thank them for the heritage that is ours in Polk County, Minnesota.

**VAVRINA HISTORY**

The Vavrina family had its origin near Caslav, Czechoslovakia, some fifty miles southeast of Prague. Immigrating to the United States were John and his wife, Marie, both born in 1849, together with their five children. Five additional children were born to them in this country. They were farmers, and with the funds obtained from the sale of their holdings in Bohemia they purchased 80 acres of farmland in southern Wisconsin where they spent sixteen years until 1900 near relatives, in a community of Czechoslovakian and German settlers. In that year they loaded their farm implements and livestock into a railroad freight car and shipped it to Angus, Minnesota, accompanied by two sons, John, age 21 and Louis, age 19, who fed and watered the livestock on the way.

Tabor, the community just west of Angus, was selected as their new home by another son, Vaclav, age 27, a young minister of the Gospel, who discovered it while serving its Presbyterian church as a seminary student. He was aided in his selection by his brother, Joseph, age 29, just married to Anna Novak, a neighbor to the Vavrina’s Wisconsin home. The advantages considered in this move were level farm land, absence of rocky soil, and less expensive acreage. Sons, Joseph and John and the father each purchased 160 acres, adjoining each other, one and two miles south of Tabor.

On January 15, 1901, while returning with a wagon load of firewood from the Red River timberland the father, trying to stop and visit an acquaintance on a farm along the way, got lost in the storm and froze all his fingers, ears, and toes. Eighteen days later all frozen parts were cut off by doctors in Warren. He died five years later of a lung ailment at age 57. His widow continued farming with the aid of her son, Louis, surviving until the age of 88. An enthusiastic devout leader in church work, and a strong proponent of education in an age when farm families were not in the habit of following educational interests, Grandma Vavrina provided the opportunity for some advanced schooling for eight of her ten children. All five daughters graduated from high school, three becoming school teachers and Katie a missionary. Katie died of tuberculosis in 1909, at the age of 33. Son Louis was sent to attend an agricultural school in St. Paul in January 1905. Frank went to attend the university in Huron, South Dakota in September 1907 at age 20. Vaclav, the preacher, received his education in colleges in Ohio, and in St. Louis, where he also served a church of six years until 1909. Vaclav then served for ten years in churches in Redig and Buffalo, South Dakota and also acquired some land in that area. He was also instrumental in getting the Redig community to build their first church, which is still in use. In 1920, he accepted a position to serve as director to supervise the operation of the YMCA organization and its chain of establishments throughout Czechoslovakia, where he continued until his retirement in 1933. However, soon afterwards, he accepted preaching assignments in Holdingford, Minnesota, and in Granger, Texas, until his death in 1950 at age 77.

Louis Vavrina spent much of his life as an elevator grain buyer in places like Angus and O’Meara nearby, but he also rented out several farms which he owned, and even devoted some years to the business of poultry raising. Frank entered the ranching business in Montana and later in Wyoming. He died in East Grand Forks in 1953 at age 66. Brothers Joseph and John owning 560 acres, devoted themselves to farming in the Tabor Community. However, Joseph at age 49 moved to Grand Forks in 1920, into semi-retirement with minor truck farming until his death in 1933 at age 63. His property passed to Milada, his daughter and only child, now married in the Twin Cities, who was formerly professor of physical education at the University of North Dakota. Her husband is business manager of a college in St. Paul.

Frank remarried after the death of his first wife but left no children. Louis had a son, Richard, and daughter, Ruth, both graduates of the University of North Dakota. Richard died in a military plane crash as a test pilot during World War II, and Ruth is married to Dr. C. C. Rand in Grand Forks, North Dakota. John has six children including twin sisters who are instructors in the Bloomington, Minneapolis, school system for the past many years. William is a farmer on the southeast edge of the Tabor community; Robert is a retired farmer now in East Grand Forks.

Theodore has served as a high school instructor in Fargo, North Dakota for 35 years, studied a year on a scholarship at Prague University in Czechoslovakia, taught a year in a high school in England in 1952 on a Senator Fulbright teachers’ Exchange, a summer session on another scholarship at the University of Paris, France in 1946, and at the University of Colorado in 1959 on a federal grant, and has published articles on his travels in Egypt, Persia, the Holy Land, Greece, Turkey, Russia, Spain and the rest of Europe and north Africa. Sister Olga is the widow of John Soltis, a farmer near East Grand Forks.

Of the Vavrina sisters, in 1907 Barbara married Philip Novak, a country schoolmate of hers, and lived out her life with him in that same community in Cobb, Wisconsin. One of her sons, Milan, served for years as professor at the University of Illinois, and a daughter, Helen, as professor at a college in New York State. Of the other sisters, Mary is the widow of George Maruska; Emily, the widow of Edward Filipi; and Helen, of Jack Filipi, all Tabor farmers. Their children will be included in the write-up of the Maruska and Filipi families.

![Mary Vavrina harvesting grain with binder 1910.](image-url)

**JOHN AND MARY VAVRINA**

John Vavrina was born in Brezi, Czechoslovakia. He had two sisters. He married Marie Bahaty from Brezi. They farmed a small plot of land on the outskirts of the village. Five of their ten children were born there. Due to extreme poverty the family had to share many of the necessities of life. For instance, attending church was mandatory, but because there was not enough money to buy each of the children decent outer garments, they worked out a scheme whereby on the way home from the first church service part of the family returning would exchange garments with those going to church that they all looked respectable.

Apparently the social life of the village caused John to indulge in alcoholic beverages and his wife decided that the