buildings, are located in York Township, in Green County. The north portion of the farm is in Perry Township, in Dane County. Although the two townships have different town and county boards, socially and culturally both are part of a larger, cohesive area settled by Norwegians in the mid-nineteenth century. This is known as the Perry Norwegian Settlement. In 1994, the Perry Historical Center published *The Historic Perry Norwegian Settlement,* a prize-winning book that describes the history of the settlement, its families, its schools, and its churches. The following section is excerpted from that book, a copy of which is kept at Larson Farm.

History of the Perry Norwegian Settlement

The Perry Norwegian Settlement was a part of the Blue Mounds Settlement, which was established in 1848. At its peak in the 1880s, some 6,000 Norwegians lived in the Blue Mounds Settlement. Blue Mounds was organized into eight Norwegian Lutheran parishes: East Blue Mounds, West Blue Mounds, Vermont, Hollandale, Primrose, Springdale, York, and Perry. The Military Road, constructed by the U.S.A. Army in the early 1830s to connect military posts at Prairie du Chien, Portage, and Green Bay, passed through Blue Mounds. A spur of the road running easterly to Madison and Milwaukee was completed in 1838. Regular stagecoach service began in 1840. The road was rough and weather sometimes made it impassable. In 1856, the Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien Railroad (later a part of the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad) was extended across the state. The line passed through Madison, and followed the Wisconsin River, a bit north of the Blue Mounds settlement. After the Civil War, the Chicago & North Western Railway extended a line through the area, with stations at Mount Horeb and Dodgeville. In 1887, the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad extended a spur from Brodhead, Wisconsin, with a station in New Glarus.

The Perry settlement was divided into ten school districts, most of them rural, one-room schools: Ruste, Moen, Clay Hill-Spring Creek, Sandy Rock, Daleyville (a larger, village school), Spring Valley, Forward, River Forks, Meadow View, and Tyvand. Children growing up on Larson Farm attended the Tyvand School, a

one-room building about one mile north of the farm, on the east side of Tyvand Road. The first Tyvand School was erected prior to 1873, and built of stone. It was replaced with a one-story, square, frame school in 1923-24. Between 25 and 40 students attended Tyvand School every year, until the school closed in 1960. Tyvand School was converted into a private residence, and can still be seen at 256 Tyvand Road. After 1960, children in the attendance area that included Larson Farm were bused to school in the village of Blanchardville (now the Pecatonica Area School District).

Tyvand School ca. 1938. Mr Paulson, teacher. Gloria and Marcia Erickson, 3rd and 4th from left in front row. Dwayne Erickson 2nd from left in back row.

Several Lutheran churches were established in the Perry settlement to minister to the Norwegian community. The first of these was the Hauge Log Church, erected in 1851-1852 on County Highway Z near Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, north of Larson Farm. This congregation was a part of the evangelical Lutheran Haugean sect that had first immigrated to the U.S.A. in the 1820s. The Hauge Log Church was used until 1887, when the congregation erected a new church. The Hauge Log Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, and its grounds made into a public park. The church is open daily from sunrise to sunset for quiet meditation.

In 1854, a second congregation following a more traditional type of Norwegian Lutheranism was formed, briefly worshiping in the Hauge Log Church. The cornerstone for the Perry Lutheran Church, which would house this congregation, was laid in Daleyville in 1856, and the building was completed in 1861. The first Perry Lutheran Church was destroyed by a tornado in 1878. The second Perry Lutheran Church was erected in 1878-1881. Following a fire sparked by a lightning strike in 1935, the Perry Lutheran Church was completely rebuilt. Since the 1980s, the Perry Lutheran Church has housed the Perry Historical Center, in addition to holding Sunday morning services.

The Syse, Knudtson, Erickson, and Larson families all attended one of the two York Lutheran churches, on Highway 78 near the intersection with Highway 39, west of Larson Farm. Construction on Old York Church began in 1861, on the south side of what is now Highway 78, east of the intersection with Highway 39. Old York Church was finished in 1872, its completion delayed by the Civil War. Old York Church was a simple, frame, front-gabled building with gothic-arched windows. The entrance was in the center of the front façade, at the base of a square bell tower. In 1880, the congregation split over whether to call a pastor from the Norwegian-Danish Conference (of Lutheran Churches), or to call one from the Norwegian Synod. The majority preferred a pastor from the Norwegian-Danish Conference, and remained the congregation of Old York Church. The proponents of a pastor of the Norwegian Synod formed a new congregation, New York (York Memorial) Church. Both congregations met in Old York Church until 1884, when York Memorial Church was built across the road from Old York, on the north side of Highway 78, west of the intersection with Highway 39. Old York Church closed in 1966, and was demolished in 1977, although the cemetery is intact. York Memorial Church was extensively remodeled in 1948, creating its present modern appearance. There is also a cemetery adjacent to York Memorial Church, where the Larson family plot is located.

History of the Village of Blanchardville

The village of Blanchardville dates back to 1843, when two Mormon families settled on the site, which they called, Zarahemla, or "City of God." A third Mormon family arrived in 1846. Zarahemla was a tiny hamlet with a dam and

gristmill on the Pecatonica River, a general store, and a handful of log homes. The mill was known as the Horner Mill on the Pecatonica. However, the Mormon families moved on in the early 1850s.

In 1855, Alvin Blanchard bought the Horner Mill and the land that would become Blanchardville, paying $1,500.00. In 1857, he filed a plat for Blanchardville, made up of six blocks and incorporating the mill. The same year, a hotel and a blacksmith shop were built in the hamlet. The first school opened in 1858, and the first house of worship was built for the Methodists in 1859. Blanchardville developed as an agricultural support community, serving farm families in the surrounding area.

In 1880, 169 people lived in Blanchardville. In 1888, the Illinois Central Railroad extended a spur line through Blanchardville, linking it to Freeport, Illinois and through Freeport to Chicago. The arrival of the railroad sparked growth in Blanchardville such that, in 1890, Blanchardville was large enough to incorporate as a village. In 1891, the village's volunteer fire department purchased its first hooks and ladders – the hooks were used to pull down burning buildings to prevent the spread of fire. The first Lutheran church was erected in 1892. It was replaced by the New Hope Lutheran Church at 305 Madison Street in 1925. The first Catholic church was built in 1898. It is no longer standing. The Immaculate Conception Church at 604 East Street appears to date from ca. 1970.

By 1900, Blanchardville had 573 residents. A telephone switchboard was in operation, with more than 250 customers in 1907. In 1914, the first electric lights in the village were installed in the depot. Blanchardville continued to modernize throughout the twentieth century, as the village's population fluctuated. The village saw its greatest growth during the 1960s, rising to 794 inhabitants in 1970. The population has increased slightly since then, reaching 825 in 2010. The village of Blanchardville continues to serve as an agricultural support community for the surrounding area. The Blanchardville Historical Society and Museum, at 101 South Main Street, maintains a collection of items reflecting the village's history. It is open Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., from April through October.

History of the Village of New Glarus

Emigrants from canton Glarus, Switzerland, founded New Glarus in 1845. Terrible economic conditions in rural Switzerland, brought about by the combination of a burgeoning population, insufficient arable land, and lack of employment, left many families in desperate circumstances. In 1844, magistrates in canton Glarus financed a search for suitable land in the U.S.A., organized the Emigration Society of the Canton of Glarus (society), and formulated rules for the use of common funds and property once the land was purchased. Glarus officials sent Nicholas Duerst and Fridolin Streiff as representatives of the society to acquire land for the colony. In July 1845, Duerst and Streiff bought 1,280 acres in what is now Green County, to be owned in common by the society. One hundred-eighteen immigrants arrived in August 1845, naming the colony New Glarus. A second group came in 1847. Initially, they followed the communal plan, but by 1856, had severed ties with canton Glarus, and all property was privately owned.

The Town of New Glarus was organized in April 1850. The original plat of New Glarus was recorded in 1851. By 1861, the settlement boasted a church, a school, a blacksmith shop, an apothecary, a wagon-maker, a tinsmith, two masons, two carpenters, two general stores, a physician, three shoemakers, a flour mill, and the New Glarus Hotel (which still stands at 100 Sixth Avenue, and was erected 1853). A branch of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad arrived in New Glarus in 1887. The community numbered 600 residents and 150 houses in 1890. New Glarus' first bank was established in 1893, and the first newspaper began publishing in 1897.

In 1901, New Glarus incorporated as a village. It continued to develop as an agricultural support community, a role it played well in to the twentieth century. In 1910, the village numbered 708 residents. The Helvetia Milk Condensing Co. (later Pet Milk Co.) opened that year. It would be a major employer in the village until closing in 1962, in response to decreasing dairy production in the area. As agriculture was declining in the area around New Glarus, tourism was on the rise. New Glarus, long known as "The Swiss Colony" was gaining national attention as "America's Little Switzerland," a tourist destination. New Glarners had carried on some traditions brought from Switzerland, but the founding of the Wilhelm Tell pageant in 1938, the participation of many townspeople in the production, and

the event's success reawakened pride in Swiss heritage and led to the development of tourism as an important factor in the local economy.

In addition to the popular annual Wilhelm Tell pageant, the Swiss Historical Village & Museum was planned (1939) and built (1942-ca.1990), the Chalet of the Golden Fleece opened as a museum of Swiss culture (1954), annual presentations of the Johanna Spyri play *Heidi* began (1965), and the national Swiss Center of North America was established (1999). Some businesses also promoted Swiss traditions, such as the Upright Swiss Embroideries, Inc., which took over a failing embroidery factory in New Glarus in 1936, embroidering handkerchiefs and dresser scarves. The firm later became the Swiss Miss Textile and Lace Factory, closing in 1998. The village has grown slowly but steadily, rising from 1,469 residents in 1960, to 2,172 in 2010.

Today, tourism is the leading sector of New Glarus' economy. The Swiss Historical Village & Museum is located at 612 Seventh Street in New Glarus, and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., May 1 through October 15. The Swiss Center of North America maintains a collection of Swiss genealogy, history, and cultural resources. It is found at 507 Durst Road in New Glarus, and is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Chalet of the Golden Fleece, an authentic Swiss Bernese mountain chalet, was built for Edwin P. Barlow (1885-1957). Barlow's mother was Swiss, and he was raised by his mother's sister, Fanny (Streiff) Figi from a young age. Barlow was an actor and director, pursuing a career in the theater in New York City in the 1910s and 1920s. He lived in Switzerland for much of the 1930s, where he saw Friedrich Schiller's play, *Wilhelm Tell* (1804), at Interlaken. In 1937, Barlow returned to New Glarus, and commissioned the construction of the Chalet. In 1938, he founded the Wilhelm Tell pageant, which has been performed in New Glarus every Labor Day weekend since.

Barlow was a courageous, openly gay man at a time when homosexuality was widely condemned in the U.S.A., and punishable by imprisonment in some states. In 1954, Barlow gave the Chalet and its contents to the village of New Glarus to operate as a museum. The Chalet is open some Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., call (608) 527-2614. It is located at 618 Second Street in New Glarus. Todd Larson has served on its board.

Farming History: Dane and Green Counties

The farming history of Dane and Green counties followed a pattern typical of the state. Early Euro-American settlers, including Norwegians, primarily planted wheat. It was a very valuable cash crop, was easy to grow, and could yield two crops each year – spring wheat, and winter wheat. The first gristmill in Dane County, the Badger Mill, was erected in 1844, about 18 miles northeast of Larson Farm in Verona Township. The city of Verona grew up around the mill. Luke Stoughton built a gristmill on the Catfish River in the Koshkonong settlement in 1848, about 34 miles east of Larson Farm, and platted the community of Stoughton next to it. Knut and Gunnhild Syse lived near the village of Stoughton for about four years after they first arrived in the U.S.A., around October 1, 1850. By the time the Syse family had settled on Larson Farm, in 1854 or 1855, a gristmill had been in operation in the community of Blanchardville, eight miles southwest of Larson Farm, for at least five years.

Wheat production increased in Dane and Green counties in Wisconsin through the 1860s, peaking around 1870. That year, Dane County led the state in acreage planted in wheat. Green County, in contrast, was 22nd in acres of wheat. The 1870 census of agriculture shows that Knut Syse produced 397 bushels of wheat in 1869, about average for farmers in the Town of Perry. However, during the 1870s, wheat production in Dane and Green counties plummeted. Decades of intensive wheat cultivation had depleted the nutrients in the soil, and insects decimated the crops. Wheat planting moved westward, and many new immigrants followed the wheat frontier, settling in western Wisconsin, and then in Iowa and Minnesota, and the Dakotas.

During the 1870s, farmers in Dane and Green counties began transitioning from growing wheat into dairying, raising cattle and feed crops. In central and eastern Dane County, tobacco had been an important crop since the 1840s, mostly cultivated by Norwegian farmers. Many tobacco producers acquired dairy cattle during the 1870s, developing combination tobacco/dairy farms, still found in the area. Milk could not be transported far, due to lack of refrigeration, so dairy farmers processed milk into butter, and cheese. Farmers first made butter and cheese at home, but small factories soon appeared at prominent intersections

in both counties, making the process easier. It is not clear when the Syse family began dairying, but it seems likely that they had done so by the time Olaus Syse took over the farm in 1886. By 1885, Dane County was second in the state in pounds of butter produced, and Green County was eleventh. Cheese-making surpassed butter production in Dane County by 1915. In contrast, cheese production exceeded butter in Green County from at least 1885 on. That year, Green County was second in Wisconsin in pounds of cheese made.

The pre-eminence of cheese-making in Green County was due in large part to the efforts of the Swiss settlers, many of whom had raised cattle in Switzerland, producing cheese for home consumption, which they continued in their new home. In 1873, the first cheese factory in Green County opened in the village of New Glarus, seven miles east of Larson Farm. The number of cheese factories in Green County peaked at about 200 in 1898. In contrast, Dane County never had more than 100 cheese factories. The Perry settlement included about 28 cheese factories. The earliest of these are thought to have been built in the 1880s.

A cheese factory is said to have been located on Larson Farm, but does not appear on either the 1891 or 1902 Green County plat map, so either was in operation briefly during the 1880s, or during Anton Knudtson's ownership of Larson Farm (1917-1937). During the Erickson family's tenure, 1938-1971, the milk was delivered to a cheese factory at the intersection of Highway 39 and County Highway F, near Blanchardville. Rural cheese factories were small, simple buildings, and had become largely obsolete by the early twentieth century, when improved transportation and effective refrigeration made it possible to truck milk long distance to large-scale plants in cities.

The amount of cheese manufactured in both Dane and Green counties increased annually, rising to more than 18 million pounds each in 1947. Only five counties in the state produced more cheese than Dane and Green counties that year. Acreage planted in corn, both for human consumption and as feed, also increased between 1870 and 1947 in both counties. Dairying remains the leading agricultural pursuit in much of Dane and Green counties, and small-scale, artisan cheese-making is on the rise, especially in Green County.

Historical and Cultural Destinations Around Larson Farm

American Players Theater (APT)
5950 Golf Course Road
Spring Green, Wisconsin
(608) 588-7401
boxoffice@americanplayers.org
www.americanplayers.org

APT presents nine plays each season, from June through November, in two venues. One is an outdoor amphitheater, and the other is a smaller, indoor theater. APT specializes in Shakespeare, and is located in a hilly area near the city of Spring Green.

Blanchardville Historical Society and Museum
101 South Main Street
Blanchardville, Wisconsin
blancharvillehistorical@gmail.com
www.blanchardville.com/community/blanchardville-museum

The Blanchardville Historical Society and Museum maintains a collection of items reflecting the village's history. It is open Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., from April through October.

Chalet of the Golden Fleece
618 Second Street
New Glarus, Wisconsin
(608) 527-2614
nggoldfleece@gmail.com
www.newglarusvillage.com/recreation/chalet-of-the-golden-fleece

The Chalet of the Golden Fleece is an authentic Swiss Bernese mountain chalet. In is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Built for Edwin P. Barlow, founder of the Wilhelm Tell pageant, the Chalet also displays Barlow's extensive collection of antiques. It is open some Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Grandview (Nick Englebert)
7351 State Highway 39
Hollandale, Wisconsin
(608) 967-2322
Grandview@nicksgrandview.com
www.nicksgrandview.com

Grandview is an art environment located just west of the village of Hollandale. Nick Englebert created more than 40 concrete sculptures on the grounds between 1937 and 1952. Between 1952 and his death in 1962, Englebert produced oil paintings, on display in the museum (formerly his house). The museum is open Thursday through Sunday, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Memorial Day through Labor Day. The grounds are open year round, during daylight hours.

Green County Fair
2600 10th Street
Monroe, Wisconsin
(608) 325-9159
www.greencountyfair.net

The fair is held at the Green County Fairgrounds in Monroe annually, in the third week in July. It is a 4-H, with auctions, concessions, animal judging, cheese competition, a tractor pull, a demolition derby, carnival rides and attractions, and harness racing.

Hauge Log Church
County Highway Z
Blue Mounds, Wisconsin
(608) 437-4419 (Hauge Preservation Association)
www.haugelogchurch.com

This 1852 log church is one of the first Norwegian Lutheran churches built in Wisconsin. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Located in the Hauge Historic Park, which is open from sunrise to sunset seven days a week.

Mineral Point
(608) 987-3201 (Mineral Point Chamber of Commerce)
info@mineralpoint.com
www.mineralpoint.com

The city of Mineral Point was settled by Euro-Americans in 1827, drawn by rich deposits of lead and zinc. The historical center of Mineral Point features stone buildings erected for Cornish settlers, who were expert miners, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Pendarvis, a historical site owned by the state, is located in the historic district at 114 Shakerag Street, and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., from May through October. The city boasts many antique shops, and cafes where you can sample the local specialty, Cornish pasties.

Monroe Cheese Days (Green County Cheese Days)
1016 16th Avenue
Monroe, Wisconsin
(608) 325-7771
www.cheesedays.com

Cheese Days is a festival celebrated in the third weekend in September in even-numbered years. It takes place on the county square in downtown Monroe, and features live Swiss-German folk-dance music, carnival rides, and a Sunday afternoon parade.

Mount Horeb Area Historical Society
100 South Second Street
Mount Horeb, Wisconsin
(608) 437-6486
mthorebhistory@mhtc.net
www.mthorebhistory.org

The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society depicting the history of western Dane County, and depicting the village of Mount Horeb in the early twentieth century. The museum is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., from May 1 through December 15.

New Glarus Brewery
2400 State Highway 69
New Glarus, Wisconsin
(608) 527-5850
www.newglarusbrewing.com

Artisanal brewery with self-guided tours, hard-hat tours (reservations needed), gift shop, and tasting room. Open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. The hard-hat tour lasts three hours and visits the Riverside and Hilltop breweries (part of the New Glarus Brewing Company), every Friday, at 1 pm.

Perry Historical Center/Perry Lutheran Church
1057 Highway 78 South
Daleyville, Wisconsin
(608) 437-5294
www.perrylutheranchurchelca.org/perry_historical_center
A room in the church is dedicated to historical records and family histories, and the public is welcome. The congregation remains active, and holds services on Sundays.

Swiss Center of North America
507 Durst Road
New Glarus, Wisconsin
(608) 527-6565
info@theswisscenter.org
www.theswisscenter.org

The Swiss Center of North America maintains a collection of Swiss genealogy, history, and cultural resources. It is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Swiss Historical Village & Museum
612 Seventh Avenue
New Glarus, Wisconsin
(608) 527-2317
www.swisshistoricalvillage.org

The Swiss Historical Village & Museum recreates an original Swiss-American settlement. It is located at 612 Seventh Street in New Glarus, and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., May 1 through October 15.

Taliesin
Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center (tickets, bookstore and gift shop)
5607 County Highway C
Spring Green, Wisconsin
(608) 588-7900
www.taliesinpreservation.org

Taliesin was the primary home of internationally-acclaimed architect Frank Lloyd Wright from 1911 until his death in 1959. The property embodies Wright's organic architecture, and has housed the Taliesin Fellowship/Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture since 1932. The visitor center is open daily, May through October, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and in November and April, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Friday through Sunday.

Wilhelm Tell Festival
Tell Grounds
W5199 County Highway W
New Glarus, Wisconsin
(800) 527-6838 (New Glarus Chamber of Commerce)
www.wilhelmtell.org

Friedrich Schiller's play, Wilhelm Tell, is presented in New Glarus every Labor Day weekend at the Wilhelm Tell Festival. Live performances of traditional Swiss music and folk-dancing are often a part of the festival.

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Appendix: Oral History Excerpts

Tyvand School Reunion at Larson Farm
Date: Late 1970s
Interviewer: Barbara Larson
Interviewees: Lilly Ness and Mabel Lokken

Lily Ness?: We used to board the teachers [at Tyvand School] at our farm [not Larson Farm]. Must have boarded about 30 teachers.

Barbara Larson: Would there usually just one teacher there [in the school]?

Lily?: Oh, yes, just one. Sometimes she'd have about 30, 35 pupils. And now, they hire a teacher, and then they hire a teacher to help that teacher, and an extra teacher for that teacher! Honestly!

Mabel Lokken?: We had 44 [pupils] one time, I remember.

LATER

Lily?: The teachers we had were mostly from Verona, and

Mabel?: Mount Horeb, some of them.

Lily?: And Black Earth, and Verona. I have a list, I've written down the names of all the teachers, since 1889.

LATER

Barbara: Why did the Norwegians settle here?

Lily: Well, I suppose where some were, more came. They all came to that place.

Mabel: But we had Swiss people, too. Mabel: Nope, he was the father to Lawrence Syse. And Lawrence Syse was married to Theolina Kittleson.

Lily: Oh yeah, we had Swiss men in the cheese factory, you know.

Mabel: The cheesemakers were always Swiss.

LATER

Barbara: [You had a dairy farm] How many cows did you milk?

Lily?: I milked 40 cows.

Mabel?: I milked 28 down here [not Larson Farm]. We had 44 when my Dad was living.

[garbled]

Lily?: My mother sat on a milking stool milking by hand until she was 75 years old.

LATER:

Lily?: I remember one time, Lena Knutson told us she came out here and saw something along the wall [in the parlor, presently known as the New York room] and she thought, where did that pretty ribbon come from? And she went over there to pick it up and it was a snake! [As the Larsons discovered during remodeling, beneath the floor of the room was dirt, so the snake could have come from underneath the floor]

Barbara: In this room?

Lily?: Yeah, well you know, the window, they didn't, the windows were, he crawled up that stone wall and came in the window. Unless she had the window open, and there was a hole in the screen, I guess.

Tyvand School Reunion at Larson Farm
Date: 1980
Interviewer: Barbara Larson
Interviewees: Lilly Ness and Mabel Lokken

Lily Ness: Here's that big room. Mabel, you remember this big room? Yeah, this is where Gunnar Stugaarden had them, and the boys.

Mabel Lokken: There were two families, you know, they had to divide the house.

Barbara: There were two families here?

Mabel: Yeah.

Barbara: About what year was that?

Mabel: Um, let me see now. 18…18? Let me see now. Must have been. Let me see now. Elwood was two and I was 5 months.

Lily: 1892 then, I suppose.

Mabel: Yeah, must have been 1892.

Barbara: Okay, you lived here in 1892. For six years. And your name is?

Mabel: My name was Mabel Lokken at that time.

Barbara: And who owned it at the time.

Mabel: Gust, no, Olaus, O-L-A-U-S Syse.

Barbara: Was Andrinne his wife?

Mabel: Andrinne [pronounces "Andrina"], yeah, uh-huh.

Barbara: Was he the father to Knut Syse?

Lily: Knut was born in 1818, that's the father of them all. That's the one that came here.

Barbara: Okay. Let me get out my abstract here…It shows that Knut Olsson was the first owner. Is this Knut Olsson the same as Knut Syse?

Lily: Yes, the pioneers, when they came, they changed their names, when they came.

Barbara: So, you think Knut Olsson and Knut Syse were the same person?

Lily: Yes.

[Lily reads aloud from the article written by Alexius Baas for the *Capital Times*, in 1949, after Julia (Gurine) Syse Fjelstad died]

Lily: Gurine Syse married Gunnar Fjelstad, he was the town clerk for Madison for many, many years. He was a great, big, 300-pounder. And that was his wife, that lived here, that was born here.

Barbara: Now he was the what? The Town Clerk in Madison?

Mabel: Dane County Clerk in Madison for many years.

Lily: George. His name was Gunnar, you know, and they called him George. I don't know why.

LATER

Barbara: Now who were these people who had TB, and when were they here?

Mabel: That was, uh, Olaus and Andrinne Syse.

Lily: And then she died.

Barbara: He was a son to [whom]?

Mabel: No, he was a brother to Mrs. George Fjelstad and all them.

Lily: He was a son to Knut, you know.

Mabel: Yeah, a son to Knut.

Barbara: A brother to Julia, son to Knut.

Lily: The only way to do that is to make a chart. You know, like a

Barbara: Right.

Lily: I could get someone to help me, I think I could get Kermit Fjelstad to help me, maybe I could make a chart, of the whole Syse family, because a lot of them moved on.

Barbara: You know, I was wondering if Knut, the first owner, is buried up there in one of those cemeteries, the old cemeteries. [A rubbings of the Syse gravestone hangs in Larson Farm house]

Lily: Old York, I believe.

Mabel: Yeah, Old York.

LATER

Mabel: Do you remember the names of those three boys that were here, you know?

Lily: Yeah, Lawrence

Mabel: Lawrence, and Robert, and Arthur.

Lily: Arthur, Lawrence, and Robert. They were the three boys. And two of them died of TB. Just think, they couldn't get the house clean enough, the doctors didn't know anything, they lived here, and those germs were around. But the doctors didn't know much in those days. Poor boys. I had their picture. I had their picture and I gave it to Kermit [Fjelstad].

Erickson Family Reunion on Larson Farm
Date: June 29, 2013
Interviewer: Tim Heggland
Interviewees: Stanley Erickson, Shirley Erickson Barth, Gloria Erickson Treuthardt, Rae Erickson Boeshaar, Frank Erickson, Terry Erickson, Rona Erickson Gant (daughter of Dwayne Erickson)

Note: The Erickson family holds a reunion every summer. In 2013, Larson Farm hosted their reunion, and interviews were conducted in the hay mow (top part) of the barn.

Stanley Erickson

Tim: When you needed to ship cattle, or hogs, or stuff like that, I'm assuming that by now, you were shipping everything by truck?

Stanley: Yeah, but when we moved here, though, we drove the cattle here on the highway from over by Waldwick [where the Erickson family lived before, in Iowa County]. We overnighted them at Orville Balrud's that was a brother-in-law of my Dad's, and fed them and watered them, and then the next [day] started from there, and brought them here. On the highway.

Tim: Was the highway paved at that time?

Stanley: No, it was a kind of black top, it was put down different than what it is now.

Tim: When did the, was the farm or the valley electrified at the time you moved here?

Stanley: No, no, there was no electricity here until 1947. Rural electric brought the poles down through, and we had electricity then. I still remember that. Going from kerosene lamps, to lanterns, to electric lights.

Tim: So the school would have had electric lights – but you weren't there at night.

Stanley: No. That might have gotten it from the other direction, too. We got it

from south, from the south, and I don't think it went any further than here. So they may have had it before us.

Tim: I'm from Madison, I'm a city kid, and it's really hard for me to imagine what a difference it must have made.

Stanley: Oh, yeah, the first night they turned the lights on, it was like daylight. I remember those fluorescent bulbs they had put in. Yeah, it was nice.

Tim: And a washing machine?

Stanley: Well, my mom washed a lot of clothes with an old gas engine, wringer-type washer.

Shirley Erickson Barth

Tim: What do you remember best about the place?

Shirley: Probably how we used to play. We didn't have a whole lot of chores to do at that age. I remember Mom used to take us, she helped milk and everything, she used to take us, the little ones, in a wheelbarrow or something like that, and take us to the barn to milk, and then back up to the house. [laughs] So, you know, you remember those kind of things, but…

Tim: So, how many of there were you?

Shirley: Well, let's see, it was Junior, Stanley, Frankie, Rae, the twins, and I that were born here.

Tim: So there was a group before who were born in Iowa County?

Shirley: I think so.

Voice off-camera (Rae): No, Dwayne, Marcia, Gloria, and Junior were born in [Iowa County]

Shirley: Oh, okay. I though Junior was born here, too. But, it doesn't matter [laughs]. But there were 12 of us, six girls and six boys, when it ended up.

Tim: So, you went to school at Tyvand.

Shirley: Yeah, we walked, both ways.

Tim: I've been told it was uphill both ways.

Shirley: Right! [laughs] Yeah, I would concur! We thought it was quite a jaunt. But, you know, as you got used to it, it didn't seem to be, you know.

Tim: So, you would've started in kindergarten there.

Shirley: Yeah, uh-huh, and I was just starting – no, it would've been in March, of my third grade, that we moved.

Voice off-camera (Rae): Actually, they didn't have kindergarten yet. So, she started first.

Shirley: That's right. First, second, and into third.

Voice off-camera (Rae): She used to make great leaf houses. At Tyvand School. In the fall when the leaves were down. We would make whole houses with, this would be the kitchen, this would be the living room, this is the parlor. And one day, we had just built our beautiful leaf house, remember that? And this other girl was not wanting me to play with them, because I was two years younger, but Shirley and I played together all the time. So, she came and messed up the leaf house.

Shirley: Was that Carol or Cheryl?

Rae: We'd had our lunch outside, and do you remember? I didn't like milk, if you can imagine, growing up on a dairy farm. Anyway, I took my milk and poured it on her shoes. [everyone laughs] And she left our leaf house alone after that.

Gloria Erickson Treuthardt

Tim: The family has said that you raised dairy cattle and hogs.

Gloria: Yes, yes. And I used to take the hogs and up on the hill over here, and let them eat the acorns. And that was almost every day for quite awhile until they could go to market. But they loved to go out there and eat.

Tim: Did you keep any of the hogs for yourselves here?

Gloria: Yes, yes. And in the wintertime, Mom would, when we butchered, Mom would fry the meat and put it in these big jar things, and then pour the lard over it, to seal it in. That's how we, our refrigerator was. And then we had, my Dad took the milk, and we'd run the separator, and had cream for quite a few years. And then he changed over to grade B, I presume, because the barn had to be a certain fixed up to go grade A. I don't know if he ever made it or what.

Tim: How did you refrigerate, with ice?

Gloria: We never…we had a spring, and it was very cold [there was a spring house in what is now called the 'summer pasture' on Larson Farm]. We'd use that, and most everything was not…like we use the refrigerator for everything now, you know, but at that time, you just didn't do that. The meat we never did. So, and you, I don't know, we just got along that way. That's how we were used to.

Tim: So, what were your chores?

Gloria: [laughs] Lots of things to do! I started milking, by hand, when I was seven. And I even had a cow that wasn't tied in at the stanchions, she backed out over me, and I fell onto the driveway, and she stepped across me. Yeah, she didn't step on me, or I probably wouldn't be here today! But, I mean, there were lots of things I remember, you know, well. Lantern for light in the barn. No yard light, when I was here, anyway. I know they got one later on, between the middle of the barn and the house. But, I always used to think, when I went out the door on the porch, now, if I go straight, I will hit the milk house [which Todd Larson later converted into a chicken coop]. And then, I'd know I'd be there. But you could not see.

Rae Erickson Boeshaar

Rae: What my memories of the early years, the fun, after the twins were born, and, my brother, Frank and I, had a lot of, we weren't into doing chores yet, or anything, we were too small, we had a lot of fun exploring the wonderful trees that, thankfully, are still here. We love this farm! It's so beautiful, and we spent a lot of time down by that stream, with the tadpoles, and the frogs, and the birds, and all that, because we were both- he was two years younger than I was. And I was here until…elementary school started in September of my…I got to go when I was 5, and then in February I turned six, and in March, we moved! So, I only spent part of my first grade here. But my best memories of this farm are later on, I was a tomboy and I would go hang with my brothers and Dad, and we would come here, always, because we had to do the haying here. There is a field at the end of this property that is absolutely beautiful, if you get to go up there, it's the very last one at the end of the property, and you can enter from the road. But the whole farm was beautiful, there are other fields back here that I love, too. And we used to pick walnuts, if you notice when you're coming, when you're approaching the farm from 39, you see all those walnut trees, on the left side. It's just, I can't believe it, it's solid walnut trees. And, we used to pick them in gunny sacks with, the siblings all picked them, and then we would, you know, shell them, and all that. That was not my favorite thing to do, but I loved eating the walnuts. And we'd have them for baking during the winter, and all that sort of thing. Let me see. But my best memories from here are coming back here when, first, my oldest brother ran this farm, and he would still live with us, at the farm we moved to, and we had a lot of fun here, and my, the one who comes after me, is actually one of the ones who ran the farm, so, he'll tell you his time, time period, this date to this date, right? We, as an adult, I really enjoyed coming back here because I still think it's like a Shangri-la, you know, if you've ever seen that Himalayan place called Shangri-la, you walk around here, and you'll get that feeling. Beautifully preserved, too. That's why we love what the Larsons have done because they really respect the natural beauty of this place.

Frank Erickson

Frank's wife, Connie: Todd wanted you to tell about the snake.

Frank: Oh, yeah. Down there in the milk house, I come in to wash up the equipment after milking that morning, and I had a double sink with a divider in it, and I was looking down at the divider in the sink and I saw a head about that big. And here it was a bull snake. And I knew they were okay for, for getting mice and rodents, and that. But, I didn't want to hurt it, so I went and got a fork (pitchfork) and slipped the fork under about the midsection of it, raised him up in the air, and I had him about six feet off the ground, and his head and tail were still hitting. So, I think he was about 8, 10, maybe 12 feet long, you know. And, that's the biggest snake I'd ever seen. The bull snake. Oh yeah, he was a big fellow. Calm as a cucumber though, he didn't hurt nobody. But they had a lot of fun around here, I guess, cause there's a lot of [snakes].

Tim: So, now when you were doing milking in those days [1962-1968], were you doing bulk milk, or cans, and taking the cans out?

Frank: No, it was a bulk tank, but we started with the buckets, dumping the buckets and carrying them out. My mom, she did a lot of the milking by hand.

Tim: Was the milk sold for cheese?

Frank: No, just milk. Well, I guess they did make cheese out of it. Then I got a conveyor, and it had a hose, that would go down into the bulk tank. And that worked good, too. A lot less walking.

Terry Erickson

Terry: Right on top of the hill here, we were [haying], I would drive [the tractor] in low gear, of course, just barely big enough to steer it,

Tim: Oh, you were driving it?

Terry: Yes, I was driving, and my older brother Dwayne,

Tim: How old were you?

Terry: Yeah, about five years old. My older brother, Dwayne, was on the wagon, they call it the buck and the loader, he was spreading the hay out to get a full load, and I turned around once and looked, and there he was, dancing all over the place, I thought he was just joking, but here we'd pulled a bumble-bee nest up in the hay. So, I'm sitting there kind of laughing at him, and then all of a sudden they were all over me. Well, he was that fast, he got off the wagon and jumped up on the tractor, brushing me off. I got stung 13 times, and Dad was scared enough to haul me to the doctor, and he said, old Doc Marsh, he said, Milt, one more could have been enough, he said. So, that was that close, you know. But that was just one of the experiences here.

Terry: Have you interviewed Stanley yet?

Tim: Yes.

Terry: Did he tell you about the night he stayed up all night planting corn?

Tim: No.

Terry: Yeah, he planted that field up there that's all trees. Then he came back home, cause it was going to rain, so they wanted to get the corn all planted. Anyway, he came back home, and I got up, about 5 o'clock, and then we came right back over again. And I was helping him with the morning chores. Anyway, he says, now you're going to have to keep me awake. So we started back out, we got by the York church over here, going around a corner, and he says, make sure you keep me awake. We had an old '37 Chevy coupe, went around the corner, and he dozed a little bit, I didn't, you know, I was a kid, I was in a cloud somewhere. Anyway, he got off the shoulder, and whipped it back, and took a guard post out. The old '37 Chevy had a running board, on each side. And, we'd always stop at the top of the hill, up here, and let me out, and I'd go bring the cows down, and he'd come down here and get everything set up to milk. We stopped, and he was going to let me out. I opened the door and it caught on the running board, it had banged it up so I couldn't, so he had to shut the car off, get out his side, and then come down here. Yeah, lots of little stories!

Rona Erickson Gant (daughter of Dwayne Erickson)

Tim: I understand you have a hot story about cats?

Rona: I don't know that it's a hot story, but…I was a little girl, very little. I tagged along with my Dad a lot, because usually there was a chocolate shake somewhere in the trip for me. We came here, well, I don't know, one of the many reasons that he'd come here, because there were still people, siblings, farming here. And, the house, we stopped, and his uncle, Leonard, lived in the house. It was kind of dilapidated, dirty and messy, and I remember walking through the porch, and I was probably here a handful of times. But, this one time, we went in the kitchen, and the cupboards were open, doors kind of hanging off cupboards, it was dirty and grimy, and dusty. And, a cat jumped out of one of the upper cupboards, and then some cats came out of the lower cupboards, and I just stood there thinking, 'Oh, my God! The cats are in the cupboards in the kitchen! Is this where they live?' I was just little, maybe three or four, I don't even know how old.

Tim: It was like you were in a horror movie?

Rona: Yeah, it was like 'Ahhhh!' So, it startled me. And I just remember thinking, oh, my God. So, but, Leonard didn't care!