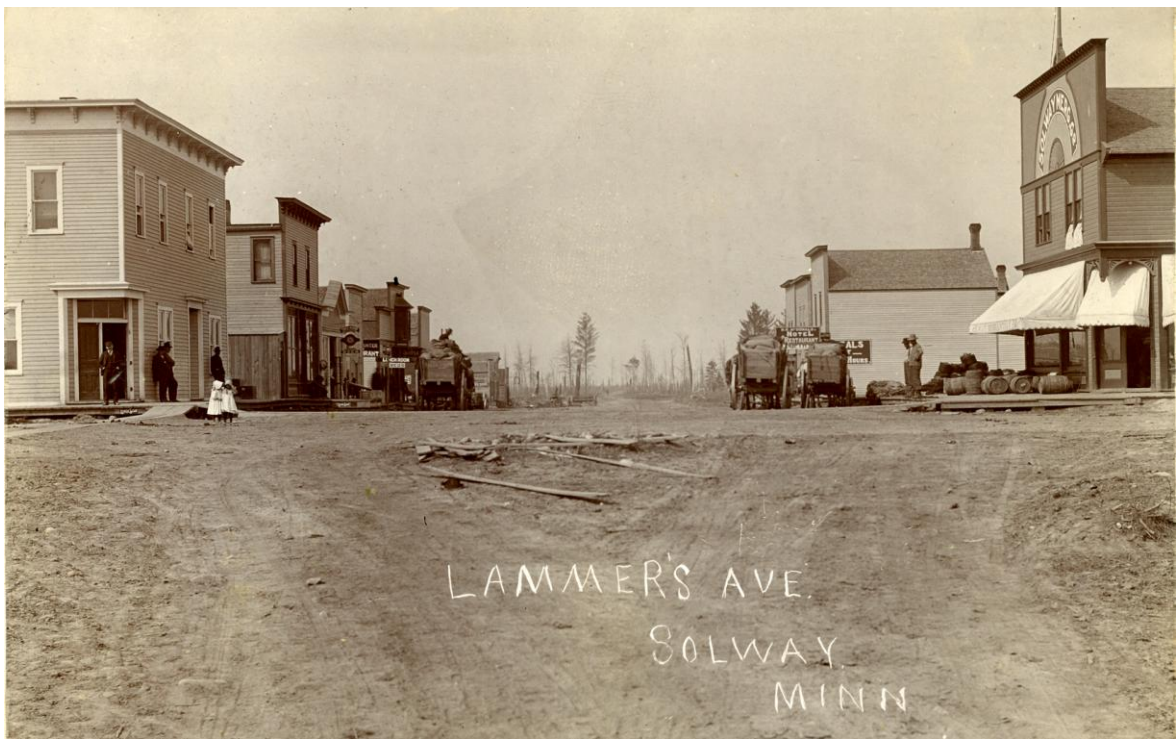


# The “Swede Settlement” of Lammers Township



Roy A. Johnson



Solway Orchestra. L. to r.: John Erickson, Gustaf Johnson, Anton Helgeson, Walter Johnson, L.D. Johnson, Axel Johnson.



First grade class, Solway School, 1943. L. to r., front row: Donnadee Tweten, Georgia Keel, Bonnie Jean Thompson, Arleen Vigasaw, Danny Burgoon, Arlis Ann Peterson, Bobby Almy; back row: Richard Sand, Ruby Bowman, Kenneth Peterson, Jack Solt, Pat Kembitskey, Roy Allen Johnson, Harlan Peterson, Norbert Huey, Leslie Malsness.







# The “Swede Settlement” of Lammers Township



Roy A. Johnson  
2008

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The photograph on the title page is of the Solway Coronet Band, about 1916, comprised of members of the "Swede Settlement." L. to r., front row: Herbert Larson, Carl Erickson, Ed Larson, Otto Fredricks, Axel Johnson; middle row: Alf Johnson, "Nick" Nelson, Anton Helgeson, John Erickson, Joseph Lindell; back row: Oscar Larson, August Larson, Stone Johnson, Ed Lindell, John Lindell, and Bert Thoren.

Sources of photographs: Figures 2, 3, 7, 19 are from Terry D. Boyd; Figure 18 is from Janice (Lindell) Naylor. All other photographs are in the possession of the author.

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## Preface

All through childhood, I remember hearing about Solway in it's early days - it's stores, blacksmith shops, newspapers, and saloons – and the surrounding township of Lammers. I heard how my grandparents and their neighbors came here from Sweden by way of Fertile, Minnesota, and homesteaded land that they then tried to develop into small, self-sufficient farms. I heard how these settlers built a schoolhouse in which to educate their children and how my dad and many other students spoke only Swedish when they began first grade. I saw photographs of the main street of Solway and thought that it looked like the frontier towns in motion pictures of the wild-west. I heard hunting and fishing stories set in locations such as “west of Shorty Knutson's,” “just south of the Soo line tracks,” “in the swamp east of the Larson boys' shack,” and “at Moose Lake.” Still visible throughout the township were the remnants of huge stumps left behind from the time when the pine forests were logged off. In 2002, I completed a family history book titled, *Meadowview. A Family History of Gust A. and Lydia (nee Gack) Johnson and the “Swede Settlement” of Lammers Township*, in which I included the information I had collected about the Swedish community in Lammers township.

The present booklet, prepared for the 2008 anniversary celebrations of Solway (110 years) and Lammers (110 years), is extracted from that 2002 family history book. Some material in this booklet has been reworked while other parts are unchanged from the original. A number of new photographs have been added. One difference from the earlier book is that most dates, *i.e.*, births, marriages, etc., are given only by the year whereas in the original complete dates are used. Land descriptions also have been simplified or deleted. Anyone interested in more of these details is encouraged to refer to the 2002 book, copies of which currently are available in the Bemidji Public Library, the Beltrami County Historical Society library, and the Minnesota Historical Society library (St. Paul).

I heard the stories and wrote essays for classes in school but, unfortunately, I don't remember many details of the stories and the school essays have disappeared. Consequently, when I compiled the family history, it was necessary to re-create much of the detail for the account. A few notes and bits of information on scraps of paper and in old spiral notebooks did survive and other information was found in county court houses and the archives of historical societies. Fortunately, I have received a great deal of assistance from a number of other persons and sources.

Much information was provided by my father and mother, both of whom had excellent memories. Although my mother only arrived in Lammers township in 1932, her knowledge of the community and it's people were invaluable in preparing this account. A visit with Herbert Larson, his daughter Carole Jane Stewart, and his son-in-law Floyd Johnson in 1999 provided numerous fascinating stories as well as much key information about the old Swedish community. Corinne (Johnson) Brindos published a Johnson family history in 1978 that included my Johnson relatives in Lammers township. Her brother, Rodney Wayne Johnson, later added more information to Johnson family history. The book, *Lest We Forget, Lammers and Solway*, collected and published by Jo Johnson in 1982 is an invaluable source of information about the entire Lammers community. Another shorter history of Solway and Lammers was written at the time of Solway's sixtieth anniversary in 1958. These and other sources of the material included in this booklet are acknowledged at the appropriate places throughout the text.

Today, to the best of my knowledge, only two descendents of the Swedish settlers described in this book can still be found living on any land of the original homesteads.



## **The “Swede Settlement”**

In 1898, my grandparents and nine other families began filing homestead claims in eastern Lammers township.<sup>1</sup> The claims were filed in the Federal Land Office in Crookston, Minnesota.<sup>2</sup> An eleventh family in this group of Swedish settlers obtained their land by purchase. Before homesteading in Lammers township, the eleven families were neighbors in rural Bear Park township, Norman County, located southeast of the village of Fertile, Minnesota. In order to claim their homesteads, the settlers must have walked from Bear Park township to Lammers township and then returned home, a round-trip of one hundred miles.

During the summer of 1898 the first log houses were built and, by fall, were ready for occupation. The families arriving in the fall of 1898 were those of Gustaf Johnson, Axel Johnson, Lars Anderson, and L.D. Johnson. Arriving very late in 1898 and early 1899 were Johnnie Lindell, Joseph Lindell, and Amanda Lindell. Later in 1899, John Thoren and Josef Olson arrived and the Andrew Larson family came in 1901. The Peter Ericksons purchased their land in 1901.

The community and the area in which they settled and lived became known locally as the "Swede Settlement." I have no illusions that this group of settlers was unique among the hundreds of other rural communities formed across the United States by immigrants having the same ethnic background. In fact, around the village of Solway in Lammers township were other communities made up of families of Norwegian descent and of Danish descent. The "Swedish" community was special to me because that is where I spent my formative years. I had a strong sense of attachment to the Swede Settlement even though by 1950 many of the original families had left. My father was born in Lammers township in 1906 and my mother, also born in 1906, arrived in the community in 1932 as a teacher in the local school.

All the members of the Swede Settlement are listed in Table 1. The information included in this Table is taken from census records for the years 1885, 1895, 1900, 1905, and 1910 and describes the community from the time of its formation in Bear Park through re-settlement in Lammers township. All the information in Table 1 is transcribed directly from the census records. There occasionally are differences in dates, ages, times, etc., from one census to another; these differences have not been corrected. An exception is in the names of persons. There are numerous variations in names from census to census. For compilation of Table 1, it was necessary to choose one name. I have tried to use names that either were used in the later census years or are those known to be used for the person.

The new homesteads in Lammers township were 50 miles straight east of Bear Park township. The route taken by the families as they moved from Bear Park township probably first took them to the village of Fosston. From Fosston, they presumably followed the existing trail or road connecting Fosston and Bemidji. This road, called the Fosston Trail, has been described as follows:<sup>3</sup>

“The Fosston Trail began in Polk County at Fosston and ran east. At the then Beltrami County line it ran through the now extinct settlement of Popple. Ole Nosen kept a popular stopping place at Popple. The trail continued east until it joined the Red Lake Trail just before Howe’s (earlier Warren’s) stopping place, about four miles north of the present town of Bagley. Mrs. Howe was a

Table 1. Census data<sup>(a)</sup> for "Swede Settlement" members for the years 1885, 1895, 1900, 1905, & 1910.<sup>(b)</sup>

1885		1895			1900				1905			1910				
Name <sup>(c)</sup>	Age	Age	Yrs/mos living in: <sup>(d)</sup>		Date of birth		Year of		Years of resid. <sup>(e)</sup>			Children <sup>(f)</sup>			Place of birth <sup>(g)</sup>	
			Minn.	Dist.	Mo.	Year	Age	Imgrn.	Age	Mn	Dist.	Age	Brn	Lvg		
Anderson, Lars	39	50	27/2	14/2	Aug	1845	54	1868	59	37	7		62		Sw	
Ingeborg	50	62			-	-	-		-				-		Sw	
Brita	-	34			-	-	-		(see Andrew Larson, below)						Sw	
John Albert <sup>(h)</sup>	-	2			Apr	1893	7		12	12	7		-		Mn	
Martha <sup>(i)</sup>	-	-			-	-	-	1893	51	5	5		61	1	1	Nor
Harold <sup>(i)</sup>	-	-			-	-	-		11	5	5		-			Wi
Peterson, Anna	-				-	-	-		76	37	4		-			
Dickinson, Charles <sup>(j)</sup>	-				Nov	1857	42		47	47	5		-			Mn
Amanda (Lindell) <sup>(k)</sup>	-	21			Feb	1871	29		34	34/3	6		-			Mn
Cora Vista	-	-			Oct	1896	3		8	8/8	6					Mn
Johnson, Axel	-	30	7/2	7/2	Jan	1864	36	1887	42	17/1	7		47			Sw
Hulda	-	19			Sep	1876	23	1886	28	18/2	7		33	8	7	Sw
Alben Walter	-	2			Jan	1893	7		12	12/4	7		16			Mn
Agar William	-	3/12			Mar	1895	5		10	10/2	7		15			Mn
Alf Victor	-	-			Mar	1897	3		8	8/8	7		13			Mn
Rolf Eugene	-	-			Jul	1899	1		5	5/10	7		11			Mn
Axel Arvid	-	-			-	-	-		1	1/10	1/10		6			Mn
Oscar Fritof	-	-			-	-	-		1/12	1/12	1/12		4			Mn
Edith Viola	-	-			-	-	-		-				1	11/12		Mn
<i>Albert John</i>																
Johnson, Gustaf	-	26	2	2	Jun	1869	31	1893	36	12	6/7		40			Sw
Emma	-	25			Jun	1869	31	1893	36	12	6/7		41	3	3	Sw
Helga E.	-	3			Jul	1992	7	1893	13	12	6/7		17			Sw
Stone William	-	-			Mar	1896	4		9	9	6/7		14			Mn
Gust Arvid <sup>(l)</sup>	-	-			-	-	-		-				3			Mn
Larson, Oscar	-	20			-	-	-		-				-			
Johnson, L.D.	-	39	30/6	12/2	May	1854	46	1869	51	36	6		55			Sw
Mathilda (Lindell)	-	25			Apr	1869	31		36	36	6		41	6	5	Mn
Mary	-	1			Oct	1893	6		11	11	6		16			Mn
Alfred L.	-	-			Dec	1895	4		9	9	6		14			Mn
Louella	-	-			Feb	1898	2		7	7	6		12			Mn
Samuel G.	-	-			-	-	-		4	4	4		9			Mn
Ellen M.	-	-			-	-	-		-				4			Mn
Larson, Andrew	34	45	15/2	12/2	Feb	1850	50	1880	55	24/10	4		69			Sw
Oscar Carl	-	7			Oct	1887	12		17	17	4		22			Mn
Edward	-	5			Aug	1889	10		15	15	4		20			Mn
Emma Marie	-	2			Jan	1893	7		12	12	4		17			Mn
Brita	-	-			Oct	1860	39	1885	44	19/11	4		49	3	3	Sw
John A.	-												17			Mn
August L.	-	-			May	1899	1		6	6	4		12			Mn
Herbert R.	-	-							1	1	1		6			Mn
Lars	-	73	9	9	Aug	1822	77		82	19/7	4		87			Sw
Martha	-	76							-				-			
Lindell, John	63	72	36/2	13/2	Aug	1824	75	1850	-				-			Sw
Seselia	41	51			Mar	1842	58	1860	62	41	6		66			Sw
Anton	20	29	29	13/2	Dec	1861	38		40	40	6		46			Mn
Joseph	18	26	26	13/2	(see below)		-		-				-			Mn
Mathilda	16	(see L.D. Johnson)			-	-	-		-				-			Mn
Amanda	14	(see Charles Dickinson)			-	-	-		-				-			Mn
Charles	10	20			-	-	-		-				-			Mn
John	8	18			Mar	1877	23		28	28	6		34			Mn
Oscar	3	13			May	1882	18		-				(see below)			Mn
Edwin B.	-	9			May	1886	14		20	20	6		16			Mn

Table 1. Census data<sup>(a)</sup> "Swede Settlement" members for the years 1885, 1895, 1900, 1905, and 1910,<sup>(b)</sup> (continued).

Name <sup>(c)</sup>	1885		1895		1900			1905			1910		
	Age	Age	Yrs/mos living in: <sup>(d)</sup>		Date of birth		Year of	Years of resid. <sup>(e)</sup>			Children: <sup>(f)</sup>		
			Minn.	Dist.	Mo.	Year	Age	Age	Mn	Dist.	Age	Brn	Lv
Lindell, Joseph	-	-			Apr	1867	33	39	39/1	6	44		Mn
Lena	-	-			Mar	1877	23	28	28/2	6	32	9	4
Alice	-	-			-	-	-	2	2/3	2/3	7		Mn
Cora L.	-	-			-	-	-	-			4		Mn
Arnold	-	-			-	-	-	-			2		Mn
Lloyd	-	-			-	-	-	-			4/12		Mn
<i>Milton</i>													
<i>Robert</i>													
<i>Morris</i>													
Lindell, Oscar	-	-									27		Mn
Emma B.	-	-			-	-	-	-			21		Mn
Clifford	-	-			-	-	-	-			11/12		Mn
<i>Florence</i>													
<i>Oscar</i>													
Olson, Joseph	-	-			-	-	-	33	22/11	6			Sw
Thoren, John A.	-	35	11	10	Dec	1859	40	44	21	5/6	50		Sw
Carolina	-	35			-	-	-	-			-		Sw
Erland G.	-	8			Dec	1887	12	17	17	5/6	-		Mn
Helfred A.	-	6			Jun	1889	10	15	15	5/6	-		Mn
Arthur C.	-	4			May	1891	9	14	14	5/6	18		Mn
Svea E.	-	2			Aug	1893	6	11	11	5/6	16		Mn
Berthel	-	-			Dec	1895	4	9	9	5/6	14		Mn
Josie	-	-			Dec	1864	35	40	5	5	45	0	0
Erickson, Peter								-			-		Sw
Anna	-	-			-	-	-	46			52	7	5
John	-	-			-	-	-	21			26		Mn
Minnie	-	-			-	-	-	19			-		Mn
Edward	-	-			-	-	-	17			22		Mn
Carl Victor	-	-			-	-	-	13			20		Mn
Annie	-	-			-	-	-	9			14		Mn

<sup>a</sup>All data in this Table, except for names (see footnote c to this Table), are taken without correction from copies of the census records. Consequently, discrepancies may be seen from year to year, for example, in an individuals age. <sup>b</sup>Census data for 1885, 1895, and 1905 are taken from census records of the State of Minnesota. Data for 1900 and 1910 are from census records of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor. The 1885 census was taken June 8; the 1895 census was taken on July 9-10 (Theo. Johnson, enumerator); the 1900 census was taken June 1-4 (August Christenson, enumerator); the 1905 census was taken June 6 (August Larson, enumerator); and the 1910 census was taken April 16 and 20 (George A. Hayes, enumerator). <sup>c</sup>Spelling of names often vary from one census to another. The names recorded here are those most frequently seen in the records for the five census in the table. *Names recorded in italics are of known family members born after the census of 1910.* <sup>d</sup>Data for these columns in the 1895 census were recorded only for males over the age of 21 and record how long an individual had lived in Minnesota (Minn.) and in the enumeration district (Dist.). <sup>e</sup>Length of residence in Minnesota (Mn) and in enumeration district (Dist.). <sup>f</sup>These two columns record how many children the woman gave birth to (Brn) and how many of these children were living (Lvg) at the time of the census (1910). <sup>g</sup>Places of birth are for the person being enumerated. <sup>h</sup>The 1900 census records John A. Anderson as being the grandson of Lars Anderson. <sup>i</sup>The 1910 census records Harold Anderson as being the stepson of Lars Anderson. <sup>j</sup>In the 1900 census, Charles Dickinson is recorded as boarding in the residence of Alfred M. and Florence Bagley; his marital status is given as divorced. <sup>k</sup>In the 1900 census, Amanda Lindell is recorded as working as a servant and residing with her daughter in the dwelling of Fredrick and Barbra Rivet; her marriage status is given as single. <sup>l</sup>This Oscar Larson likely was Emma (Larson) Johnson's youngest brother.

member of the White Earth Band. She and her first husband named Warren had begun the stopping place. When he died she and her second husband, Howe, kept the place. Thayers' stopping place was built just a mile or two east of Howe's. Nosen's and Howe's were well established and popular. A few miles beyond Thayers', the road branched. The Red Lake Trail continued north, and the Fosston Trail went east. It crossed the Bagley Dam over the Clearwater River very close to the present Clearwater-Beltrami County line. The road dropped south then followed generally the present Beltrami County 22 (today, Beltrami County road 22 runs approximately on the Eckles-Liberty township line). There were two stopping places beyond the dam crossing. Berry's or Berrie's, the earlier of the two, was on the Eckles township side of the road; A.P. Blum's Traveler's Rest was on the Liberty township side. The trail continued east until the Big Meadow; one branch, called by Amanda Wickner Grow the Yellowstone Trail, went southeast to Bemidji [North Country History, III.4 (1986), pp13f]. The main trail went northeast past Little Fraction and on to Little Turtle Lake and Buena Vista, where it met the Leech Lake Trail."

As the settlers proceeded eastward along the Fosston Trail and after crossing the Clearwater River at the Bagley Dam, they presumably came to an intersection with a trail that ran north from Solway to Red Lake. This intersection was close to the town site of Pinewood. From there they likely would have taken the trail south to Solway.

A survey map prepared soon after Lammers township was organized shows what may have been the original trail from Solway out to the community.<sup>4</sup> The trail branches off the old Bemidji Mail Road east of Solway and meanders northeast to the middle of section 24. The homesteads of the Swedish settlers are located along this trail. After the township was organized and the town board formed, one of the first actions of the town board was to approve construction of a road into the homestead area.

It is said the families made the entire journey from Fertile to Solway by foot with their goods carried by wagon. An oft-heard story is that to cross a narrow swamp and creek a short distance from the homesteads, the men had to build a corduroy road. The dictionary definition of a corduroy road is apt: "a road built of logs put down crosswise, as across a marsh." A road still crosses at this place today and, allegedly, the original corduroy forms the base across the swamp.<sup>5</sup>

## **The Eleven Families of the Swede Settlement (The First Generation).**

Among the eleven families were three sub-groups whose members were interrelated. These relationships are included below in descriptions of the families. Each of the original eleven families of the Swede Settlement is described below. The families are listed in order of subgroups. The subgroups are:

- (1) John A. Thoren, Axel Johnson, Gustaf Johnson, and Josef Olson;
- (2) Johnnie Lindell, Joseph Lindell, Amanda (Lindell) Dickinson, and L.D. Johnson; and
- (3) Lars Anderson, Andrew Larson, and Peter Erickson.

Descriptions of second generation family members are given in a later section below. Additional stories of the Swede Settlement also are given in later sections. The locations of their homesteads are shown on a 1916 Lammers township plat map (see Figure 22, page 28).



Figure 1. John and Carolina (Johnson) Thoren with children, l. to r., Earl George, Helfrid Axcelia, and Arthur Chester.

**John A. Thoren (1859-1939), Carolina (Johnson) Thoren (1860-1895), and Josephine (Peterson) Thoren (1864-1932).** John Thoren was one of six children born in Sweden into the family of Carl and Anna Maria Olson. The Olson family emigrated from Sweden and in about 1881 homesteaded land in Garfield township, Polk County, also near Fertile, Minnesota. John elected to use Thoren as his surname; changing surnames was a practice that was not unusual in Sweden. He emigrated from Sweden in 1884 and settled on a 40-acre homestead in Bear Park township. He and Carolina Johnson, sister of Axel and Gustaf Johnson, were married in 1885 and were parents of five children born in Bear Park township: Earl George (1887), Helfrid Axcelia (1889), Arthur Chester (1891), Svea Elenora (1893), and Berthel (1895). Carolina's death in 1895 coincided with the birth of Berthel and is said to have been the result of an overdose of chloroform given during childbirth. So it was that John Thoren was a widower at the time of his move to a new homestead in Lammers township in 1899.

John Thoren and Lars Anderson (see below) lost their first wives at about the same time. According to Herbert Larson<sup>6</sup> the men decided to see if they could find "mail-order" wives. Since Lars did not write well in English, John Thoren, who had been a teacher in Sweden, wrote the necessary letters and carried out the follow-up correspondence. They were successful in attracting two women. The woman that Lars Anderson married was named Martha (d. 1925)<sup>7</sup> and she had a son named Harold who took



Figure 2. Axel Johnson



Figure 3. Hulda (Nelson) Johnson

the name Anderson. "But Lars Anderson was supposed to have the woman Thoren married. Thoren was supposed to have the mother to Harold Anderson. But Thoren liked the other lady better so he switched and Lars didn't know the difference." The woman John Thoren married was named Josie Peterson who turned out to be a difficult woman to live with.<sup>6</sup> John Thoren and Josie Peterson were married in 1900 in a civil ceremony before Judge of Probate, G.M. Carson, with Gustaf Johnson and Hulda Johnson as witnesses.<sup>8</sup>

The Thoren farm was taken over by Bert and his wife, Electa (Sutton) Thoren, and stayed in the family at least until Electa's death in 1998. Shortly thereafter, fire destroyed the farmhouse, part of which was the original log structure built in 1899.

**Axel Johnson (1863-1941)<sup>9</sup> and Hulda Olivia (Nelson) Johnson (1876- )**. Axel Johnson emigrated from Sweden aboard the ship "Romeo" and arrived in the port of Boston in April 1888. In Bear Park township, he filed a claim in 1892 for 40-acres of land diagonally adjoining the forty of the Thorens.<sup>2</sup> He had married Hulda Olivia Nelson in 1891.<sup>9</sup> The couple had three children, Walter Albin (1893), William Agard (1895), and Alf Victor (1897), before moving to Lammers township in 1898. In their first winter in Lammers they are said to have shared the log house built on brother Gustaf Johnson's homestead and moved to their own newly built log house in 1899.<sup>5</sup> Their fourth child, Ralph Eugene (30 Jul 1899),<sup>9</sup> is considered to be the first child born to Caucasian parents in the township.<sup>10</sup>

Following Ralph, Arvid Alexander (1903), Oscar Fritof (1905; died at age four months), Oscar Fritof (1906), Edith Viola (1908), and Albert John (1915) were added to the family.<sup>9</sup> Axel was a fun loving man and enjoyed making music. He is easily spotted in photographs of community bands due to the fact that he played either a tuba or a bass fiddle. Axel and Hulda eventually separated and divorced. They both moved off the original homestead to live in nearby houses. The farm was sold to Arvid and Victoria (Peterson) Johnson who were not related to Axel or Hulda. Arvid was, however, a nephew of Emma Johnson, Gustaf's wife. Arvid and Victoria added a large barn to the farmyard and farmed for a number





Figure 4. L. to r., front: Gustaf Johnson, unknown, Axel Johnson; back: Herman Nyback, August Carlson, and August Nyback. Photograph by Louis Olson, Fertile, Minnesota.

of years. They then rented the farm to the Paul Van Hyfte family before selling it in 1942 to Stanley and Iris Tweten.<sup>5</sup>

Following their divorce, Hulda moved to a house that had been built by Oscar Lindell, one of John Lindell's sons (see below).<sup>6</sup> The house was located just east across the county road from the Axel Johnson homestead and was occupied through the years by a number of different people but no longer is standing. Axel moved to a house a half a mile due east of the house where Hulda lived. There, sons Arvid and Oscar lived with Axel until Arvid married Florence Fredricks. At that time a second house was built nearby for Axel with Arvid and Florence living in the first. Granddaughter Carole Larson remembers walking from the Andrew Larson homestead to play with Arvid and Florence's children, Jeanette and Clark, and to visit Grandpa Axel. She also would walk on the trail through the woods to see Grandma Hulda. On the way back, Grandpa Axel would ask, "How is the old battleaxe doing?"<sup>11</sup>

Axel liked a little whiskey from time to time (perhaps an understatement) and Carole remembers his house smelling faintly of alcohol, snuff and peppermint candy.<sup>11</sup> Floyd Johnson remembers there always being a bucket of herring on the table in Axel's house and that Axel could bake a great loaf of bread – better bread than made by most of the other cooks in the community.<sup>12</sup> Gunnar Nelson had a homemade still in the woods between the two houses. Herbert Larson remembers Axel waiting for the first drop of alcohol to distill over and saying, "Is it a-comin', that thing yet?" Then when the first drops came, he said, "There, they're a-comin'!"<sup>6</sup>

**Gustaf Johnson (1869-1958)<sup>9,13</sup> and Emma (Larson) Johnson (1869-1945).<sup>9,14,15</sup>** Both Gustaf and Emma were born in Nedre Ullerud parish, Värmland province, Sweden and were married there in 1892. Their first child, daughter Helga Elisabeth (1892<sup>9,14</sup>-1957<sup>9</sup>), was born before the family emigrated from



Figure 5. L. to r., front: unknown, Stone Johnson, Andrew Carlson, Clarence Carlson; back: Andrew Carlson, Gustaf Johnson, Emma Johnson, Helga (Johnson) Carlson.

Sweden to the United States in 1893.<sup>14</sup> The family first lived in Bear Park township, Norman County, near the village of Fertile where Gustaf's older brother, Axel, and older sister, Carolina, had earlier settled after leaving Sweden. Gustaf and Emma do not appear to have been landowners while living near Fertile.<sup>16</sup> In the 1885 Minnesota state census, Gustaf's occupation is listed as farmhand. Their second child, Stone William (1896-1958), was born in Bear Park township.<sup>17</sup>

On 17 May 1898, Gustaf filed a homestead application in the Crookston Land Office for 160 acres of land in Lammers township.<sup>2</sup> A one room, one and one-half story log house was built on the land during the summer and Gustaf and Emma took up residence in the fall of 1898 with children Helga (age 6) and Stone (age 2). It is said that they shared the log house during the first winter with the Axel and his family. The following year, a second room, also constructed of logs was added to the house. The log structure, together with a frame addition built in 1922, still stands today.<sup>5</sup>

During the early years of the Swede Settlement, Emma frequently served as midwife for births of children in the community. She also experienced a stillbirth (date unknown) that was not officially recorded in the county courthouse. The infant was buried in Meadowview cemetery. Emma is said to have tended the burial site faithfully, however, the site was later disturbed by another burial. This upset Emma and she requested that she not be buried in the Meadowview cemetery. She and Gustaf are buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Bemidji.<sup>5</sup> The third surviving and last child born to Gustaf and Emma was named Gustaf Arvid (1906-1986)<sup>18</sup> but was known throughout his lifetime as Gust.

After about 1938, Emma began suffering from arthritis. The disease became sufficiently severe to cause her to be bed ridden for a number of years before her death in 1945. Gustaf continued to live on the homestead after Emma's death until senility caused him to be hospitalized in the state hospital in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, where he died in 1958.

**Josef Oskar Olson.** Josef Olson was a younger brother of John Thoren and the son of Carl and Anna Maria Olson. He was born in Sweden and emigrated to the United States in 1883 at the age of 11 or 12. In 1899, he applied for a homestead patent on 160 acres of land in Lammers township. He established residence on the homestead on 1 Dec 1899.<sup>2</sup>

A newspaper story tells of one eventful morning in Mr. Olson's life:<sup>19</sup>

"Joseph Olson, Lammers Farmer, Shot by Charles Carlson; Insanity Cause" (from Saturday's *Daily*)

"Sheriff Andrew Johnson, Deputy George Deuley and a posse of farmers and city residents this afternoon are searching for Charles Carlson, who resides in a shack in the Town of Eckles, and who early this morning shot Joseph Olson, an enterprising farmer of Lammers township.

Taking a rifle as his weapon Carlson visited the home of Olson, who is a bachelor, at 5:30 this morning and after a short argument in which he demanded Olson explain why he had cut a halter rope (belonging to Olson) announced that one or the other must die. Before Olson realized his danger, Carlson had aimed the gun. Olson stooped just as the gun was fired, the bullet entering his neck on the left side just below the jaw. The bullet came out near the back bone, just below the left shoulder.

Before Carlson could fire again, Olson grabbed him and a desperate struggle for possession of the gun took place. Bleeding profusely, but realizing that to give up meant certain death, Olson exerted every bit of his remaining strength, knowing that his assailant had become temporarily insane.

He finally obtained the gun and Carlson disappeared. Weak and with blood flowing from each wound, Olson walked a mile and a half to the home of his brother, John A. Thoren, who brought him to Bemidji where the wounds were attended to by Dr. E. W. Johnson. It was announced at the hospital that no bones had been broken and that while the wounds are more or less serious, Olson's recovery is expected.

Thoren requested Judge M. A. Clark, of the probate court, to issue a warrant for Carlson's arrest, charging him with insanity. Thoren stated that Carlson and his brother had always been good friends and on many occasions while Olson had been at his farm near Fertile, Carlson had attended to his stock. It is claimed that Carlson is a heavy drinker.

Olson says that he was awakened by Carlson at 5:30. He observed that the talk of his visitor was strange and attempted to reason with him when he spoke of the halter rope. Carlson then left the house, returning a few minutes later with the rifle. The shooting followed.

Sheriff Johnson decided that no chance would be taken in capturing Carlson and when he left this afternoon he took a deputy and several others with. He planned to seek the assistance of farmers residing in the vicinity.

Olson and his brother, Thoren, are two of the best known farmers in this section and have resided here for sixteen years. "I would not be a bit surprised if Carlson has killed himself," said Thoren.

Because of the belief that Carlson is insane a charge of attempted has not been brought.

When found Carlson was at the home of three brothers, John, Adam, and Joe Ganvkstki (*note: I wonder if the reporter meant Jenkousky*), who live on a farm in Eckles. A search made Saturday afternoon failed.

Adam and Joe Ganvkstki went to Carlson's shack early Sunday morning to milk the cows. They went to the house where they found Carlson. After milking the cows he was asked if he wanted any food. He replied that he had had nothing to eat Saturday nor did he want anything then. A large spot of blood was found on his shirt.

A short time later he went to the Ganvkstki home where he was arrested. He was brought to Bemidji and placed in the county jail where he will be held until examined as to his sanity. Judge Clark was not positive whether the examination would be held this afternoon.

Olson is still in a weakened condition but his complete recovery is certain. In telling of his fight for possession of the rifle he says that he knew to give up would mean death. He says that the struggle lasted for at least fifteen minutes, Carlson at last giving up the rifle."

A follow-up story in the newspaper reported that Carlson was judged insane and was to be taken to the hospital in Fergus Falls. Carlson admitted that he was in need of medical attention and was willing to be sent to the asylum.<sup>19</sup>

It is not known when Josef Olson left his homestead but his land eventually was added to the nearby Thoren farm.

**John (“Johnnie”) Lindell** was the son of **John (1823-1904)<sup>20</sup> and Cecelia (Monsen) Lindell (1844-1925).<sup>20</sup>** He homesteaded 160 acres in Section 26<sup>2</sup> of Lammers township and moved there in 1899<sup>14</sup> with his parents and several of his brothers. The senior John was the oldest member of the Swede Settlement, having been born 5 Aug 1824.<sup>20</sup> He also was the first of the group to emigrate to the United States, arriving in this country in November, 1859.<sup>20</sup> In about 1860 he married Cecelia. According to his grandson, Howard Lindell,<sup>21</sup> the couple first settled near St. Peter, Minnesota, in Nicollet County where John worked at his trade of carpentry and wagon making. He was in military service at the time of the Civil War, being in action during the Indian “uprising” at New Ulm, Minnesota, in 1862.<sup>22</sup> The Lindell family moved to Bear Park township in 1881.<sup>2,23</sup>

Upon moving to Lammers township, John and Cecelia lived on the homestead claimed by Johnnie. Also moving to the homestead were family members Anton, Oscar, and Edwin. Anton is said to have been a half-brother to the other children of John and Cecelia Lindell.<sup>5,6</sup> It appears that he remained a bachelor throughout his life.

**Joseph Lindell (1886-1936)<sup>20</sup> and Lena Lindell (1878-1965).<sup>20</sup>** Joseph (“Joe”) Lindell was the son of John and Cecelia Lindell. Joe and his wife, Lena, moved to Lammers township in the winter of 1898-1899,<sup>24</sup> homesteading 120 acres in Section 25<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 13). After losing several children in infancy, their first surviving child was Alice, followed by Cora, Arnold (1907<sup>25</sup>-1984<sup>26</sup>), Lloyd (1908),<sup>25</sup> Henry Milton (1912<sup>25</sup>-1992<sup>27</sup>), Robert (1915<sup>25</sup>-1998<sup>28</sup>), and Morris (1918; died in childhood).<sup>25</sup>

**Louis David (“L.D.”) Johnson (1854<sup>29</sup>-1935<sup>30</sup>) and Mathilda (Lindell) Johnson (1869<sup>29</sup>-1947<sup>31</sup>).** John and Cecelia Lindell’s eldest daughter, Mathilda, married L.D. Johnson in Bear Park township. There, Mary (1893),<sup>29</sup> Alfred (1895),<sup>29</sup> and Louella (1898)<sup>29</sup> were born before the family moved to their Lammers homestead in the fall of 1898.<sup>24</sup> Their homestead of 160 acres was in Section 24.<sup>2</sup> Two more children, Samuel (b. ? ) and Ellen Cecelia (1905),<sup>25</sup> were added to the family after the move. The original log house is still standing. L.D. Johnson served on the Lammers town board for many years.

**Charles Dickinson (1857-1932)<sup>20</sup> and Amanda (Lindell) Dickinson (1871<sup>29</sup>-1924).** Amanda Lindell, daughter of John and Cecelia Lindell, gave birth to Cora Vista (1896)<sup>17</sup> in Bear Park township. The Norman County record of births names John Thoren as the father of Cora Vista.<sup>17</sup> This contradicts what has been written to the effect that Cora was the daughter of Charles and Amanda (Lindell) Dickinson.<sup>21</sup> It is likely that Charles assumed the role of her father but he was not her biological father. In 1898, Amanda filed for a homestead of 120 acres in Section 25 next to the claim of her brother Joseph.<sup>2</sup>

The 1900 U.S. census records Amanda and her daughter, now age 3, as living in the household of Frederick and Barbra Rivet. Her occupation is given as servant, a common designation of profession in that time. The same census records that Charles Dickinson was a border in the dwelling of Alfred and Florence Bagley in the village of Solway. His marriage status was given as divorced. In conversation with Herbert Larson (1999), he said that it was common knowledge that Thoren was the father of Cora Vista.<sup>6</sup> According to documents filed with her homestead claim, Amanda married Charles Dickinson on 16 Jul





Figure 6. Clifford and Cora (Lindell/Dickinson) Fredrickson.

1902.<sup>2</sup> At some time after the homestead patent was issued in 1905 and before 1916, ownership of the land changed hands with the new owner being Nels J. Saltness (see Lammers township plat map for 1916, Figure 22).

As an adult, Cora married (1921) Clifford W. Fredrickson, proprietor for many years of a general store in Solway. Clifford and Cora were the parents of four children. Cora was postmistress of the Solway post office from 1917 until her death in 1944.<sup>21</sup>

**Lars Anderson and Martha Anderson.** Lars Anderson (1845)<sup>29</sup> was from a large family in the Dalarna province of Sweden.<sup>6</sup> He was the first Swede in our story to move to Bear Park township, arriving in 1881<sup>24</sup> from southern Minnesota. Lars Anderson was admitted as a citizen of the United States on 20 Nov 1873 in the Ninth Judicial District of Minnesota in Brown County.<sup>32</sup> The documents in his homestead file for Lammers township contain the information that he had previously applied in 1868 for a homestead of 78.25 acres (in the St. Peter Land District).<sup>32</sup>

Lars moved from Bear Park to Lammers in 1898<sup>24</sup> where the Anderson homestead of 80 acres was located in Section 13.<sup>2</sup> In about 1900, he married Martha and became step-father to her son, Harold (see story of “mail order” wives, above, under John Thoren). Also living with Lars in Bear Park township was his sister, Brita Anderson. She had come to the United States in about 1893 and her son, John Albert, was born soon after. A few years later, Brita married Andrew Larson (see below); John Albert took the



Figure 7. L. to r., Lars Larson, Andrew Larson, Emma (Larson) Fredricks holding Florence Fredricks.

Larson name. Lars and Martha returned to Sweden and there lived out their last years; Lars died at the age of 94.<sup>6</sup>

**Andrew Larson (1850<sup>29</sup>-1939<sup>30</sup>) and Brita (Anderson) Larson.** Andrew Larson also was from the province of Dalarna in Sweden. His citizenship application (15 Mar 1883 in District Court, Polk County)<sup>33</sup> states that Andrew “emigrated to the United States and landed at the port of Port Huron on or about the month of March in the year eighteen hundred and eighty.”

According to his son, Herbert, Andrew lived about two years in the New Ulm area after he first came to the United States. There, Andrew worked on railroad construction. Earthmoving equipment in those days consisted of “a wheelbarrow and a shovel.”<sup>6</sup> Andrew Larson moved to Bear Park township in 1884<sup>24</sup> where he claimed a homestead of 40 acres. He and his first wife, Anna (d. 1894) were the parents of Oscar Carl, Edward, and Emma Marie (1893).<sup>17</sup> Also living in the Larson household were Andrew’s mother and father, Martha and Lars (1822-1916).<sup>7</sup>

Andrew married Lars Anderson’s sister, Brita, in the late 1890s. Their first child together, August (1899-1960),<sup>34</sup> was born in Bear Park township. The family remained in Bear Park until 1901; they then moved to a homestead of 80 acres in Lammers township. On the move, Andrew drove a team of horses pulling a wagon. The only way the cattle would follow was for Brita to lead them behind the wagon. The cows would follow because they were accustomed to her. In Sweden, she had been a herd-girl, staying with cattle in the summer when they were taken to higher pastures,<sup>6</sup> a story that is reminiscent of “Heidi” in Switzerland.

Andrew and Brita’s second son, Herbert, was born in 1903.

**Peter E. Erickson (1851-1901)<sup>34</sup> and Anna (Larson) Erickson (1858-1922)<sup>31</sup>.** The Ericksons were the only family of the eleven who did not file a homestead claim. Instead, they purchased forty acres of land on July 11, 1901<sup>35</sup> for one hundred eighty dollars from the Solway Land Company. Anna (Larson) Erickson was a sister of Andrew Larson (see above). Peter and Anna’s first five children were





Figure 8. John A. Thoren



Figure 9. L. to r., Earl Thoren, Helfrid Cecelia (Thoren) Quesnell, Berthel "Bert" Thoren, and Nora (Thoren) Burnham.

born in before the family moved to Lammers township. The children were: John (1884-1959),<sup>34</sup> Minnie (?), Edward (1888-1975),<sup>34</sup> Carl Victor (1892-1960)<sup>34</sup> and Annie (?).

Unfortunately, Peter Erickson died in an accident in December of 1901. According to Herbert Larson, Erickson and Axel Johnson were hauling a load of hay from a stack out in the fields to the farmyard in winter. The wagon wheel hit a rock and as the load of hay lurched, Peter fell from the load and broke his neck.<sup>6</sup> A second tragedy struck the Erickson family with the death of a daughter, Ellen (b. 22 Jan 1902; d. 28 Dec 1902)<sup>34</sup> at the age of eleven months.

## The Second (and Later) Generations

**Earl and Bessie Thoren.** John and Carolina Thoren's two oldest children, Earl and Helfrid, both married and lived in North Dakota many years.<sup>9</sup> Earl and his wife, Bessie, were farmers; after retirement they returned to Lammers township and lived a number of years in the same house where Hulda Johnson had lived following her divorce from Axel.

**Svea Elenora "Nora" (Thoren) Burnham and Roy Burnham.** Svea Elenora ("Nora"), daughter of John and Carolina Thoren, married Aaron Leroy Burnham of Wilton.<sup>9</sup> The Burnhams lived many years in a home built on the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 13. This "forty" was part of John Thoren's original homestead claim.

**Berthel "Bert" Thoren (1895<sup>9</sup>-1988<sup>36</sup>) and Electa (Sutton) Thoren (1907-1998).<sup>37</sup>** John and Carolina Thoren's sons, Arthur and Berthel, both volunteered for service in the U.S. Army in World War I with tragic consequences. The brothers were in different companies of the Second Division but they were able to be together on the battlefield. Bert has recalled his experiences in an account written in 1919.

The brothers left Bemidji on August 9, 1918, spent several days in Iowa and then were taken by train to Camp MacArthur in Waco, Texas. After a brief two-and-a-half week training session, they proceeded to New Jersey and then to New York where they boarded the ship, proceeded to Contrex where they were drilled for eight days. On the morning of October 17th they boarded a train for the front and arrived

eight days later (25th) within sound of the artillery. They were among hundreds of thousands of newly recruited soldiers in the American First Army as it joined French and British forces in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive that led to end of the war. From that point, Bert describes in some detail their experiences until November 11th, Armistice Day.<sup>38</sup>

November 1 found them advancing to the front line which on that day, for the Second Division of the A.E.F., lay in an arc between the villages of Buzancy to the west and Barricourt to the east. The Meuse River is about 8 miles to the east of that point, running roughly in a north-northwesterly direction. The Second division advanced to the north (10 miles to the Meuse). On November 6th, they captured the town of Beaumont, about 1.5 miles from the Meuse, and continued on to the west bank of the river. There they dug in on the stony hillside overlooking the river.<sup>38</sup>

Tragedy struck late on November 10th or early on the 11th. On the evening of the 10th, they came under extremely heavy artillery bombardment. Around midnight, a shell burst directly overhead and shrapnel penetrated through the calf of Arthur's leg. At daylight, he was brought to an aid station near Latenney (Létanne?) by Bert and three stretcher bearers. Bert returned to his position. Arthur succumbed several days later to gangrene, a casualty of the war on the last day of battle.<sup>38</sup> The full text of his account is given below in the section, World War I.

Following the war, Bert returned home and gradually took over working the family farm. In 1940, he married Electa Belle Sutton, a teacher at the Meadowview School from the fall of 1936 through the spring of 1939. Following consolidation of the Meadowview and Solway schools in the village of Solway, Electa taught at other schools in the county for many years while Bert operated the farm. After Bert's death (1988),<sup>36</sup> Electa continued to live on the farm until her death in 1998.<sup>37</sup>

**Arvid Johnson (1903<sup>9</sup>-1999<sup>39</sup>) and Florence (Fredricks) Johnson (1911-1983).<sup>9</sup>** Arvid Johnson, son of Axel and Hulda Johnson, remained in the community for many years, marrying (1930)<sup>9</sup> Florence Fredricks, a granddaughter of Andrew Larson. Arvid and Florence lived at the home site to which Axel had moved following his divorce from Hulda. They raised their children, Jeanette Marie and Clark Dennis, there until about 1952 at which time they moved to Bemidji. Arvid worked many years for the Nordheim Roofing Company of Bemidji before he and Arnold Lindell formed their own company, the Bemidji Roofing Company.

Arvid was a legendary hunter, trapper and woodsman. In a photo published in *The Bemidji Pioneer* in 1994, Arvid is shown in the living room of his home in Bemidji against a backdrop of mounted deer horns and heads. He is "holding his favorite set of antlers and his favorite rifle, an 1895 Winchester .30-.40, with 226 notches on one side, one for each deer he has shot."<sup>40</sup> This may be the rifle with a curved stock. Because he sighted with his left eye when aiming, Arvid had his rifle fitted with a curved stock. Once during deer hunting season, a couple of hunters from the Twin Cities stopped to talk to Arvid. One of them asked what had happened to the rifle. Arvid told them, "Well, I've had this rifle for a long time and I've leaned on it so much, I bent the stock." The hunters likely believed him because Arvid was a good story teller. Thanks to a video recording made at a birthday gathering held for Arvid in 1988, several of his stories have been saved.<sup>41</sup> Two of the stories are transcribed below.

**Arvid wrestles a buck. Question:** "How about that time you run one (deer) down on your skis?"

**Arvid:** "That's the buck I wrestled." (pause) "(It was) in the spring of the year and we had snow about that deep (shows with his hand, several feet deep) and about an inch of crust and, damn it, I saw a buck way down across the swamp. They (several hunters) had a hound on the south side - there was three of them. I was on the north side, southeast of (Pinewood?)."



Figure 10. Arvid and Florence (Fredricks) Johnson

"And I saw the buck - and I swung and I went right for him and I damn near run over him. And he started running - and he made a circle and he was going back on the high land and I was right on his tail.

"We got out in the open -- well, you know, he was going clean down to the bottom of the snow -- you know -- and I was gaining on him and then he stopped. I got along side him like beside that chair, there (pointing). And I was going to pet him on the nose - and he jumped straight up into the air and dove at me.

"I got him around the neck and we went around and around for, I betcha, over half an hour. Damn right. We mowed down the grass. He had me off the ground one time and I had him off the ground. After half an hour, he pooped out on me."

**Q:** "He did, huh?"

**Arvid:** "Unh, ya. I yanked his head several times and he wouldn't offer to do anything. I even bit his ears."

**Q:** "He didn't say 'uncle'?"

**Arvid:** "I looked around - hell - my gun, you know, that was snowed under. Damn it - there was a ski pole laying over there and I says to myself ----.

"I gave him a couple-three more yanks and, you know, he never offered to do anything - so I let go and I jumped for that ski pole.

"And, you know, that son of a biscuit come at me again ---



Figure 11. Axel Johnson and children. L. to r., front: Oscar, Edith, Axel, Albert; back: Alf, William, Walter, Arvid and Ralph Johnson.

**Q:** "Is that right?"

**Arvid:** "And we went around some more. So that last time I was choking him and then, by golly, he was done for. He never had any respect for me when I came back. He just laid there. He wouldn't even offer to fight me.

"That's no baloney.

"They both (other hunters) said to me, 'You're crazy.' Well, I showed 'em where the snow was worn down -- for four, five rods.

**Q:** "And they wouldn't believe you?"

**Arvid:** "No, they didn't. -- And that buck wouldn't even offer to look at me when I come back.

"I'll never forget that."

**Arvid, Oscar and Ralph play a trick on Alf. Question:** "Where was it that you set up those two eyes for Alf that night?"

**Arvid:** ---?--- (unclear)

**Q:** "Was it you that did that?"

**Arvid:** "Nah, we all three agreed to give Alf a bad time."

**Q:** "You and Oscar .....?"

**Arvid:** "Yah, Oscar and Ralph set up the eyes -- and I took Alf for a walk. I lost him in the swamp and I finally got back about dusk. Ralph and Oscar was smiling when I came into the trailer house.





Figure 12. Front, Helga Johnson; right, Clara Mathison

"We had it all arranged. --

"We were playing whist and, by golly, about eight-thirty Oscar went out to wee-wee -- and, God, coming back he about tore the damn door off the trailer and said, 'God, a buck snorted out here.' And boy, I'm telling you, nobody was slow handing Alf that gun of his and we rushed out there.

"Oscar turned the light on. About fifty yards and them damn eyes was about a foot apart.

"And Alf, he up and shot and he repeated and he shot again and then he started swearing. He repeated a third time. We were damn near busting a gut laughing behind him.

"I'll never forget that. He never trusted us (after that). We couldn't even turn around but he was watching us."

**Edith (Johnson) Larson and Herbert Larson.** Edith Johnson, the only daughter of Axel and Hulda Johnson, and Herbert Larson, the youngest child of Andrew Larson, were married in 1924<sup>6</sup>. The couple lived on the Larson homestead for many years before moving to California in 1944 and establishing a roofing business in the community of Hawthorne, a suburb of Los Angeles. All their children were born in Minnesota and were Mavis Audrey (1924-1924),<sup>9</sup> Ramon Herbert (1926),<sup>9</sup> Norma Elaine (1928),<sup>9</sup> Carole Jane (1933),<sup>9</sup> and Gerald William (1935).<sup>9</sup>

Norma (using the name Patty) and Carole as the "Layne Sisters" were professional singers for a number of years following World War II. From singing as young children atop a stack of lumber in their backyard in Lammers township, they graduated to performances on radio, in clubs and on stage in the Los Angeles area.<sup>9</sup>

Musical talent runs deeply throughout several generations of the Johnson family and its origin may go back generations earlier. Axel's sister, Lovisa, is said to have had an operatic voice.<sup>9</sup> Nineteen of the thirty-four children and grand-children of Axel and Hulda listed in Corinne Bindos' family history are noted as having musical interests, either vocal or instrumental in nature.<sup>9</sup>

**Albert Johnson.** Albert Johnson, the youngest son of Axel and Hulda Johnson, was one of the musically talented. Albert, with three of his cousins from the Shervan family, Ralph, Dovre, and Harold, formed a country-western band, calling themselves the Rodeoliers. [The Shervan's mother, Marie (Nelson) Shervan, was a sister of Hulda Johnson; the Shervans lived for a number of years in Section 16 of Lammers township.] Perhaps the highpoint of their career was an appearance in the movie, "Home on



Figure 13. L. to r., Elin Olson, Stone Johnson, unknown

the Prairie," starring Gene Autry with Smiley Burnette. The movie was produced in 1939 by Republic Pictures. Only Albert was offered a contract with the studio following this movie but he chose to stay with the group.<sup>42</sup>

**Helga (Johnson) Carlson (1892<sup>9,14</sup>-1957<sup>16</sup>) and Andrew Carlson (1868-1939).**<sup>43</sup> Helga Johnson, daughter of Gustaf and Emma Johnson, was born in Sweden and emigrated with her parents in 1893. The family lived several years near Fertile, Minnesota, before settling near Solway. When Helga left home, she moved to Brainerd, Minnesota, and worked in a hotel operated by her aunt and uncle, Elvina (Emma's twin sister) and Andrew Carlson. After Elvina's death at age 41, Andrew Carlson married Helga and the couple moved to Menisino, Manitoba, where they operated a small country store for many years. They were the parents of six children, Andrew, Emma (1913-1998),<sup>44</sup> Ellen, Clarence, Agnes, and Edwin. Emma married Arnold Lindell (see entry below).

**Stone Johnson (1896<sup>17</sup>-1958<sup>45</sup>) and Elin (Olson) Johnson (1894-1990).**<sup>46</sup> Stone Johnson, son of Gustaf and Emma Johnson, was one of several young men of the Swede Settlement who served in the U.S. Army with the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) in World War I. He was a bugler for Company "F" of the Third Pioneer Infantry, A.E.F. He was inducted into military service July 10th, 1918 in Bemidji, Minnesota. A summary of the actions of this company in WW I is included in a printed pamphlet, Roster of Company "F".<sup>47</sup> This pamphlet lists the personnel of the Company as follows. Commanding officers: 1 captain, 5 first lieutenants, and 8 second lieutenants; Company roster: 1 first sergeant, 1 mess sergeant, 1 supply sergeant, 12 sergeants, 37 corporals, 4 mechanics, 5 cooks, 2 buglers, 61 privates first class, and 141 privates. Seven members of the company were listed 'deceased.'

Stone married (1923)<sup>9</sup> Elin Olivia Olson (1894-1990)<sup>46</sup> in Bemidji, Minnesota. Elin Olson came to the Swede Settlement as a teacher in the Meadowview School in 1916. She taught three years at the school, 1916-17, 1917-18, and 1920-21. She was but one of several teachers at the school who married





Figure 14. Gust A. Johnson



Figure 15. Lydia Gack, 1932

sons of the Swede Settlement. Stone and Elin built and developed a farmstead on the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Section 26. This forty originally was a part of the homestead of John Lindell. Stone and Elin purchased the land from the Lindells in 1923. They also were given a forty (SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 23) of Gustaf's original homestead.

Stone and Elin were the parents of Donald Stone (1924<sup>9</sup>-1989<sup>48</sup>) and Merle William (1928<sup>9</sup>- 1980). Both Donald and Merle served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Following the war, each attended college, Donald graduating from the University of Minnesota and Merle, with a double major, from Bemidji State College. Donald married (1950)<sup>9</sup> Lois Kuelen; they are the parents of Elin Ann, Eric Stone, and Kristine Marie.<sup>9</sup> Donald worked as an engineer for the Boeing Corporation in Seattle, Washington.

Merle remained a bachelor, living in the Brainerd area for a number of years and then, as his health deteriorated due to complications from severe diabetes, with his mother in Lammers township. His professional career was with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources where he worked as an aquatic biologist in the division of Fish and Wildlife. He wrote a 60-page pamphlet, "The Management of Lakes for Stream Trout and Salmon," Minnesota DNR Special Publication No. 125, 1978.

**Gust Johnson (1906-1986)<sup>5</sup> and Lydia (Gack) Johnson (1906-2004).<sup>5</sup>** Gust Johnson, son of Gustaf and Emma Johnson, married Lydia Bertha Bernhardine Gack in Bemidji on 18 Oct 1936.<sup>5</sup> Lydia first came to the Swede Settlement in 1932 when she was hired to teach at the Meadowview School. Following their marriage, they lived on the original homestead of Gustaf and Emma until Gust's death in 1986. Their only child is Roy Allen (1937), the writer of this article. Roy married (1963) Jian Hwa Lee (1937) and they are the parents of Timothy Allen and Carina Lee.

Lydia is vague about her courtship by Gust Johnson. She recalls that they took rides in his dad's old Model T Ford automobile in the summers and that he occasionally came over to the Arvid Johnson residence, where she was boarding, to see her. They went skiing together in the winters.

One winter, several members of the community decided to put on a play for the benefit of the needy. Lydia was included in the cast of the play. Rehearsals were held at the school house and afterward, Gust would pick her up to give her a ride home in the car. Other persons that she remembers being in the play were Edith (Johnson) Larson, Herbert Larson, Florence (Fredricks) Johnson, Albert Johnson, and Stanton Newman. Lydia's role in the play was of "a sweet young gal who was supposed to fall in love with the character played by Albert Johnson." She remembers that the play was performed before a paying

audience in Solway and that they did make a profit. Stanton Newman suggested that the money be given to the Spicer family and she thinks that is where it actually did end up going.

Gust and Lydia agreed that they didn't want a church wedding but they ended up being married in a church anyway. That was because the minister (Rev. Paul Seltz) of the church in Bemidji that Lydia attended was asked to perform the ceremony and when they arrived at his parsonage home, he suggested that they go to the church for the ceremony. Gust's brother and sister-in-law, Stone and Elin Johnson, were the witnesses for the wedding.<sup>49</sup> When Gust arrived with the car for the wedding, he parked it several blocks away from the parsonage to avoid any pranks. Meanwhile, Stone parked his car in front of the parsonage. The children of Rev. Seltz took it upon themselves to fill the back of Stone's car with firewood, thinking that this was the car of the newlyweds. After the marriage ceremony, Gust and Lydia came outside and saw what had transpired. Gust suggested that they get into Stone's car as if it was their own so that the kids would get a kick out of their efforts – so they did.

Gust's mother and father had already remodeled a building on the farm (previously used as a granary) into a small house and had moved into it in advance of the wedding. The hot summer had resulted in a very poor garden crop with carrots about the only thing that grew. Lydia remembers canning about thirty pints of carrots and was somewhat tired of eating them by the next spring. Potato dumplings were a staple in the Swedish diet then. She told me that after she and Gust were married, she cooked a lot of potato dumplings during the first winter because of the shortage of vegetables. She said that Hulda Johnson (Gust's aunt), with a large family of mostly boys, cooked dumplings using a wash boiler (the oval copper boilers now seen in antique stores) on the stove.

The Norwegians in the Solway area also cooked potato dumplings but unlike the Swedes, who put some fried salt pork in the center of the dumpling, the Norwegians made a solid dumpling. Gust said that when he was young and Stone still was at home, their mother might make a solid dumpling if she ran out of meat before using all the dumpling mix. Then, at dinner, everybody was afraid of getting the one without meat. Some things about kids don't change from one generation to the next.

I was to be born in July or August of 1937. When the time approached, Grandmother Emma Johnson asked Lydia if she was planning to go back to her home in Badoura township for the birth. Lydia replied that her mother was ill at the time and that she planned to have the birth in the hospital in Bemidji. The trip to Bemidji was made in the old Model T Ford. After giving birth, Lydia remained in the hospital for eleven days (a standard period of time in those days). She recalls that the bill for the doctor was \$35 and the bill for the eleven days in the hospital also was \$35.

While Lydia was in the hospital, Gust screened in the porch on the house back on the farm but Lydia was too busy most of the time to use it after she got back home. She was very weak when she got home but found a stove dirty from the men cooking on it and a batch of beans waiting to be canned. Alma paid a visit from International Falls to see the baby and she was able to help out.

There was a log barn on the farm in 1936. Lydia did not help in the barn at that time. Gust and his dad had Guernsey cows and two horses for the fieldwork and they did the outside work. The fields were about the same at that time as I remember them. As sources of income, they sold cream, eggs, and dressed-out chickens. In about 1938, Gust and his dad with help from Stone began building a new barn. Lumber had been sawn from logs cut on the farm. Clem Kembitsky brought his portable sawmill to the farm for the sawing. The haymow and one side barn were built first. A second side barn was added a little later. I was frequently reminded that during the building of the barn, I tried to help by running my dad's wood plane back and forth over the concrete foundation.

The Rural Electrification Association (REA), a federal program to bring electricity to rural area of the country, began to work in the Solway area in the late 1930's. Gust worked clearing right-of-way for the power lines. Holes for the power line poles were dug by hand. Electricity came to our farm before the onset of World War II. Lydia recalls that the Beltrami county agent found some wire so that the line could be brought in. When the REA first proposed providing electricity to the farms, some people were skeptical about having the line built into their farmyards.

Gust served at various times on the town board, on the local draft board during WWII, on the board of the Beltrami Rural Electrification Association, and was fire warden for Lammers township for over fifty years. With the help of Lydia, he built a small but excellent dairy herd of Guernseys (maximum number of cows was twelve, dictated by the size of the barn in which they could be housed during the winters). He was forced to sell the herd in 1948 due to illness, eventually diagnosed as a gall bladder problem. Once corrected by surgery, his health returned and he again built up a dairy herd, now selling Grade A milk to the local cooperative creamery association until increasing regulations became too expensive to implement. In retirement, he raised a few beef cattle, was the Beltrami County weed inspector for a few years, put up firewood, and went dark house spearing in winters with good friend and neighbor, Stanley Tweten. Gust died on 28 Jun 1986<sup>5</sup> at the age of 79 of complications from intestinal cancer and is buried in Meadowview Cemetery, Lammers township. Following his death, the homestead was sold and Lydia relocated to Bemidji where she lived until her death on 26 Jan 2004<sup>5</sup> at the age of 97. She is buried in Meadowview Cemetery.

**Adolf Larson (1866-1948),**<sup>50</sup> Emma (Larson) Johnson's brother, purchased forty acres of land (NE ¼ of SE ¼ of Section 23) adjoining the Gustaf Johnson homestead in 1918 and built a one-room house on the land. Adolf was a bachelor and after retirement from his job with the railroad in St. Paul lived in his small home until he could no longer care for himself. At that time he moved to what was known as the Beltrami County Old Folks Home.

Adolf was my great-uncle and while living adjacent to my grandfather's homestead was the source of a number of memorable experiences in my childhood life. His forty acres of land was comprised of about 30-35 acres of swamp in which there were distributed numerous very large rocks. This part of his land was useful for pasture and served this purpose for our cattle for many years. The remaining 5-10 acres of his land was partly covered by a variety of trees that provided Adolf with an ample source of firewood. I was visiting him one summer at the age of perhaps 4 or 5 and went out into the woods with him while he cut some firewood. He sat me down on a fallen tree trunk that was safely out of way of his work. Soon I was squirming to get off the tree as the dead wood was heavily infested with large ants that had attacked me as an intruder. This experience made a strong impression on me.

Adolf's house was a little less than a quarter of a mile away from the buildings on my father and grandfather's farm. He often came to the farmyard to visit with my grandfather and grandmother and to bring back a little milk and cream from the milk house in the evening. In the winter, he marked his path across the open field with stakes every 50 feet or so. These stakes provided a guide for his path in the event of a snowstorm or darkness. I remember taking this path occasionally in the winter to visit him in his house. My parents would watch in the evening if darkness was settling in to see if he made his way safely back to his house. He carried a kerosene lantern with him that was visible from our house.

Adolf owned a Model T Ford of about 1914-17 vintage that was housed in a garage on our farmyard. I vaguely remember being taken for a ride in this automobile. The ride must have been in the very early 1940's because the car was donated to the scrap metal drives that were held at that time in support of the war effort related to World War II. The garage later was used to keep our Farmall C tractor out of the

weather until the building was torn down by my father. One of my jobs in the latter process was to pull and straighten nails from the old boards. Adolf died in 1948 and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

**Boomerville.** Three of Emma Johnson's nephews purchased 120 acres of land in Lammers township in 1918-20. The land was the E  $\frac{1}{2}$  and the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 22 and was referred to as "Boomerville".<sup>43</sup> The nephews built a small one room cabin on the property that, in my memory, always was referred to as "the Larson boy's shack." The nephews were Edgar, Victor, and Arthur Larson, sons of Emma's brother Otto. After emigrating from Sweden, Otto lived in St. Paul. Arthur's daughter, Jean Larson, has written an account of the Otto Larson family.<sup>83</sup> The brothers cleared some of the land and raised crops for a few years. The land eventually was purchased by Max May who at the time owned an adjacent farm (NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 27).



Figure 16. Alfred and Caroline (Hruska) Johnson



Figure 17. Ellen Johnson

**Louella (Johnson) Carson and Charles Carson.** Louella Johnson, daughter of L.D. and Mathilda Johnson, married Charles Carson.

**Ellen (Johnson) Loewen and Peter Loewen.** Ellen Johnson, daughter of L.D. and Mathilda Johnson, married Peter Loewen. Both the Lowewns and the Carsons lived in Lammers township, "just up the road" from the Swede Settlement.

**Alfred Johnson.** Alfred Johnson, son of L.D. and Mathilda Johnson, married Caroline Hruska, a teacher at the Meadowview School<sup>55</sup> in 1929-30 and 1930-31.



Figure 18. Arnold and Emma (Carlson) Lindell with sons, Douglas and Curtis.

**Samuel “Sam” Johnson.** Sam Johnson was the son of L.D. and Mathilda Johnson. Following L.D.’s death in 1935, first Alfred and then Sam tried their hands at farming the homestead. The farm was lost to mortgage foreclosure in 1940 and was purchased by Norbert and Beatrice Peterson.

**Alice (Lindell) Johnson and Alf Johnson.** Alice Lindell, daughter of Joseph and Lena Lindell, married Alf Johnson, son of Axel and Hulda Johnson. The couple lived and raised their family in International Falls, Minnesota. Their children, in addition to Corinne Evelyn (Johnson) Brindos and Rodney Wayne Johnson, both of whom are mentioned elsewhere in this account, were Leslie William (“Bud”) and Duane Walter.<sup>9</sup>

**Arnold Lindell (1907-1984)<sup>20</sup> and Emma (Carlson) Lindell (1913-1998).<sup>20</sup>** Arnold Lindell, son of Joseph and Lena Lindell, married (1932)<sup>9</sup> Emma Carlson, granddaughter of Gustaf and Emma Johnson. Their home was located in the southwest corner of the SW ¼ of the NW 1/4 of Section 25 on a piece of land from Joseph Lindell’s original homestead. Arnold and Emma were the parents of Ervin (1933-1994),<sup>52</sup> Curtis, Douglas, and Janice. After many years of working for the Nordheim Roofing Company of Bemidji, Arnold joined forces with Arvid Johnson and they formed the Bemidji Roofing Company. Arnold’s son, Ervin, also worked with them and assumed the business following retirement of the two founders. Ervin’s son, Michael, joined the firm and has continued to operate it after Ervin’s death.

**Lloyd Lindell.** Lloyd Lindell, son of Joseph and Lena Lindell, lived in Duluth as an adult.

**Milton Lindell (1912-1992).<sup>53</sup>** Henry Milton Lindell, son of Joseph and Lena Lindell, remained a bachelor and lived on the original homestead, working in the woods and at odd jobs as they arose.



**Robert Lindell (1914-1998).**<sup>54</sup> Robert Lindell, son of Joseph and Lena Lindell, worked for the railroad for many years.

**Anton Lindell.** Anton, son of John Lindell, is said to have been a half-brother to the other children of John and Cecelia Lindell.<sup>5,6</sup> It appears that he remained a bachelor throughout his life.

**Oscar Lindell (1882-1957)<sup>20</sup> and Emma (Nelson) Lindell (1887-1974).**<sup>20</sup> Oscar Lindell, son of John and Cecelia Lindell, married Emma Nelson and their first child, Clifford, was born in Lammers township. Oscar built the house later occupied for many years by Hulda Johnson. Oscar moved his family to Saskatchewan and developed prairie land into a successful farm primarily used to grow wheat. They had two additional children, Florence (who, in Canada, married Norman Nickason) and Oscar, Jr.<sup>20</sup>

**Edwin “Ed” Lindell (1884-1966)<sup>20</sup> and Clara (Mathison) Lindell (1883-1956).**<sup>20</sup> Ed Lindell, son of John and Cecelia Lindell, married Clara Mathison (shown in Fig. 12) in 1908; they were recorded by the census as living on the John Lindell homestead in 1910. Daughter Evelyn (1911<sup>25</sup>-1977<sup>20</sup>) was born in Shevlin and son Howard (1913)<sup>25</sup> was born in Solway in the hotel that Ed and Clara were operating at that time.<sup>51</sup> Ed is named as the first switchboard operator for the Solway Telephone Company described in a later section) that began service in 1912. In 1922, Ed and Clara returned to the John Lindell farm,<sup>51</sup> working it until 1941 or 1942. The farm was sold to Albert and Rose Fliethman in 1946.

**Harold Anderson.** Harold Anderson was the stepson of Lars Anderson. In 1917, Harold was drafted for military service in the U.S. Army. When he came home from signing his induction papers in Bemidji, Herbert Larson saw him, and Harold said, “ Well, I went to Bemidji and signed my death warrant today.” Herbert remembers: “We didn’t take it very seriously, ..... and Art May, the man who in later years had a threshing machine, was just a little way from Harold on the last day of the war when he saw Harold get hit by shrapnel. He said, ‘It blew him all to bits’.”<sup>6</sup>

“Lars Anderson got five thousand dollars from Harold’s death and nobody knows what happened to it. He went back to Sweden and in the last years of his life they built a cabin; in fact I have pictures of it. He lived until he was 94. But he didn’t have any money when he got to Sweden, either. Nobody knows what happened to it.”<sup>6</sup>

**Emma (Larson) Fredricks (1893-1972)<sup>56</sup> and Otto Fredricks.** Emma Larson, daughter of Andrew and Brita Larson, married Otto Fredricks in 1910. They lived at several locations in the township before remaining permanently in a house built on the south 20 acres of the SW ¼ of the NW ¼ of section 23. Earlier, Otto had bought the original Meadowview log schoolhouse, moved it and used it as a temporary home. He had purchased forty acres of stumpage from the state in the tamarack swamp (north of Hemingers) and he rebuilt the house on the highest piece of ground he could find. In the summertime - the seasons were very wet in those days - one had to wade in water to get to their place. Andrew Larson’s homestead included part of that swamp as well. A lot of timber was cut out of the swamp in the winters.<sup>6</sup>

**John Larson.** John Larson was the son of Brita (Anderson) Larson and the stepson of Andrew Larson. After enlisting and while serving in the U.S. army during WWI, he was encouraged to join the army





Figure 19. Fredricks family. L. to. r., front: Gladys, Otto, Emma, Phillip; back: Kenneth, Florence, and Roman Fredricks

band. (His step-brother, Herbert Larson, remembers that he played first B-flat coronet.) He joined and in time became leader of the 332<sup>nd</sup> field artillery band. Later in the war, John encouraged both Alf Johnson and Carl Erickson to enlist in the army and promised them that they would be able to join the band. They did serve in the army and were members of John's band. After the war, John eventually moved to Wetonka, South Dakota, and developed a large farm that is still in the family today.<sup>6</sup>

**August Larson (1899-1960).** August Larson, son of Andrew and Brita Larson, worked both in the woods and on the Larson. As the result of an accident while working in the woods, August lost sight in one eye.<sup>6</sup>

Herbert Larson told me that in his later years August lived in Fargo, North Dakota, where his last job was working in a factory that made concrete blocks. The factory did not operate during the winter so August drew unemployment from the state. On New Year's Day, 1961, Herbert got a telephone call from his sister, Emma Fredricks, who said, "Did you hear about your brother, August?" Herbert said, "No." She said, "They found him in Fargo, dead in his room." He had been murdered.

So Herbert and his son Ramon left California about 7:00 o'clock in the evening on New Year's Day and drove first to Bemidji and then to Fargo. "They had gotten him out of his room" where he had died on December 28, 1960 and "They gave me ... he had an unemployment check; there was blood on the envelope ... the check hadn't been taken but he didn't have any money (on him or in the room)."

"The police department, they didn't want to spend any time investigating the case so they said that he died of a heart attack. But there wouldn't be blood all over the floor if he died of a heart attack. But we



Figure 20. Gerald Larson, son of Herbert and Edith (Johnson) Larson



Figure 21. Annie (Erickson) Robertson

didn't see any reason to contest it because there was nothing to gain ... he was dead, we couldn't bring him back to life ... and whoever did it would have to live with his own conscience the rest of his life. We probably would have gotten nowhere with it anyway, a lawsuit contesting the Fargo police department."

"He was four years older than me."<sup>6</sup>

**Herbert Larson (1903-2003) and Edith (Johnson) Larson.** Herbert Larson is the son and youngest child of Andrew and Brita (Anderson) Larson. Herbert was born in his parent's home in Lammers township on December 11, 1903. He married Edith Johnson on February 14, 1924 and they were the parents of Mavis Audrey (who died in infancy), Ramon, Norma, Carole Jane, and Gerald. More about Herbert Larson is found below in a section titled, "Life in Lammers Township as Remembered by Herbert Larson."

**Minnie (Erickson) Gullickson.** Daughter of Peter and Anna Erickson, Minnie married Gullick Gullickson<sup>6,57</sup> and raised a large family in the Fertile area.

**Annie (Erickson) Robertson and Richard Robertson.** Annie Erickson, youngest daughter of Peter and Anna Erickson, married Richard Robertson; they were the parents of a son Clarence (1922)<sup>25</sup> who it is said was born in my grandmother's bed. My grandmother served as midwife for a number of births in the Swede Settlement.<sup>5</sup> Annie died in 1925<sup>30</sup> and Clarence was raised by his three bachelor uncles until he entered military service in World War II. Following the war, he returned to the Lammers area and was married to Marlys Stolle in 1945.

**John, Edward “Ed”, and Carl (“Snuse Carl”) Victor Erickson.** The three sons of Peter and Anna Erickson, John, Edward and Carl Victor, remained bachelors all their lives and lived in the family home until their deaths. Carl saw service in World War I. His marker in the Meadowview Cemetery is inscribed with the following reference to his military service: MUS 3 CL HQ CO 332 FA WWI. To some extent, the three brothers all developed an addiction to alcohol; Carl was notorious for his drinking excesses. On more than one occasion, he was rescued from the snowy roadside by his neighbor, Stanley Tweten, who lived on the adjacent farm (originally the Axel Johnson homestead).

For many years, there were two Carl Ericksons living in the Solway area. In local conversation, it was necessary to identify which Carl was being talked about. The nicknames, **“Snuse Carl”** and **“Lucy Carl,”** often were used for this purpose. Snuse Carl was the son of Peter and Anna Erickson who were among the eleven families from the Fertile area who made up the “Swede Settlement.” The word snuse is slang for snuff or chewing tobacco, a habit in which “Snuse Carl” presumably engaged. “Lucy Carl” was the son of Erik and Martha Erickson, who also lived in the Fertile area. The name “Lucy Carl” derived from the fact that he was married to Lucy Heminger. Carl’s twin brother, Albert, was married to Lucy’s sister, Helen Heminger. Herbert Larson explained these relationships and also told me that he and both of the Carl Ericksons were first cousins. This was because their mothers, Anna and Martha, both were sisters of his father, Andrew Larson.<sup>6</sup>

**William and Nellie Heminger.** The Hemingers, one of the first non-Scandinavian families in the “Swede Settlement,” moved to Lammers township in 1916 when they bought and lived on eighty acres of land to the east of the L.D. Johnson homestead. William and Nellie Heminger were the parents of ten children: Helen, Charles, Lucy, Earl, Fredrick, Evangeline (“Eva”), Eleanor (“Nellie”), Louis, Arthur, and Joseph. The children all attended the Meadowview School and graduated from the eighth grade.<sup>21</sup>

## Lammers Township

Lammers township is located on the western edge of Beltrami County, Minnesota,<sup>58</sup> directly west from the city of Bemidji. The township is typical in most respects. It is bordered to the north by Buzzle township,<sup>59</sup> to the east by Eckles township, to the south by Jones township,<sup>60</sup> and to the west by Shevlin township in Clearwater County. The name Lammers is taken from George A. Lammers who, with his brother Albert J., operated the Lammers Brothers logging company.<sup>21</sup> Within the township is one village, Solway, located in Section 28.

The survey of Beltrami County from which the boundaries of the townships were determined had begun in 1874.<sup>61</sup> The surveys of each township were completed at different times. The township (No. 147 N of Range 35 W) that would later be named Lammers was surveyed in 1891.<sup>62</sup> A petition for organization as a town(ship) was signed by 27 male residents<sup>63</sup> in July of 1898 and was presented to the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners in August of 1898.<sup>64</sup> The name “Solway” also was proposed for the township but the name “Lammers” finally prevailed. The petition is marked as being approved as of 5 Oct 1903 (or 1908) but records of town board meetings are dated as early as May 6, 1899.<sup>6</sup>

Lammers and surrounding townships were home to large stands of old white pine and red (Norway) pine forest. It was inevitable that the logging industry would be attracted to these forests and eventually would reach the area. Treaties between the U.S. Government and the Ojibway in 1855 and 1889 gave the U.S. possession of millions of acres of land across west central Minnesota. Once surveyed, timber

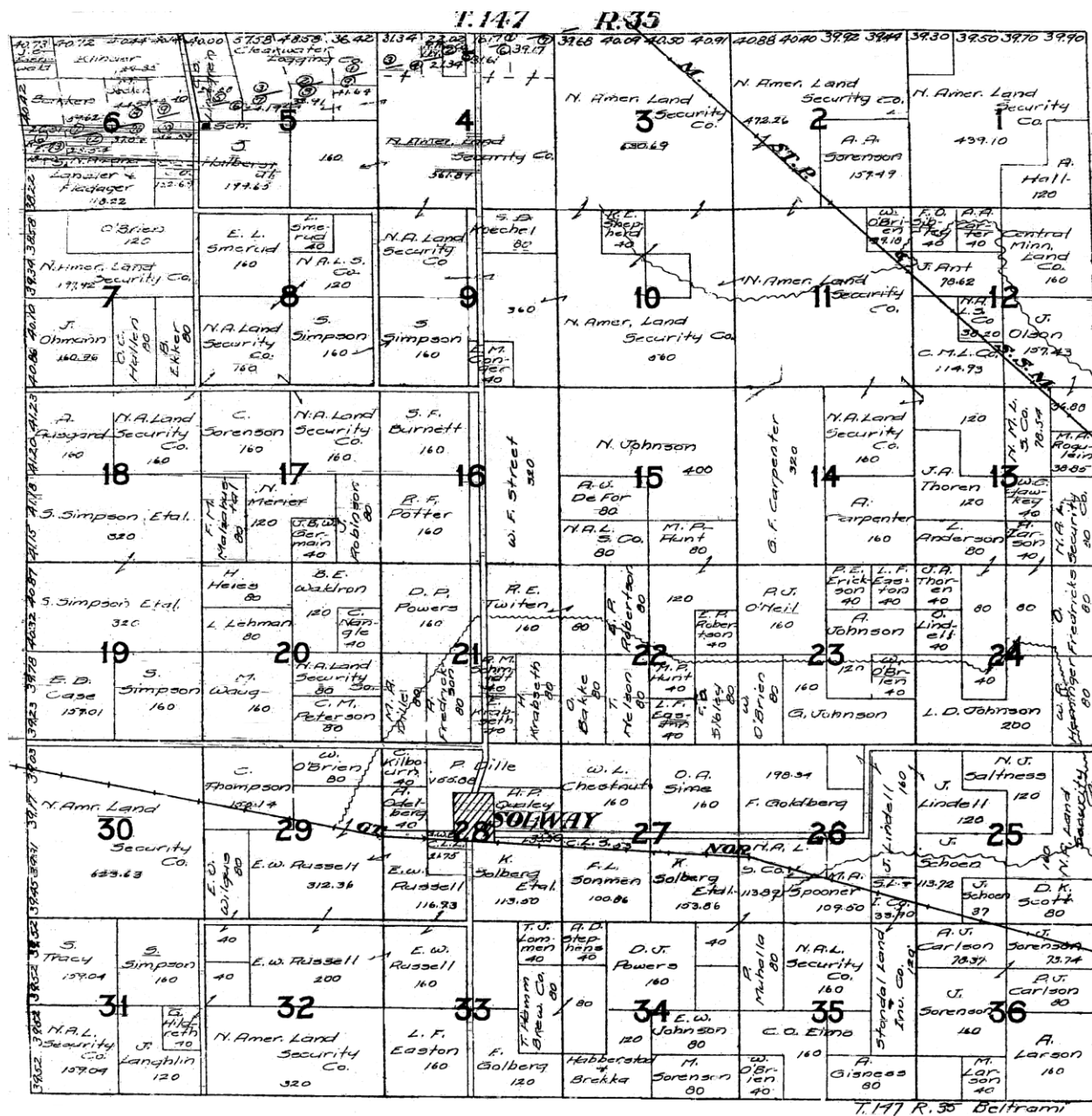


Figure 22. Lammers township plat map, 1916.

companies were able to gain title to much of the choice forested land using a variety of methods including purchase of land warrants (scrip), pre-emption and outright land purchases.

The timber harvest in Minnesota initially advanced through the state along rivers that provided the means to transport logs to sawmills. Logging operations moved upstream from the southeastern part of the state along the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers and their tributaries as well as along other smaller rivers. But because the Mississippi River is quite small below Lake Bemidji and runs through large lakes, such as L. Winnibigoshish, it did not become an important access route to the forests of Beltrami County. Instead, some of the first logs from the county were taken north and west down the Clearwater and Red Lake Rivers to sawmills in Crookston and Grand Forks. The Clearwater River runs close enough to Lammers township so that early logging operations supplying these mills had extended into the northwest corner of the township.

However, most of the forests in Beltrami and surrounding counties were sufficiently remote to survive until the arrival of railroads. Railroads provided an alternate, efficient means for carrying logs to the sawmills. Two railroads reached Beltrami County in 1898. The first was the Great Northern which connected existing railheads at Deer River to the east and Fosston to the west. The first Great Northern passenger train came through in August of 1898.<sup>66</sup> Later in the same year, the Brainerd and Northern Railroad completed an extension of their line north from Walker to Bemidji. With the establishment of these rail routes to the sawmills, exploitation of the forests in and around Lammers township rapidly accelerated.

Logging operations required large quantities of supplies to service their needs. Small business communities sprang up at various locations along the existing trails and roads of the day to provide these supplies. In 1898, land was deeded to Solway and official incorporation as a village occurred on February 7, 1899 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>21</sup> The newly completed Great Northern railroad passing through Solway, enhanced the role of the village as a supply center for the logging business.

The acceleration in logging was accompanied by an influx of settlers. The first newcomers established businesses to serve the logging industry. They were soon followed by other settlers claiming homesteads for the purposes of farming. The population (excluding Native Americans) of Beltrami County, which had been 10 in 1880 and 312 in 1890, had grown to 11,230 in 1900.<sup>67</sup> In fact, this acceleration of growth took place in just the last two or three years of the decade. For example, Bemidji grew from a population of about 200 in 1896 to 500 in 1898<sup>66</sup> and to 2183 in 1900.<sup>68</sup>

Once the timber had been removed, the land was of no further interest to the lumber companies. The deforested land was sold to entrepreneurs who then re-sold the land to potential farmers. In Lammers township, The Solway Land Company was incorporated on July 30, 1898, George A. Lammers, president and James W. Foley, secretary. On August 9, thousands of acres of land were transferred by the Red River Lumber Company to the Solway Land Company.<sup>69</sup>

Land not covered with forest remained in the hands of the federal government until made available through the Homestead Act to anyone wishing to claim, settle upon, and improve the claim. Consequently, land in the eastern part of Lammers township was opened for homesteading in 1896.<sup>70</sup> Responding to this opportunity, homestead claims were filed by a group of Swedish immigrants living near Fertile, Minnesota.

## **Meadowview School**

One of the first community activities of the new settlers was the establishment of a school. The following information is taken from "Lest We Forget," a compilation of anecdotal information of Lammers township and the village of Solway collected and published by Jo Johnson in 1982.<sup>21</sup>

"School district #123 was located on the east side of Lammers township in Section 24. It was also known as the Swede school as so many people of Swedish ancestry settled in the area. Later it was known as the Meadowview school.

L.D. Johnson donated land for the school building. The first one of logs, was built in 1900-1901. This building was used for ten years. In 1910, a two-story frame schoolhouse was built. The upper rooms were used for social meetings, church services and such. One such event was a bridal shower for Luella Johnson and Charles Carson.

Children from the west side of Eckles township attended school here, too.

A 14 x 48 foot barn was built to house the horses while people attended events in the school.



In 1939, the school consolidated with the school in the village of Solway, bringing in enough money to pay off the debt of the district #31 (*district # 26 in 1939*) school.

Otto Fredricks purchased the old log school and moved it to his place and the family lived in it for some time. The frame school was sold, torn down and moved."



Figure 23. Meadowview School. Children are unidentified.

More information about the Meadowview school comes from a variety of old records. The exact location of the school building was in the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 24. Today the site can be identified on the south side of the Meadowview Cemetery by the concrete front steps and foundation remaining a few feet off the nearby road.

The school district was not originally numbered 123. A plat book for school districts in Beltrami County<sup>71</sup> shows that in 1899-1900 the entire township of Lammers was designated as District 26. In 1905-6, there were three different schools in district 26, described as follows: "#1 in the village (of Solway); #2 located N.E. of village; #3 located 4 mi N of village." Clearly the school described as being N.E. of the village refers to the Meadowview school in the Swede Settlement. On a later, undated page in the book, the township is shown divided exactly in half from north to south with the west half designated as District 26 and the east half as District 123. The designation as District 123 is first used in 1908-9 in county records listing all the teachers in Beltrami county schools.<sup>71</sup>

In 1916, O.A. Sime, J.A. Hallan, Chas. Smerud, and T.J. Lomen petitioned successfully to have parts of Section 27 in District 123 changed to District 26. This was based on practicality as the homes of these families were much closer to Solway than to the Meadowview schoolhouse. In 1918, Frank J. Smith successfully petitioned to have part of Section 10 changed from District 123 to District 26.<sup>71</sup>

A nearly complete list of teachers in the Meadowview school can be reconstructed and is given in Table 2 together with other miscellaneous information about the school. A school census of students residing in the Meadowview district was taken every summer. The records for these censuses, beginning

Table 2. Teachers in the District 123 (Meadowview) School, 1901-1939.

Year	Teacher	Months	No. of pupils	Salary, \$/mo	Ref.
1901-2	Amy J. Ecker				a
1902-3	E.G. Williams				b
1903-4	Cecilia Rygg				b
1904-5	Cecilia Rygg				b,c
1905-6	Ella F. Parker				d
1906-7					
1907-8	Josie D. Hanson <sup>6</sup>				d
1908-9	H.A. Pierce	5 3/4		40	d
1909-10	H.A. Pierce	5		40	d
1910-11	Agnes Back	5		40	d
1911-12	Bertella Gustafson	5		40	d
1912-13	Bertella Gustafson	7		45	d
1913-14	Frances Bowers	7		50	d
1914-15	Josie Hanson	8		50	d
1915-16	Josie B. Hanson	8		60	d
1916-17	E.O. Olson	8		60	d
1917-18	Elin O. Olson	8		60	d
1918-19	Olga Skinvik				d
1919-20	Jesse Pendergast				d
1920-21	Elin Olson				d
1921-22	Edna Flynn				d
1922-23	Florence Miller		18		d
1923-24	Florence Miller		24	95	d
1924-25	Bertha Webster		22	95	d
1925-26	Beatrice Sund				d
1926-27	Leona Nordheim		19		d
1927-28	Leona Nordheim		22		d
1928-29	Mrs. Ralph Lake		13	100	d
1929-30	Caroline Hruska			90	d
1930-31	Caroline Hruska			95	d
1931-32	Margaret McMillan, (Feb. 9) Agnes Larson		15		d
1932-33	Lydia Gack		18	70	d
1933-34	Lydia Gack		19	60	d
1934-35	Lydia Gack		28	60	d
1935-36	Lydia Gack		28	60	d
1936-37	Electa Sutton		25	65	d
1937-38	Electa Sutton		26	75	d
1938-39	Electa B. Sutton		34	75	d

<sup>a</sup>From greeting card to Stone W. Johnson, student. <sup>b</sup>From certificate for perfect monthly school attendance, awarded to Stone W. Johnson. <sup>c</sup>From souvenir card, shown in reference 5. <sup>d</sup>From Beltrami County Superintendent of Schools Term Records. Volume 1. 1904-1943; in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society Library, St. Paul, MN.

in 1920 and continuing through the closing of the school after the 1938-9 school year, were found in the Beltrami County courthouse and are transcribed in Appendix 6 of reference 1.

If photographs of the log school exist, they have yet to come to light. Several photographs of the frame school building do exist including an excellent large picture reproduced in "Lest We Forget."<sup>21</sup> Most of the large group of people in that photograph are identified. Although undated, one can estimate from the known birthdays of several small children in the photograph that it was taken in 1917 or 1918.

It was in District 123, Meadowview School, Lammers Township, that my mother, Lydia (Gack) Johnson, accepted a teaching position in the fall of 1932 upon completion of a year of teachers training at Bemidji State Teachers College. She was interviewed for the job in Bemidji by Elin Johnson and Alfred Johnson, two members of the Meadowview school board. As an aside before the interview, Alfred said about the just completed, but not yet opened to traffic, highway (U.S. Highway Number 2) that connected Solway to Bemidji, "Boy, that road looked so good, I was tempted to drive down on it." During the interview, Lydia was asked how long she expected to teach. She answered, "All the rest of my life!"<sup>5</sup>

In the Lammers community where the school was located, she found two homes offering boarding for the same price (\$16 for four weeks) and chose to stay with the one having no children attending the school. This was in the home of Arvid and Victoria (Peterson) Johnson who, in 1932, owned and lived on the farm originally homesteaded by Axel Johnson.<sup>5</sup>

Boarding was much like being part of the family. After coming home from school, Lydia might spend time correcting papers or preparing "seat work" for the next day. The "seat work" was similar to workbooks and was prepared using a typewriter and carbon paper to make copies. Lydia then joined the family for supper after which they would talk and do the dishes.<sup>5</sup>

Victoria was only a year or so older than Lydia so they sometimes did things together. A small local vaudeville troupe, "**The Ole Borgan Show**," performed occasionally in Solway. Lydia and Victoria walked to Solway to see the show. The four-person troupe was led by Pete Borgan and his wife, Elsie, and included Elsie's mother and Howard Lindell (the son of Ed and Clara Lindell and grandson of John Lindell). Elsie wrote the plays that the group performed as they traveled from town to town in northern Minnesota.<sup>5</sup>

Lydia left the house about 7:00 a.m. to walk (or, in winter, ski) to school in order to get a fire started and the water fountain filled. The big, round stove was surrounded by a jacket within which air circulated to warm the room. The stove also was equipped with a water pan to provide some humidity to the large classroom. The children all carried lunch from home to school. Their lunches often included jars of soup, sliced potato dumplings with butter, goulash or other hot dishes which were placed in hot water on top of the stove to warm up for lunch. The water was obtained outdoors from a hand pump. The water fountain was a large stoneware crock with a fountain to drink from. Excess water from the drinking fountain ran into a pail.<sup>5</sup>

The school building had two floors with the upper floor used for various community activities. The lower level had one large classroom with a small entry room in front. To one side of the entry was a small space for a library and cloakroom. On the other side were stairs to the upper floor. The classroom had a row of windows across the south side and a blackboard across the north side. The front of the classroom also was equipped with a blackboard where students wrote their spelling words and worked arithmetic problems. The room contained a case of maps for geography and included maps of Minnesota, the World, and each continent. A globe also was suspended from the ceiling.<sup>5</sup>

School began at 9:00 A.M. and ended at 4:00 P.M. The school day was begun with some singing and/or stories and, in the winter, a few marches around the room to get the students warmed up. In one-room, multi-class schools, students were called together and given their lessons in the front or back of the room. Then they returned to their desks to work on the lesson using the "seat work" that had been prepared. Classes were 10-15 minutes long. Although students in different grades might be combined for certain classes, there were eight grades to be taught reading, arithmetic, history, geography, language, drawing, and music so each class time was short. Fifteen minute recesses were held once each in the morning and the afternoon. There was a one-hour noon lunch break. Lydia taught the easier subjects later in the day when fatigue began to shorten attention spans. Current events were taught from special

two-page newspapers that either the students or the school bought. Report cards were sent home once a month.<sup>5</sup>

The two big special events of the year were the Christmas program and the school picnic at the end of the school year. The Christmas program included songs, recitations, dialog and a play. Lydia had her students perform the play, "Christmas at Finnegan's Flats," which was an hour in length. She put on the play at every school she taught at and knew the whole play by heart. Practice for the program was done as part of the reading and language classes.<sup>5</sup>

A school census of children residing within each school district in the county was taken every summer. The census records for Meadowview School for the years 1920 through 1938 were available in the office of the Beltrami County Court Administrator. A transcription of these records is included in Reference 1.

Herbert Larson remembers the first six words he spoke in English. When he started first grade at the Meadowview school, he spoke only Swedish. The teacher, Miss Back, used blue colored blocks with letters on them as a teaching aid. She taught him to say, "Miss Back has a blue block." This tongue twister was soon being repeated by all the other kids in the school.<sup>6</sup>

Herbert also remembers when my grandfather brought my dad to school the first time. He told the teacher that "his name is Gosta, but you can call him Gust." Like Herbert, Gust spoke only Swedish when he started school. He began learning English but at first he sometimes got the two languages mixed together. Once, when someone threatened to throw something at him, Gust said, using both English and Swedish sentence structure, "Oops, I better look out I."<sup>6</sup>

Herbert was the envy of the other kids at school because he had a source of income. He was paid \$2 a month to carry a pail of water from home to school every morning during the winter (because the outside pump at the school would freeze up) and to start a fire in the stove to get the school house warmed up.

Herbert: "We all hated going to school. It was not considered so important. Working was more important."

When the new Meadowview schoolhouse was built in 1910, new outhouses also were put up – one for the boys and one for the girls. After being in use for a while, the teacher admonished the boys that they were using too much toilet paper which was costly for the school board to pay. Charlie Heminger replied, "That toilet paper is no good anyway – your finger goes right through it."<sup>6</sup> Most kids were used to the stronger paper from the Sears Roebuck mail order catalog.

## **"Rubbernecking" (The Solway Telephone Company)**

While writing this account, I came across the following lines in a magazine: "Like the telephone before it, television has been an instrument for overcoming American loneliness. Think of the farm wives of a century ago who suddenly could hear another voice without having to travel into town."<sup>72</sup> These lines express as well as any what the telephone must have meant to rural communities such as those in Lammers township in the early years of the 20th century.

The Swedes in Lammers township organized and built a telephone system with a central exchange in Solway in 1912. An article in the *Bemidji Pioneer* described the new telephone company:<sup>73</sup>

"Solway Farmers Build Phone Lines"

(Note: Spelling of names in the article has not been corrected.)

"At a recent meeting of the farmers and citizens of Solway an organization was effected, which will be known as the Solway Telephone company. The officers elected are Andrew Larson, president;

John Thoren, secretary and H.P. Dunning, treasurer. Fifteen members have already sent in their appropriation toward the building of a line from Solway east into the thickly settled portion of the town of Lammers.

The distance of the immediate line will be seven miles. The poles are up and the stringing of the wire will be commenced within a few days. It is expected that the line will be completed within a portion of two weeks.

The central station will be at the Hotel Solway, where Edward Lindall will have charge. The line will be connected with the regular Bell telephone system and also with other lines in that vicinity as well as throughout the entire country. It will cost nothing for the owners to talk to the respective members on their line, but a charge of five cents will be made for a connection to another line, in addition to the regular toll charge.

The line is being built by subscriptions raised by the citizens of Solway and farmers in that section. In the spring of the year it is planned that a seven mile line will be extended south and another seven miles north.

The present membership consists of the following: H.P. Dunning, E.B. Lindall, Mike Wold, H.C. Ellis, John Lindall, Gust Johnson, Axil Johnson, John Erickson, John Thoren, Andrew Larson, Lars Anderson, L.D. Johnson, Nels J. Saltness and Joseph Lindall. Others have signified their intention of taking stock and becoming a part of the new telephone system.

A directory will be issued for the company and will be distributed among the patrons as soon as the line is completed."

I told Herbert Larson that I remembered my dad talking about the common practice of "rubbernecking" on the telephone party line. He said that when the Larson's talked on the phone to each other [for example, Mrs. Andrew Larson calling Emma (Larson) Fredricks], they used their own dialect of the Swedish language that the other Swedes in the community could not understand. Herbert chuckled and said "you could hear the click of receivers being hung up when they started talking."<sup>6</sup>

Carole (Larson) Stewart also describes the party line telephone in her recollections of Lammers township. She remembers that the Larson's ring was two longs and a short. Ours was two shorts and a long (9F210). As Carole says, "there weren't many secrets."<sup>74</sup> Or if you had a secret, you certainly would not tell it to anyone over the telephone.

## **Life in Lammers Township as Remembered by Herbert Larson<sup>6</sup>**

While corresponding with Max and Corinne (Johnson) Brindos (daughter of Alf Johnson) in 1998, they encouraged me to talk to Herbert Larson who at that time was living in southern California with his daughter Carole (Larson) Stewart. Mr. Larson was the last person of the Swede Settlement from the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who could tell us about the community. And, they emphasized, Mr. Larson was noted for his excellent memory

So, on Thursday, April 15, 1999, I drove to the San Diego area and on Friday morning, I was warmly greeted by Carole, Herbert, and Floyd Johnson at Carole's home in Carlsbad. I returned on Saturday afternoon for an additional session of talking.

Almost immediately upon entering their home, we began talking about various aspects of life in Lammers township. After farming the Larson homestead for a number of years, Herbert and his family left the farm in the late 1930's. They lived briefly in Bemidji before moving to Fargo, North Dakota, in 1940. While in Fargo, daughters Norma and Carole, known as the "Layne Sisters," sang for the radio station WDAY. Herbert recounted that when he moved to Fargo, he left an account at Fredrickson's store in Solway in the amount of about \$35 that he was unable to pay. Some (6-7) years later, during a return



visit to the Solway area, he saw Clifford Fredrickson and mentioned his unpaid bill. He asked Clifford if he would consider it settled for \$40 to which Clifford happily agreed.

During the Depression, Herbert had played in a band called the “Rhythm Ramblers” at the Swing Club near Bemidji. In 1944, the drummer from that band invited Herbert to come to California to work in a restaurant, actually a beer bar, that he had bought. So in November of that year, the Larsons moved to Wasco, California – a “tough town” – and Herbert worked for the former drummer. “I lasted about two weeks as a bartender. That was enough for me.” After six months, he moved his family to the Los Angeles area and founded the Larson and Sons Roofing Company in the city of Hawthorne.

Additional stories from our conversation are included below.

**The Solway Coronet Band.** One of the first things Herbert did when I arrived at his and Carole’s home was to show me an old photograph (see title page) of the Solway Coronet Band. By coincidence, I also have a copy of that photograph that I had brought along to show Herbert. Herbert is seen in the photograph on the (viewer’s) left end of the front row. He thought he had been 12 or 13 years old at the time the photograph was taken; consequently the photograph dates to about 1915 or 1916. All the musicians in the photo had been identified to me previously with the exception of a man in a dark suit and plain cap who was holding a clarinet. Herbert immediately identified him as “Nick” Nelson of the Pinewood-Aure area.

In the right background of the photograph is visible a low structure partially hidden by small leafy trees. Herbert said the structure was a platform that had been built outdoors next to the Meadowview school and that it was used for dances. The band played for these dances as well as for other occasions in the community and surrounding area, as far away as once for Fourth of July celebrations in Trail, Minnesota. Herbert doesn’t recall that the band had any one particular leader but said that John Erickson often would set the beat for the players. The band gathered in the upstairs of the schoolhouse once a month or so to practice.

**Clearing Land and Farming.** Herbert said, “It’s a wonder that I’m here at all.” When he was about 17 or 18 years old, Sheriff Johnson had bought forty acres near the Larson farm. The timber was harvested and the stumps had to be blasted in order to break the land. “He had hired a dynamite man from Solway to blow these stumps and I was punching holes in the ground to try and get down to the tap root of the tree. He would always load 5 or 6 places where I punched these holes and light them at the same time. He used a lighter and then he would run like the dickens. One day I found this place and I didn’t see (anything) – he cut the fuse so you could barely see it. There was a bunch of people from Solway out there watching us blow these stumps. Some one must have stepped on this place and covered the fuse so I missed it. So, I was punching holes with that iron crowbar and the second time - the ground was muddy - I pulled it back and I pulled out a cap with two sticks of dynamite and it didn’t go off. I wouldn’t be here if it had gone off.”

After the stumps were blasted, the field was plowed with a breaking plow. It had a blade that was called a sod cutter that cut the sod and roots. After plowing with the breaking plow, the field was disked and dragged. All the roots were picked up and carried off. “And rocks - there always seemed to be rocks to contend with. I know we had two rock piles on our farm. They would be full of woodchucks and gophers in the summertime. The dogs would be in those rock piles, barking and digging and trying to get at those woodchucks.”



Figure 24. Community gathering in back of the Meadowview schoolhouse. Members of the Solway Coronet Band are seen holding instruments.

“We had pretty good crops (for awhile). And then, I’ll tell you what happened at our place, the quack grass took over. That quack grass, that was something. You couldn’t exterminate the stuff; you leave one little piece of root and (it would grow again). It grew real lush for a few years and finally, I figured, it took all the nutrients out of the ground and even the quack grass died off. It made good hay for a year or two. The cows liked the quack grass as far as eating.”

**Work and Wages.** Herbert remembers cutting railroad ties with his brother Oscar in December of 1923. They were cutting the trees seven miles south of Solway. The job required felling, trimming and cutting the fallen trees into eight foot lengths. Then these lengths were cut flat on two sides using a broadax to make the finished railroad tie. Herbert fell, trimmed and cut the trees into lengths and Oscar did the cutting with the broadax. “Oscar was the best broadax man I know.” One day, a Friday, the two men cut and finished 100 railroad ties. Then they walked the twelve miles to their home northeast of Solway. They were paid 15 cents for each tie and so they had earned \$7.50 apiece for the day.

When he was eighteen years old, Herbert had a job loading railroad ties. One man to a tie, carried into a boxcar. “That was rough on your shoulder.”

During the Depression, Herbert worked in the woods with his nephew, Roman Fredricks, who “was about as good a wood cutter as anybody could be.” They were cutting ??? posts and they got 1¼ cents apiece for the posts. “We worked like dogs all week and I think we made about \$18.50 for the week.”

Herbert worked for Ed Nordheim when Nordheim’s Roofing company put the roof on the paper mill in International Falls. Herbert was the kettle man. Nordheim asked him if he could heat enough pitch to keep two crews supplied. Herbert did and for that, Nordheim increased his pay from 35 cents to 40 cents an hour. “Nordheim was a hard man to work for.”

Homemade butter was one source of cash income from the farm. Herbert's mother, Brita, made excellent butter that was delivered to a number of people in Bemidji. Herbert remembers sitting between his dad and L.D. Johnson once when they were driving a team of horses to Bemidji to deliver butter. The horses had rarely seen an automobile and when they met an oncoming car on the road, the horses were frightened and reared up on their hind legs.

Herbert: "They (the settlers) did jobs on the outside. They didn't get paid very well for it, a dollar and a half a day or something. Probably two dollars or two dollars and a half if you had a team of horses, like for work on the roads. They used dump boards and a wagon, where you turn over the board and the gravel falls out and the guys would level it. You had a gravel pit where you shoveled it all by hand, then you had someone help you to turn the boards." That was the earth moving equipment of the time.

**Spearing Walleyes and Netting Tullibees.** I remember often hearing my dad tell about going to Rice Lake or Lake Plantagenet on fishing expeditions with other men from the "Swede Settlement." Herbert told me about these fishing trips. "Man, oh man ... we used to catch them by the tubful." In the spring when the walleyes were coming up the rivers to spawn, the men would put a boat on a wagon. In the afternoon, they would take the wagon with a team of horses and go down to Rice Lake, arriving by evening to spear walleyes. The spearing was all done at night using a lantern or a fire built with a bunch of pine knots floating in a "jack" made of wire netting alongside the boat. At night, the eyes of the fish would glow in the light from the lanterns or the fire and became targets for the spearers. If you happened to have a spear with a wider set of tines, you sometimes would get two fish on the spear at the same time. The tubs would be filled in one night or less of spearing and then the men would go back home. The fish brought back this way were stored either by canning or salting.

In the late fall, the men would go to Lake Plantagenet or Wolf Lake to net tullibees (a small whitefish). At Lake Plantagenet, they stayed in a cabin owned by Robert Forslund, a friend of Herbert's dad. On the frozen lake, the men would start the work of putting the net out by first cutting a hole in the ice 50-100 yards off shore out from a point around which the fish would swim. Through this hole, they anchored a stake in the lake bottom. A clothesline was attached to the stake and a long pole was tied to the other end of the clothesline. The clothesline was 100 ft in length, the same length as the net that would be used. The long pole was shoved under the ice and where it stopped, another hole was cut and the pole given another shove. This was repeated until the clothesline was fully extended. The net was anchored at this end, tied to the clothesline and pulled back under the ice to the first hole. In this way the net was set and left overnight. In the morning, the holes in the ice at the ends of the net were reopened, the net was pulled out and the fish taken out. On the snow and ice and in the cold air, the fish would soon be frozen. They were taken home and left frozen until needed for cooking. They were thawed in cold water, cleaned and cooked, tasting just like fresh fish.

## **The Town Board<sup>65</sup>**

By the year 1899, the residents of Lammers township had formed a town board of supervisors. Fortunately, many of the old records of the Lammers town board were saved and have been transferred to the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul where they are available for research use. Among the records are the minutes of town board meetings, the first of which is dated May 6, 1899. (This may not have been the first meeting of the town board since this meeting is described as a special

meeting of the town supervisors. From the minutes it is clear that supervisors had already been selected before this meeting.)

Although payment of bills is mentioned in the minutes of early meetings, the first detailed list of payments is found recorded on January 21, 1901. A number of bills paid at this time were for the costs of

W.S. Booth & Son	Blanks for clerk	\$2.32
H.R. McDonald	Service as Clerk, etc	3.75
L.D. Johnson	Service on Town board Aug 4, 1900	1.00
L.D. Johnson	Service on Town board Aug 31, 1900	1.50
Mike Rivett	Work on Road	4.37
L.D. Johnson	Service as Judge of Election	9.30
R.E. Hart	Service as Judge of Election	9.30
W.H. Kuonof (sp?)	Service as Judge of Election	9.30
Ambrose Cloney	Service as Clerk of Election	4.30
Mike Cloney	Service as Special Police of Election	3.20
Jay M. Near	Service as Clerk of Election	10.80
R.E. Hart	Service on Town Board	3.70
Jas. J. Wilcox	Work on Road	42.00
J.M. Near	90 Folios and posting notices	7.30
Lars Anderson	Work on Road	6.00
L.D. Johnson	Work on Road	6.75
W.D. Platt	Meals for Judges of Election	3.00
F.J. Baxter	Service on town board	1.50
Solway Mer <sup>Co</sup>	Mdse for township	7.50
R.E. Hart	Service on town board	1.50
L.D. Johnson	Service on town board	1.50
F.J. Baxter	Service on town board	1.50
J.M. Near	Service on town board as clerk	1.50

an election, presumably the General Election held in November of 1900. The bills in the above list were audited and allowed.

Occasionally, other matters requiring action came before the town board. Several of these are described below.

**Managed Health Care, 1905.** From the “Minutes of Board of Auditors meeting in Fire hall in the Village of Solway of town of Lammers on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of March A.D. 1905 .....,” the following two bills were audited:

(1) Peter M. Mark, Aug. 18, 1904 – Medicine in J.J. Greenlee’s Diphtheria case. The amount billed was \$2.00 and the amount allowed was 2.00.

(2) Dr. M. McKinnon. Aug. 3; Aug. 18 – 2 visits to J.J. Greenlee in above case. The amount billed was \$45.00 and the amount allowed was 35.00.

Even in 1905, “government” clearly is “managing” health care. The board of auditors allowed payment to Dr. McKinnon of only \$35.00 whereas his bill was for \$45.00.

**The Case of Mary A. Hyde.** On January 9, 1909, Andrew Larson, chairman of the board of supervisors of Lammers township called the supervisors together to consider the case of Mary A. Hyde. Supervisor Axel Johnson and clerk/justice of the peace, John Thoren, were present. Supervisor Charles Lindgren was absent. The meeting was held at Axel Johnson's residence. Chairman Larson read a letter from J.M. Phillippi, Superintendent of the County Poor Farm, notifying the town of Lammers that it was the town's duty to care for an inmate of the poor farm, a Mrs. Mary A. Hyde.

Since the members of the board did not know that the township had an inmate at the poor farm and had never heard that the township had a resident named Mary A. Hyde, they appointed a committee to look into the matter. They appointed themselves to the committee and agreed to make the necessary investigations and to meet again on January 13<sup>th</sup> to continue the matter.

Their investigation included visiting and questioning Mrs. Hyde and Mr. Phillippi at the poor farm, county auditor Wilmann, and several old residents of both the town of Eckles and the town of Lammers. They learned that Mrs. Hyde had arrived at the poor farm on the recommendation of F.O. Sibley, Commissioner of the 3<sup>rd</sup> district; that she required the use of about 3 pounds of opium per year; and that she could not live without a certain amount of opium twice a day. They concluded from their investigation that she had lived in Lammers township just before being taken to the poor farm and that the township was obligated to provide for her care.

The board decided to publish a notice to the residents of the township that there would be a public auction held on January 23 for the purpose of contracting with the lowest bidder for the boarding, clothing and care of Mrs. Hyde. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, two persons appeared before the board to bid for the care of Mrs. Hyde for a period of one year. They were Josie Thoren and my grandmother, Emma Johnson. Their bids, in the order they were given, were as follows:

	Mrs. Josie Thoren	Mrs. Emma Johnson
1st bid	\$150.00	\$130.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> "	125.00	120.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> "	110.00	105.00
4 <sup>th</sup> "	100.00	99.00
5 <sup>th</sup> "	98.00	no further bids.

Mrs. Josie Thoren was awarded the contract. The contract was written into the minutes of the meeting and said, in part, that Josie Thoren was to "...supply a certain Mrs. Mary A. Hyde .... with necessary board, care and clothings and keep her in a decent and comfortable manner, judging her keeping in necessary clothings so as to fully compare with conditions in which said Mrs. Mary A. Hyde arrived in said Mrs. Josie Thoren's place and care." The town supplied Mrs. Hyde with necessary medicine and opium and medical attendance and in case of death were to remove her body and have her buried at the expense of the town.

Andrew Larson and John Thoren were ordered by the board to go to the poor farm and bring Mrs. Hyde to her new place and also to get a supply of medicine and opium that was necessary for her. Among the entries in the minutes of town board meetings is a disbursement to Andrew Larson on January 26, 1909 of \$3.30 for "gum opium – Mrs. Hyde" and on April 10, 1909 for "opium and medicine."

Another entry in the minutes of the board made on 7 Jan 1911, recorded that the board received one bid of \$125.00 from Josie Thoren who was given the contract for Ms. Hyde's continued care.



As a final note to the story of Mary Hyde, her death certificate is in the township records and gives her birth as 9 Jun 1834 in New York and her death as 30 Jan 1911. The township incurred and paid expenses of \$17.50 to M.E. Ibertson for 1 coffin and \$2.00 each to Oscar Larson, Edward Larson, Axel Johnson, and Andrew Larson for services for burial of "H." Andrew Larson also was paid \$2.00 for a trip to Bemidji for the coffin. Following her death, the minutes of the town board show that they discussed the effects of Mary Hyde. The officers examined these and found nothing they deemed of value. They recorded that they authorized John Thoren to burn her remaining effects.

**Road Work, 1905.** From the minutes of the Town board, 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1905. The board, in response to the need to accomplish some road work within a time limit in order receive money from the county, discussed how much to offer men to pay them to pick up rocks/stones after a grader for improvement of a road. They noted that men were scarce due to many having "gone west for harvest and threshing." Chas. Dickinson moved to allow wages of \$2.50 per day. This motion was carried.

On 11<sup>th</sup> September, the following payments for "work on road" were approved by the town board:

L.D. Johnson	9 days work on road	\$22.50
Chas. Dickinson	9 " " " "	22.50
Axel Johnson	6 " " " "	15.00
Gustaf Johnson	7 " " " "	17.50
B. Berger	5 " " " " , man & team	25.00
John C. Parker	9 " " " " , 2 men & 2 teams	123.00
Andrew Larson	6 " " " "	15.00
John Erickson	4 " " " "	10.00
James Numan	3 " " " "	7.50

**Assessed Valuations of Personal Property, 1913.** Personal property as listed on the assessment book was recorded in the minutes of the town board meeting in 1913. The assessments were as follows:

Anderson, Lars	\$244	Johnson, Axel	185	Sand, Martin	198
Ant, John	142	Johnson, Gustaf	234	Saltness, N.J.	131
Backen, Marie	255	Johnson, L.D.	190	Sime, O.A.	725
Backen, Melvin	70	Klinger, Louis	190	Sime, Johanna	89
Brooks, W.L.	600	Klinger, Wm	80	Smerud, Albert	121
Bye, Nels	120	Larson, Andrew	301	Smerud, Cha's	97
Dille, Martin	96	Lindell, Joseph	30	Smerud, Edw.	146
Ellis, Geo	105	Lindgren, Cha's	293	Sullivan, D.F.	103
Ellis, Harry	115	Lommen, T.J.	223	Thompson, Christ	302
Ekker, Benora	134	Olson, J.O.	74	Thoren, J.A.	405
Erickson, Anna	60	Peterson, C.M.	243	Wallace, Christie	126
Frederickson, Anton	75	Powers, D.J.	129	Wold, Mike	200
Geisness, Anton	193	Powers, D.P.	229	Wold, Mamie	35
Hallan, Joseph	124	Rock, P.J.	359		
Hildreth, Geo.	135	Russell, E.W.	109		

## **Wolf Bounties**

On three different trips to the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, I have attempted to make a tally of how many wolf bounties were paid in Lammers township and to whom they were paid between 1900 and 1950. For some of the bounties, two forms were filled out for the same bounty, yet for others there was only one form completed. Therefore I did not take the time needed to obtain an accurate count. A very rough estimate of between 150 and 200 wolf bounties paid during this period is reasonable. Many of the members of the Swede Settlement collected bounties.

Herbert Larson said to me: "I know Arvid and Oscar, they shot one and what they do is they cut [a hole in the ear]. They used a punch and punched the wolf's ear so you wouldn't try to collect bounty a second time. One time there was a lady paying the bounty and when she was going to punch the hole, she couldn't stand to look and she missed the ear. When they got home they saw there was no hole in the ear so they brought it back and collected the bounty again."<sup>6</sup>

## **The Nordheim Roofing Company**

A large number of male members of the Swede Settlement became professional roofers. I heard many stories about roofing jobs that my dad had worked on when he was employed for a few years by the Nordheim Roofing Company of Bemidji. As described previously in this account, other men, especially from the second generation, worked for Nordheim and, in fact, Arvid Johnson and Arnold Lindell were key employees of the company for many years before establishing their own roofing company. Herbert Larson also established a successful roofing company in California after having worked as a young man for Nordheim. I began to wonder how it had happened that so many persons from the Swede Settlement had worked for the Nordheim Company. On October 24, 2000, I called Edwin I. Nordheim (b. 7 Apr 1920) at his home in Bemidji and he gave me some background information about his mother and father and how his father, Edwin ("Ed") Nordheim, had started the roofing business.

Ed Nordheim was one of ten children of Iver Thor and Syniva Nordheim, Norwegian immigrants and farmers who lived about six miles north of Fertile, Minnesota. Ed married Mary Leona Dunlap in about 1918, after which he worked for a brief time on his father's farm as well as doing road work for the county and township. Ed and Mary moved to Bemidji in about 1924-25 where Ed worked for Oscar Sievert, a distant relative and the proprietor of a small roofing company in that city. However, Oscar Sievert soon abandoned his business and moved to Montana, leaving Ed without a job. Mary Nordheim taught at the Meadowview school during the 1926-27 and 1927-28 school years (see Table 2, where she is listed as Leona Nordheim). The family boarded at the Carl Newman home during at least one of these years and Ed returned at times to Fertile to work on his father's farm.

In about 1928, Ed Nordheim started the Nordheim Roofing Company (the Bemidji City Directory for 1927-28 has a listing: 'Edwin and Leona Nordheim; formn O.W. Sievert'). He hired men from the Swede Settlement that he knew from the several years he and his family had lived in the community.

## **World War I**

Several young men from the Swedish Community enlisted or were drafted for service in the U.S. Army with the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) in World War I. These included Alf and William "Bill" Johnson, sons of Axel and Hulda; Stone Johnson, son of Gustaf and Emma; Arthur and Berthel Thoren, sons of John Thoren; John Larson, stepson of Andrew Larson and son of Brita Larson; Carl

Erickson, son of Peter and Anna Erickson; Harold Anderson, stepson of Lars Anderson and son of Martha Anderson.

Most of these young men enlisted in the Army in early 1818, shortly before the ending of the war in November of that year. Even in this short period, the war was costly to the community in terms of human life as both Arthur Thoren and Harold Anderson lost their lives in the last days of battle. Additional information about these men and their service is included in the section on "The Second (and Later) Generation of Swedes in Lammers Township."

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Art and Bert Thoren, the third and fifth children, respectively, of John and Carolina Thoren volunteered to serve with the U.S. Army in World War I. Although belonging to different companies, they were together on the battlefield during the final month of the war in France. Arthur was injured by shrapnel on the last day of the war and died a few days later from infection of the wound (gangrene). Following his return from the war in 1919, Bert wrote an account of his experiences. Bert's wife, Electa (Sutton) Thoren, kept a handwritten copy of that account and kindly permitted me to make a photocopy of the document. A transcription of the account is given below.

**"An Account of His Experiences on the Front in France during WWI" by Berthel Thoren**

"We left Bemidji on the ninth day of August 1918, for Jefferson barracks in Iowa. Three days before we got our examinations and our uniforms and a day and a half after that - all we had to do was to lay around and wait for our time to get something to eat and to write letters to the home folks and friends.

The second day, after we got our uniforms, we entrained for Camp MacArthur, Waco, Texas. After a two day and a nights ride, we got there. Then our first duties as soldiers commenced.

Our first duty was to build floor bottoms and sides for our tents and then pick all grass and other rubbish from the Company street and in between the tents. After a few days of that, we were taken out on the drill grounds, where we got to learn which was our right or left side. Our experience here in the camp was not very long. In fact we had about two and a half weeks of actual training, after which we entrained for the port of embarkation Hoboken New Jersey.

We were at Camp Merritt N.J. for about a week and then marched down to Hoboken to be ferried down the Hudson to New York, where we boarded the Leviathon (Old Fatherland) on the twenty ninth of September. On the 30<sup>th</sup> we left for "Sunny France." We landed at Brest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of October. That evening we marched five miles to camp through the dark and a heavy rain. Next day and night we helped bury three hundred dead soldiers.

The third day I got some poisoned canned meat that just about layed me out. In fact everybody thought they would have to bury me that night. We were to leave Brest that night so they got the Doctor for me. He gave me a great big brown pill. In a couple of hours I was able to sit up a little. They wanted to take me to the hospital, but I would not leave my brother, so they took me in a truck, with a man on either side, to hold me up. We went back to Brest, where we boarded a train for further inland.

We rode for three days and nights. We got off the train at a small town and marched fourteen miles to Contrex, where we billeted in the French homes. We were there for eight days. During that time we were subjected to heavy drilling. Early on the morning of the seventeenth, we boarded the train for the front.



Figure 25. Stone Johnson and Lawrence Smerud, WWI.



Figure 26. William "Bill" Johnson, WWI.

For eight days and nights we rode on the train - on the morning of October 25<sup>th</sup>, we got off the train at a small town that had been shot to pieces in 1914. We marched from there to a rest camp "Les Iselettes" where the second division were in camp, waiting for replacements to fill the gaps made by the "Battle of Champagne." We came to the camp about one o'clock, had dinner, then we were assigned to our companies.

At 2:30 we started our march toward the front. About four o'clock that afternoon we heard the first sounds of artillery - and toward dark we could see the distant flashes of fire from the guns.

We marched that afternoon and all that night, till about 4:30 that morning (the 26<sup>th</sup>). We had orders to get off the open field and go into the woods and get some sleep - but we were too tired and sleepy, so we lay down where we had been halted. About 7 o'clock we got up and went into the woods (which was an old battlefield). We were then about five miles behind the front lines. We stayed in these woods from the 26<sup>th</sup> until the night of the 30<sup>th</sup>. During that time, we were being shelled and fired on from Airplanes. At night the bombing planes would drop bombs on us and the artillery would throw over gas shells. We, of course, had to dig in.

On the night of November 1<sup>st</sup> we marched up in support of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Marines. At 8 o'clock we started forward. We were in the second wave, about 1,000 yards behind the front wave. Five times between 9 and 11, we went through a heavy enemy artillery barrage.

From then on we got considerable machine gun fire. We would march straight ahead, going through fields - forest - meadows and towns. We would not turn aside from anything. We dug in for the night, after we had reached our day's objectives. We were troubled considerably by machine gun fire that night so we had to do considerable patrolling and firing.

In the morning, we came upon a machine gun nest with 3 wounded German soldiers left ----- The Americans made one of them turn his machine gun on one of his comrades and shoot him down, then they shot him and took care of the third one.

On the second of November it was about the same. We were ordered to relieve the Marines. We had to go on very hilly ground and through heavy timber. The older soldiers threw away most of their equipment so they would have easier hiking. Each man had (besides his pack) a rifle, 220 rounds of ammunition and four grenades.

Under cover of darkness, we marched up the main highway. Early in the morning we were fired upon by the Marines who thought the enemy was flanking them. We of course thought it was the Germans firing upon us.

November 3<sup>rd</sup>. That afternoon we relieved the Marines and took over the front lines. (We were in the front lines from then until Armistice was signed). We took five towns that day.

That afternoon we had a heavy engagement. The enemy had evacuated a town (Bois De Beleise). They had gathered in the heavy timber and some high ground; about 1/4 mile from the town. We thought they were in the town so kept firing on it for a long time. We were going to try to get around the town, so as to get at the enemy.

We had to cross an open meadow over 1/4 mile in width. As soon as we showed ourselves in that opening the machine gun bullets came like hail, mingled in with artillery fire. We would rush a few feet at a time and when we had gone a little way, would drop down. After a while the fire would ease up a little, then we would rush ahead again. Some would drop down and never get up again. At the other side of the meadow, there were some bushes, where we were supposed to gather. After about 70 of us had got behind those bushes, we got signals from our officers - The enemy was not in town and for us to come back. The enemy was then directing their fire on the bushes, behind which we were laying, and we were firing at where we thought they were. The machine gun bullets were cutting the bushes like a sickle cuts grass.

I don't think 30 of the 70 that crossed the meadow came back alive. My brother, Art, was the last to leave them.

Part of the 15<sup>th</sup> field artillery came up and shot up the southern edge of the woods, which stopped most of the enemy fire. It would have taken several days to take these woods as it was a regular enemy stronghold.

After dark we formed into a column of 2<sup>s</sup> and marched through the woods, north of the Germans, for eight kilometers and into the enemy's territory. Several machine gun outposts were taken unaware, either disposed of or captured. Just as we got out of the woods we surprised a battalion of the enemy that was fortifying a small town on the southern edge of the woods. We drove them off and captured great numbers. At 3:30 that morning we established a line of defense.

At the beginning of daylight we were attacked by the enemy and a fierce fight ensued. At about 9:30 we started to advance toward a ridge thickly planted with machine guns. The machine gun bullets swept us like hail. The enemy artillery (from three sides) registered heavily on us as we advanced, assisted by a great number of planes that directed their fire accurately.

We advanced 1/2 mile in about 5 hours. The enemy fire was so intense and we had no protection. We had to fall back about half that distance, which maneuver took less than 15 mins. We held this new position the remainder of that day. During this time their air planes swept us with machine gun fire and dropped bombs on us. Also the next day.

That night was my first night as guard in 'no mans land.' During the nights of November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, we marched out on the main road leading to the city of Beaumont. This road was heavily shelled. The



rain was pouring down in torrents and it was so dark, we could not see the men in front of us. We would have to hold on to one another to be able to follow on. Every now and then some of the soldiers would fall into some hole, filled with water and mud.

Morning of November 6; We attacked Beaumont. After several hours of maneuvering we captured the city and continued on to the west bank of the Meuse River.

The enemy had crossed the river and taken up strong defensive positions on the heavy wooded hills along the east side of the river (where they had gathered the heavy artillery previously). We dug in along the west side of the river, along a high stony bank - at the bottom of which was a heavy growth of thorny vines which partially concealed us. We held this position until the night of November 10<sup>th</sup>. During that time, we tried to throw bridges across the river, but the enemy fire was too heavy. At seven o'clock on the night of the 10<sup>th</sup>, we succeeded in throwing two pontoon bridges across the Meuse (which the Marines crossed on, under the protection of our fire). We put over a rifle and machine gun barrage on the enemy.

As soon as we opened fire, the enemy threw up flare lights and star shells, making every thing almost as light as day and seeing the Marines crossing the river, opened up with their artillery - throwing over a barrage which lasted all night. It was the heaviest barrage they had ever put over during the whole war. After a while we had to fall back to our holes where we were dug in. Our orders were to keep low as there was no hope for anyone above the surface of the ground but as the enemy were using high explosives, our dug outs did not amount to much.

And all around us, soldiers were groaning with pain from wounds and calling for first aid and stretcher bearers.

My brother and I were in the same shell hole. We kept on wondering when the next shell was going to hit, as we heard them screaming through the air and bursting all around us, one bursting right overhead.

Our comrades at our sides were either killed or wounded.

We would say, as we heard the shells coming, " Will that get us? Will that hit me?"

Yes - it did - about midnight. A deafening explosion took place right above our heads, throwing rocks all over us.

And my brother said, "Now I got it." A piece of shrapnel from the bursting shell went through the calf of his leg, tearing the muscles to pieces. I was not hit, but a piece of shrapnel tore through my over coat below the collar and cut my blouse like it had been cut by a sharp knife. My rifle was hit and broken in three different places.

My brother said his wound burned like fire and told me to try to get first aid for him. He tried calling for first aid and stretcher bearers, but the exertion pained him too much. I bandaged his wound and then called for stretcher bearers. I had to do this to ease his mind, tho' I knew it was impossible to get help as no one could be up during such a barrage.

A little while after I had bandaged Arthur's wound, some one gave the gas alarm. Arthur's gas mask had been blown away by the explosion of the shell and I had to hunt that up and help him get it on, before I could put my own on. Consequently I got a little of it myself.

Toward morning the barrage lifted a little and that gave us a chance to get help to get Arthur to the first aid station, which was about four kilometers from where we were. I and three stretcher bearers carried him on a stretcher. We had to follow the main highway from Beaumont to Latenney which was shelled heavily. We would have to run a little way and as the shells came screaming, we would have to drop flat on the ground till the pieces stopped falling - then we would get up and rush again. Finally we came to the first aid station (which was a large barn) the floor of which was covered with straw and on this at least six hundred wounded men were laying. And Arthur was layed down among them.

I could not stay with him long as I had to get back to my company.

My last words to him were, 'I am glad your wound is in your leg, rather than any other part of your body so that you will get well soon.'

And my brother answered, 'Yes, so am I.'

I never saw him again.

While the barrage was still going on, it was not so heavy.

And when armistice was signed and everything was quiet - We seemed to be out of place. Transferred into a world of silence."

Bert Thoren 1919

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## References and Notes

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, Roy A., "Meadowview: A Family History of Gust A. and Lydia (nee Gack )Johnson and the 'Swede Settlement' of Lammers Township," 2002, 332 pages.

<sup>2</sup> Copies of the documents that are contained in the Land Entry Files for homestead claims were obtained by ordering from: Textual Reference Branch – Land (NWDT1), National Archives and Records Administration, 7<sup>th</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20408. The contents of all files obtained for members of the "Swede Settlement" in both Bear Park and Lammers townships are summarized in Appendix 2 of Reference 1.

<sup>3</sup> Sutherland, William and Sutherland, Madeline, "Buena Vista, Minnesota (1896 – ca. 1917). A History of the Town and the Wagon Trails of Beltrami County before the Railroads Came," 1999. (Found at the website: <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~woss/index.html>)

<sup>4</sup> The survey map was made by M.D. Stoner, Beltrami County surveyor, 26 Sep 1899 and was found with Lammers township records in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>5</sup> Information provided by Gust and Lydia Johnson to Roy A. Johnson.

<sup>6</sup> Information provided by Mr. Herbert Larson during conversations with Roy A. Johnson and Carole Stewart, April 16 and 17, 1999, in Carlsbad, California.

<sup>7</sup> Date recorded on death certificate, filed with Lammers township records in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>8</sup> Marriage records for Beltrami County, viewed at the Beltrami County courthouse by Roy A. Johnson.

<sup>9</sup> Brindos, Corinne (Johnson), "Family Johnson," 1978.

<sup>10</sup> The question of whether Ralph Johnson or Vernon Lindgren was the first such child is addressed in Saltness, Mrs. Nels, "Solway: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Pioneer Homecoming," 1958, 48 pages; see pp. 13,15.

<sup>11</sup> Information provided by Carole Stewart during a visit with her, her father, and Floyd Johnson at her home in Carlsbad, CA, April 16 and 17, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Information provided by Floyd Johnson while visiting with him, Carole Stewart, and Herbert Larson in Carlsbad, CA, April 16 and 17, 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Obituary for Gustaf Johnson, *The Bemidji Pioneer*.

<sup>14</sup> Information provided by Lars Lundell as derived by him from the Regional Archive in Karlstad (Värmlandsarkiv), Sweden, and sent to me by e-mail on 11 May 1999.

<sup>15</sup> From a Family Group sheet for Lars and Elizabeth (Gustafsdotter) Larsson, compiled by Jean Larson, July 1981.

<sup>16</sup> For some now unknown reason, Gustaf and Emma were counted twice in the 1895 Minnesota census; first on July 10<sup>th</sup> in Bear Park township and again on July 20<sup>th</sup> in Garfield township in Polk County.

<sup>17</sup> Birth records for Norman County, Minnesota. Viewed at the Norman County courthouse in Ada, Minnesota by Roy A. Johnson, September 25, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Birth date is from certified copy of birth registry, Beltrami County, Minnesota, C. Buiford Qualle, Clerk of Court; the name given on the certificate is Gustaf Arvid Johnson. Date of death is from the certificate of death, State of Minnesota, County of Clearwater, Vernon K. Lundin, Court Administrator.

<sup>19</sup> A typed transcript of the newspaper articles, presumably from one of the Bemidji papers, was kindly provided by Max and Corinne Brindos.

<sup>20</sup> Lindell Family History, compiled by Cecelia (Lindell) Clark, 6 Nov 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Johnson, Jo, "Lest We Forget: Lammers and Solway," 1982.

<sup>22</sup> A certificate, included in the U.S. Land Office file of John Lindell's application for preemption land in Bear Park township, reads:

"State of Minnesota, Adjutant General's Office. Saint Paul, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1881. This is to certify that the records of this office show that John Lindell late a Private in Company "B" of the First (1<sup>st</sup>) Regiment of Minnesota Mounted Rangers Volunteers, was enlisted on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of October 1862 for the term of one year, was mustered into the Military Service of the United States on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of October 1862 and that he was discharged for disability March 29<sup>th</sup> 1863. (signed) H P Van Cleece (handwriting not clear) Adjutant General."

<sup>23</sup> This date was calculated (1895 minus the number of years living in the enumeration district) from information given in the 1895 Minnesota census.

<sup>24</sup> The year in which families or persons moved from Bear Park township to Lammers township was determined from information in Land Entry files. See footnote 2.

<sup>25</sup> This birth date was obtained from the annual Beltrami County school census of all school districts including Meadowview School, district 123. See Appendix 6 of Reference 1 for a complete set of these census records from 1920-1938.

<sup>26</sup> This date is from an obituary in *The Bemidji Pioneer*, 10 Aug 1984.

<sup>27</sup> This date is from an obituary in *The Bemidji Pioneer*, 3 Aug 1992.

<sup>28</sup> This date is from an obituary in *The Bemidji Pioneer*, 3 Jan 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Date given in 1900 U.S. census. In most census years, only the year of birth was recorded but in 1900 both the month and year of birth were recorded.

<sup>30</sup> Date recorded on a Permit for Burial, filed with Lammers township records in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>31</sup> Date recorded on death certificate, filed with Lammers township records in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>32</sup> This information is from a copy of the application for citizenship in the U.S.A. made by Lars Anderson. See footnote 2.

<sup>33</sup> This information is from a copy of the application for citizenship in the U.S.A. made by Andrew Larson. See footnote 2.

<sup>34</sup> Date from headstone, Meadowview Cemetery, Lammers township, Minnesota.

<sup>35</sup> Deed on file in the Recorder's Office, Beltrami County courthouse, Bemidji, Minnesota; viewed by Roy A. Johnson, September, 1994.

<sup>36</sup> This date was obtained from records of the Social Security Administration. The records are available online.

<sup>37</sup> See reference 90 in reference 1; data are from obituary, *Bemidji Pioneer*.

<sup>38</sup> From a written account of his experiences in World War I by Bert Thoren.

<sup>39</sup> Obituary for Arvid A. Johnson, *The Bemidji Pioneer*, 31 March 1999.

<sup>40</sup> This quotation is taken from the caption of a photograph that accompanies a story about Arvid Johnson in *The Bemidji Pioneer*, 16 Nov 1994, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> A copy of the video of the birthday party for Arvid was generously provided to the author by Max and Corinne Brindos.

<sup>42</sup> Information provided by Max and Corinne Brindos in a letter to Roy A. Johnson.

<sup>43</sup> Larson, Jean, "A Saga of Otto, Son of Lars," in *American Bicentennial Biographical Album, 1776-1976*, J. Gnacinski and C. Nowak, Eds., Gateway Press, Inc., Baltimore, 1976; pp 242-269.

<sup>44</sup> Information from obituary for Emma (Carlson) Lindell.

<sup>45</sup> Obituary for Stone W. Johnson, *Bemidji Pioneer*, 29 Apr 1958, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Obituary, *The Bemidji Pioneer*, 9 Sep 1998.

<sup>47</sup> The following is the description of the itinerary of Company F as given in the pamphlet:

"Introduction. The Third Pioneer Infantry, Col. Willis W. Stover, commanding, formerly the 5th Mass. National Guard was filled to war strength at Camp Wadsworth, S.C. Sailed from New Port News, Va., on Italian S. S. "America" on August 30, 1918. Arrived at Brest, France, Sept. 12th 1918. At Sauilly, Sept. 22nd, 1918, where the regiment was separated into detachments. "F" Co. going to Maison Range on Sept. 24th. Participated in Meuse-Argonne offensive, Sept. 26th to Nov. 11th. Changed station to Lemmes Jan. 19, 1919. Engaged in salvage and demolition of ammunition at Rarecourt from Feb. 26th to April 5th, 1919. Moved to Liffol-le-Grand April 25th attached to 13th Grand Division doing railway guard and convoy work. Left Liffol-le-Grand June 7th. Arrived LeMans June 9th, left LeMans June 21st, arriving at Nantes June 22. Left Nantes June 29, arriving at Montoir same day. Left Montoir July 9. Arrived St. Nazaier July 9th, went on board U.S.S. Mexican

July 10. Sailed July 11. Arrived Hoboken July 23rd. Left Camp Merritt, July 27, arriving at Camp Dodge, July 29. Discharged, July 30, 1919."

<sup>48</sup> Information provided by Lois K. Johnson to Roy A. Johnson, May 17, 1989.

<sup>49</sup> Certificate of Marriage, 18 Oct 1936, P. Seltz, pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota. Witnesses were Mr. and Mrs. Stone W. Johnson.

<sup>50</sup> Obituary for Adolf Larson, *The Bemidji Pioneer*.

<sup>51</sup> Information from remembrances of Solway and Lammers by Howard Lindell in reference 21.

<sup>52</sup> This date is from an obituary in *The Bemidji Pioneer*, 27 Feb 1994.

<sup>53</sup> Obituary for Henry "Milton" Lindell, *Bemidji Pioneer*, 3 Aug 1992.

<sup>54</sup> Obituary for Robert Lindell, *Bemidji Pioneer*, 3 Jan 1999.

<sup>55</sup> Information taken from Beltrami County Superintendent of Schools Term Records. Volume I. 1904-1943; in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>56</sup> Boyd, Terry D., "My Life Story," Part One, 2006.

<sup>57</sup> Gullick and Minnie Gullickson are recorded in the 1910 U.S. Census as living in Bear Park township, Norman County, Minnesota.

<sup>58</sup> A brief description of all townships in Beltrami County has been published: Marchand, Louis, "Up North: Beltrami County's Townships," Beltrami County Historical Society, Bemidji, MN, 1998, 117 p.

<sup>59</sup> A history of Buzzle Township has been published: Pinewood Homemaker's Club, "Buzzle Township: Pinewood, Minnesota," 1977.

<sup>60</sup> A history of Jones Township has been published in two parts: (a) Roberts, Beverly J. and Janet N. Fredenburg, "The History of Jones Township," Vol. 1, 1988, 36 p.; (b) Fredenburg, Janet N., "The History of Jones Township," Vol. 2, 1995, 40 p.

<sup>61</sup> Vandersluis, Charles W., "Once Covered with Pine: A Story of Bemidji and Environs at the Time the Timber was Removed," Country Candy, Minneota, MN, 1986; pp. 17, 19, 48.

<sup>62</sup> "Composite Map of United States Land Surveyors Original Plats and Field Notes," Copyright 1967, J. Wm. Trygg, Ely, Minnesota; Sheet 19 of Minnesota Series.

<sup>63</sup> The signatories to the petition were: R.J. Whipple, Hugh McDonald, E.H. Munhall, H.W. Freeman, G.N. Hildreth, H. Malony, Peter C. McLaren, -- Platt, W.O. Platt, -- Thompson, J.D. Jones, S. Chambers, Joseph Richards, A.M. Bagley, B.E. Hyat, -- Peterson, D.J. Lynch, Thos. Hay (or Hoy), S.R. Hildreth, P.H. Shellman, M.A. Brakke, Geo. Chew, John Wilkens, O--Savor, Pat Kelly, and two unclear names.

<sup>64</sup> The original petition is in the archives of the Beltrami County Historical Society, PO Box 683, 130 Minnesota Ave., SW, Bemidji, Minnesota. Twenty-seven signatures are included in the petition. The petition states that at least fifty legal voters must reside in the township and that a majority must sign the petition.

<sup>65</sup> A number of records from Lammers township are now in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota and can be viewed there. Included are the minutes of the town board meetings from 1899 up to the 1980's.

<sup>66</sup> Hagg, Harold T., "Bemidji: A Pioneer Community of the 1890's," *Minnesota History*, **1942**, 29, 24-34.

<sup>67</sup> Vandersluis, Charles W., "A Brief History of Beltrami County," Beltrami County Historical Society, 1963 (reprinted in 1997), p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> See reference 67, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> See reference 67, p. 12.

<sup>70</sup> Hagg, Harold T., "The Mississippi Headwaters Region: Scenes from the Past," Beltrami County Historical Society, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1986, p. 48. The precise date is given as 15 May 1896 but the source from which this date was obtained is not given.

<sup>71</sup> A plat book of school districts in Beltrami County is in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>72</sup> Klawans, Stuart, in *The Nation*, Volume 268, No. 14, April 19, 1999; p 42.

<sup>73</sup> *Bemidji Pioneer*, November 20, 1912 (from WPA transcriptions of old newspaper articles, held by the Beltrami County Historical Society).

<sup>74</sup> Stewart, Carole Jane (Larson), "Recollections of Early Years in Lammers Township," kindly shared with the author during our visit at her home, 16 Apr 1999.

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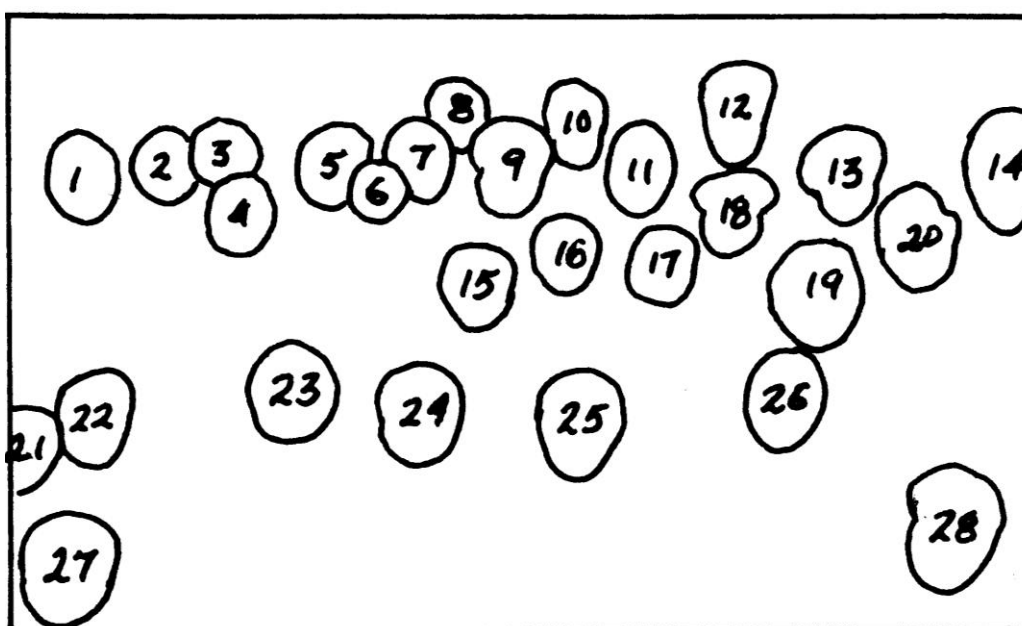
**Y**

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Lammers township neighbors, late 1940's.



Identification key for above photo, see list of names below.

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| 1. Frieda Peterson              | 11. ____?____         | 21. Donald S. Johnson        |
| 2. Lydia (Gack) Johnson         | 12. Albert Fliethman  | 22. Arnold Lomen             |
| 3. ____?____                    | 13. Rose Fliethman    | 23. Evelyn (Lindell) Nelson  |
| 4. Josie (Hanson) Saltness      | 14. Arvid Johnson     | 24. Jo Johnson               |
| 5. Esther Steinke               | 15. Dennis Johnson    | 25. Lorraine (Steinke) Lomen |
| 6. Runae Lomen                  | 16. Emily Johnson     | 26. Clarence Johnson         |
| 7. Florence (Fredricks) Johnson | 17. Carole Johnson    | 27. Elaine Steinke           |
| 8. Stone W. Johnson             | 18. Beatrice Forsyth  | 28. Philip Fredricks         |
| 9. Emma (Larson) Fredricks      | 19. Fred Steinke      |                              |
| 10. ____?____                   | 20. Stanley H. Tweten |                              |



