History of Andover Township

The first meeting of Andover township was held May 18, 1878 at the barn of Frank Bivens on section 9. E. D. Childs was chosen chairman, Alsen Pierce as moderator. Three judges of election were Alsen Pierce, John Peterson and Charles Mattson. The business of the meeting was four-fold, 1. The selection of the town officers as required by law. 2. The subject of highways and their overseers. 3. The subject of pounds and pound masters. 4. Miscellaneous business.

Eight qualified voters elected T. B. McMahan for chairman, August Peterson for treasurer and M. C. Perrin for town clerk. W. G. Lytle and Charles Mattson were named supervisors. The assessor was J. W. Pitts, and the justices of the peace were J. J. Eyde and P. Anderson; constables were G. L. Gray and A. Burnham. Later, E. D. Childs replaced Mr. Lytle, who refused to qualify for supervisor.

On October 18, 1878, at the county commissioners meeting of Polk county, in Crookston, Minnesota, 'a petition from the citizens of township one forty-nine, range forty-seven west, praying the county board to have a town organized and to be known as Town of Hillsdale' was granted and the first town meeting ordered to be held within the time prescribed by law. That is all we hear of the name 'Hillsdale,' no explanation is given for the adoption of the present name of Andover.

On October 26, 1878 election notices were posted at three places, the Childs-Lytle Company Warehouse, on section one; at C. S. Corser's barn on section three; and the other at A. Burnham's on section five. Polls were to be held at Childs-Lytle Warehouse from 9 a.m. until five p.m. on November 5, 1887 for the election of federal, state and county officers. The list of qualified voters had grown from eight to twenty-three.

The establishment of roads and bridges and levying taxes were the topics of business in those early years. Burnham Creek and its tributaries, which criss-crossed the township from the southeast corner to the northwest corner, created the necessity for a dozen or more bridges. Locating roadways gave rise to landowners voicing complaints about damage done to their farms. One such owner collected $17 for same, despite the fact that he also received the benefits of having a good road.

The first birth recorded in April of 1878 was a daughter born to T. B. and Theresa McMahan. By 1900 eighty-one births had been recorded.

There were two cemeteries in the township, one in section eight and the other in section fourteen. Deaths in those days were attributed most often to diphtheria, consumption, typhoid and scarlet fever, croup and brain fever. Two deaths were caused by heart disease and one by cancer before 1900. Very young children were the victims in the majority of cases. The Hans Hanson family lost three in two months of lung fever and diphtheria. The same year three children of the McMahan family died of diphtheria, and twin daughters of H. C. Scribner died on the same day of the same cause at age three.

There were four school districts organized in Andover: district twenty-six in section twenty-six in 1879; district twenty-nine in section four in 1880; district sixty-eight in section twenty-eight in 1882; and district two-hundred forty-six in section fourteen.

Consolidation of rural schools into larger city schools was made possible by bus transportation. (The schools had also been used to hold Sunday schools classes).


Beginning in the early part of the nineteen hundreds we find the names of John Rohrer, Gust Gulseth, George Schuck, A. Holkesvig, H. B. Scribner, John Perry, L. E. Slyter, John Letness, Andrew Anderson, R. T. Buckler, Miner Helgeson, E. C. Miller and F. M. Slyter. All took active parts in the affairs of the township, which still seemed to involve roads, bridges and taxes.

Later still, there were P. M. Finkenbinder, Walter Morgan, Lawrence and Jack Letness, and Andy Volland. Replacing them were: Laurie Volland, Ralph Finkenbinder, Marlow Leikness, and Ray Grove, Rudy Erdmann, Elroy Wagner and Erwin Erdmann took their turns with township responsibilities. The present town board of 1976 is composed of Robert Samelson, clerk; Gary Letness, chairman; Marcella Erdman, treasurer, and Duane Lien, and Roger Samuelson, supervisors.

Entries in the town meeting minutes made mention of the fact that the national flag was displayed while the board was in session.

Three citizens from Andover township have served in state and federal lawmaking bodies. The Honorable R. T. Buckler was elected to congress from the seventh district for terms from 1934 to 1944. Thomas Letness served in the state legislature as representative in 1944 and 1945. Miner Helgeson served in the state legislature as representative from 1929 to 1935.

ROBERT J. BOUCHER

Robert Jerome Boucher, fifth child of Wilfred and Parmellia Boucher, was born in Crookston, Minnesota at St. Vincent Hospital on March 12, 1922. He was raised in Lowell Township on the farm where his grandfather homesteaded and had lived for thirty-three years. Robert was baptized, confirmed and married at St. Anne's Catholic Church.

In his early school years, Robert attended St. Joseph's Academy and graduated from the Northwest School of Agriculture in 1941. Upon graduation, he continued to farm with his father and two brothers, Donald and Volarian. In 1945, he was drafted into the Armed Forces. Most of his service time was spent in Korea and Okinawa. He was discharged in October, 1946 and returned to Crookston and back to the farm. His father retired and Robert, Donald and Volarian bought their father's land. He continued to live in Lowell Township on the home place with brother Donald. On August 27, 1955, he married Signe Gladys Olson of Baudette, Minnesota. They built a new home in Andover Township and moved there on November 16, 1956. Tim, their first child, was born November 6, 1956. In those first years we not only raised small grains and sugar beets, but also children: Tim, as already mentioned; Tom, born November 27, 1957; Mark, April 6, 1959; Margaret Anne (Peggy), April 11, 1960, and our youngest Kristie Marie, February 2, 1964. Tim is now attending U.M.C. in Crookston and farms with his father. Tom is a senior at Central High School.
School. He plans to go into Hotel and Restaurant Management. He is president of U.I.C.A., active in C.Y.O. and his hobby is bowling. Mark is a junior at Central and plans to farm. His love is hunting, riding cycles and snowsleds. Peggy is a sophomore at Central and is a cheerleader for the wrestling squad. She has had eight years of baton lessons. Kristie, a sixth grader at Highland Middle School, belongs to the Eldred 4-H Club and is now treasurer. She takes accordion lessons, seven years of baton and is a very active bowler. Robert dissolved the partnership with his two brothers in 1973. The farm is now a family operation. (By that I mean that even after twenty years of marriage, they had mother out driving tractor. Wasn’t half bad!)

Robert has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for thirty-six years, N.F.O. member, a member of the V.F.W., Eagles and Elks. He has been a Minister of Holy Communion in the Church for the past three years. He is presently on the Board of Directors for Farmers’ Union and is also a life time member of the Farmers’ Union.

Glady’s belongs to St. Anne’s Sodality, President of St. Joseph’s Club, Chairman of Guild 5, Madame Conductor of Ladies Auxiliary, a member of Eldred 4-H Club, member of South Lowell Homemakers and a past president and home counselor. She bowls for Records Sodding and has been treasurer of P.T.A., hospitality chairman and dues chairman. Her hobbies are reading and plants. Both Gladys and Robert have been members of their neighborhood Couples Club for nineteen years and members of Bob Bergland’s minutemen. The past few years we have done a little traveling with hopes to do more in the future. We went to Hawaii, Florida and Washington D.C. The Good Lord has been good to us and our country! We give Him thanks for everything!

EMIL ERDMANN

Emil Erdmann was born September 9, 1884 in Storm Lake, Iowa, to Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Erdmann. He was one of seven children. In 1903 the family came to Crookston to farm twelve miles northeast of Crookston. Coming from Iowa by an immigration train, they brought their livestock, horses, pigs, chickens and a dog plus machinery and household goods. Emil and his brother, Henry, took care of the animals on the train. The train trip took four days to reach Crookston. The rest of the family came by passenger train.

In 1909, he married Louise Caroline Heydt, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Heydt of Crookston. They worked for five years on what is now known as the Vance Farm two miles south of Crookston. In 1914, they bought a 160 acre farm four miles south of Crookston. This is in Section 13, Andover Township. To them were born five children: Martha, Edna, Walter, Harold and Loren. Harold and family live on the home place now.

All farm work was done with horses. All small grains were grown on the farm. Corn was raised and put in the silo for feed for the dairy herd of Brown Swiss cattle. Pigs and chickens were also raised in large numbers.

Emil passed away March 1, 1956. Harold has four children,

Martha has four children, Walter has three children, Loren has two children and Edna had none. Emil Erdmann had thirteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. In 1949, Mr. and Mrs. Erdmann retired from farming and moved to Crookston.

HAROLD ERDMAN


They have four children: Susan Lynn Herreid of Williston, N. Dak., Kathryn Jo of St. Cloud, Doug, a freshman at U.N.D. and Candace, a junior at Central High in Crookston. Harold lives in-Andover Township Section 13, and farms with his brother, Walter. Small grains and sugar beets are raised on the 2,500-acre farm. Harold, active in community affairs, is at present serving on the Board of Directors of the Crookston Sugar Beet Haul in the capacity of treasurer. He is also serving as Vice-president and Supervisor of West Polk Co. Soil and Water Conservation. He has been a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church all his life. He has served on the Board of Trustees and other Church committees.

In 1968 an award was presented him for outstanding accomplishments in soil and water conservation in the West Polk County District.
ardous! Many times the sure-footed instincts of a trusted team of horses was all that got one home safely. In 1964, Philip was one of the first men named to the “Hall of Fame” sponsored by the Red River Valley Development Association. He was named for his contributions to the development of agriculture in the Valley.

In the early days, Mabel raised all kinds of poultry, had a garden, milked cows, drove four horses on a grain binder and belonged to the neighborhood Maple Leaf Club. She sold eggs, churned butter, which was traded for groceries at Slocum’s Store. Her “modern conveniences” were a Sears-Roebuck one-cylinder engine, which turned the churn and powered the wooden tub Maytag washing machine.

Lucille married Marshall Warn and lived in Superior, Wisconsin, until he retired in 1969. They then moved to Crookston. Mildred married Clarence Reinschmidt, lived in Little Falls, Minnesota until retirement. They have a home on Gull Lake near Nisswa, Minnesota. Gladys is Mrs. Karl Da Vis. They have a farm near Fisher, Minnesota, where they spend the summer months.

In 1935, Philip and Mabel bought the east half of Section 7 and erected all new out-buildings. The next year the house was remodeled and modernized. They lived there until 1957, at which time they sold it to Ralph and Mariam. They moved to Crookston and lived there until Philip passed away in 1968. Five children were born to Ralph and Mariam between 1928 and 1931. Pauline, now Mrs. Willard Purath, who farms near Red Lake Falls, Minnesota. Dorothy, Mrs. Larry Bergh, farms west of Hallock, Minnesota. Maxine married Jay Thody, a landscape architect at University of Nebraska. They live in Lincoln, Nebraska. The two sons, Dale and Glen own farms in Sections 5 and 7 in Andover Township.

All five children attended Burnham Creek School and were graduated from the Northwest School of Agriculture. They all belonged to the Sunnyside 4H Club. During these years great changes were taking place in rural areas. The Rural Electrification Act brought electric power and wonderful things happened at the push of a button, the first of these was the flat iron, then the milking machine, including the lights. Indoor plumbing and central heating brought more benefits. Gone were the drafty floors and frosty ceilings!

The Finkenbinders were members of the Presbyterian Church, where Mariam taught Sunday School for many years. She was also an active member of the Women’s Association and both Ralph and Mariam served on various Church Boards. Ralph was on the Town Board and involved in community affairs. They were recognized by Land O’ Lakes as Honored Dairyman in 1945 and by the Red River Valley Development Association in 1974 as Honored Valley Farmer and Homemaker.

They still live in their farm home. Mother Mabel resides in a Crookston Nursing Home, partially disabled by a stroke. She is 90 years old.

DALE FINKENBINDER

Dale Finkenbinder, son of Ralph Finkenbinder, was born March 3, 1934, in Crookston, Minnesota. My grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. P. M. Finkenbinder and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Musselman.

I have three sisters, Pauline, Dorothy and Maxine, and one brother, Glen. I have been a lifetime resident of Andover Township.

I attended the Burnham Creek Country School District #110 for eight years. From there I attended high school at the Northwest School of Agriculture and graduated from there in 1951.

After graduation, I lived on the farm with my parents for four years. I was drafted into the Service and served two years in the U.S. Navy on the air craft carrier, Bon Homme Richard. My duties took me to the Far East to Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Okinoka and Hawaiian Islands. I was discharged in the fall of 1957.

I started farming with my brother, Glen, in 1958. We raised purebred Chester white hogs and purebred milking Shorthorn cattle, which we exhibited at the Red River Valley Winter Shows. We took many top honors. We also raise wheat, oats, barley and sugar beets.

On June 27, 1959, I married Janice Abrahamson at Trinity Lutheran Church in Crookston, Minnesota. Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Abrahamson who live in Crookston Township. Her grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Bernt Abrahamson and Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Hoiseth. Janice has three sisters: Dorothy, Delores, and Judy; and four brothers: Earl, Harold, Howard, and Roger. Her brother Harold was killed in an automobile accident.

We have three children: Susan, born July 31, 1961; Duane, born August 23, 1962; and Diane, born November 6, 1964. We lived in a trailer home for five years. In 1965 we bought the Buckler farm. The Buckler farm was originally owned by Alexander Burnham. The man after whom Burnham Creek was named.

One of the main happenings of 1975 was that we started construction of a new home. The construction was completed in October of that year.

GLEN FINKENBINDER

Our family history began in Polk County and this county is still our home. Glen is presently living on the farm where he was raised. His paternal grandparents, Philip and Mabel Finkenbinder, moved from Illinois to this farm in 1905. It has been farmed by his grandfather and father and is now owned by Glen. His maternal grandparents were Charles and Louise Musselman of Fairfax Township in Polk County.

Glen was born on September 12, 1936 in Crookston to Ralph and Mariam Finkenbinder, the youngest of five chil-
MR. AND MRS. RAYMOND GROVE

I, Ethel Butenoff, came with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Butenoff and five sisters and three brothers to Fisher on March of 1929 at the age of eight. I was born in Renville, Minnesota. I have eleven sisters and three brothers, but seven of them are married and live elsewhere.

I went to school at Fisher and was confirmed at a small country church six miles east of Fisher.

I met Raymond Grove of Climax, Minnesota and we were married at the Trinity Lutheran Church, June 19, 1940. Raymond is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thor K. Grove of Climax. He was born in Vineland Township August 30, 1919. He was baptized and confirmed at Sandhill Lutheran Church. He attended rural school District #41. After finishing school, he worked as a farm hand for a wage of seventeen dollars a month in the winter; in the summer he received thirty dollars a month. This was the top wages paid for hired help at this time.

After we were married, we lived in Nisbet Township for one year. In 1942 we moved to Crookston, Minnesota, but rented a farm in the northeast quarter Section 19, Andover Township.

We rented this 320-acre farm from Elmer D. Harris, who was the assistant postmaster. We worked for wages the first year, but later worked on a 50-50 basis. Mr. Harris owned the machinery and livestock. In 1948 Mr. Harris held an auction sale to sell all the machinery and livestock. We again rented the farm and bought our own machinery and livestock. Mr. Harris died in September, 1951 and four years later we purchased the farm from Mrs. Harris. In 1960 we purchased a 160-acre farm in the southwest quarter Section 17 in Andover Township.

We have served as 4-H leaders for nine years and Ray served as Clerk of Andover Township for twelve years. We are both active in community affairs, and are members of Trinity Lutheran Church. We have served on many committees in the church.

I have served for six years as Superintendent of District 11 of the Minnesota State Horticulture Society.

We are the parents of three daughters. Mrs. Daryl (Sharon) Draegert lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. They have three daughters and one son, Daryl. Mr. Draegert is employed at Control Data in Arden Hills in St. Paul, Mrs. Leo (Judy) Rassett of St. Paul. She is a hair dresser and Leo is a salesman for the Air Conditioning Association of St. Paul, Minnesota. They have two sons. Mrs. David (Diane) Colborn lives in Crookston, Minnesota. Diane is also a hairdresser and is employed at Hair and Things. David is Manager of Sugarlines of Hillsboro, North Dakota. They have two children.

The pages of history in our lives have seen progress, from horses to trains, cars and jet air planes; the space age to the landing on the moon. We have seen some hard times and a lot of good times!
Pope in 1958 and they have one son Charles Raymond.

Eliza Adelaide (Ida) Samson was born in Osseo, Minnesota on July 28, 1878. Her grandfather Samson came to the United States from France and settled in Osseo, Minnesota and her grandfather Mageau came to the United States from Canada and settled in Osseo, Minnesota. Her father William Nelson Samson, born in Osseo, Minnesota, married Eliza Jane Mageau. They came to Fairfax township about 1880 when Ida was just a child. The family settled on the southeast quarter of section 19. Her father farmed until his death in 1918. She and her brothers William, Emery, Frank, George and Charles and her sisters Agnes, Emma, Jessie, Mayme, Pearl and Olive were all educated in Crookston. Ida went to teachers training school in Crookston and then taught until she married Charles Lariviere in 1907. They had four children; Lucille, Harold, died at an early age, Delmonte and Evelyn. She and her husband, Charles, lived on a farm south of Crookston in Hammond township, where they farmed with his father Joseph Lariviere until 1920. They moved to Twin Falls, Idaho, they were there just a short while and decided to move back to Crookston, Minnesota. Charles was in charge of a crew, and supervised work for the Union Drainage Company Road Builders, for two years. In 1923 the family moved to the farm in Andover Township. They lived and farmed there until her husband, Charles died in 1945. She and her son Delmonte kept up the farming operation until her death in 1970. Her son Delmonte and his family are still on the farm.

**DORIS AND DUANE LIEN**

Doris Marie Wermager and Norton Duane Lien were married in the Presbyterian Church, Crookston, Minnesota on September 6, 1952. Their parents are Mr. and Mrs. Oscar M. Wermager and Mr. and Mrs. Norton Lien, both of Crookston. Both attended schools in Crookston and graduated from Central High School. Duane served in the Korean conflict and upon his return they purchased a farm west of Crookston, the former Clarence Slyt farm. They have been engaged in farming since. They moved to the Norton Lien farm home in 1966. Later they moved into Crookston. They are the parents of two, Kevin Michael born August 19, 1957 and Norlan Allard born April 25, 1960. Kevin graduated from Central this June, 1975 and is farming. He is also attending the University of Minnesota. Crookston Branch. Norlan is a sophomore at Central High. Crookston.

**FRANK IVERSON LERUM**

Frank Lerum's father, Iver C. Lerum, came from Lyster Sognedal, Norway. His mother, Maria Hillestad came from Bergen, Norway. With their families in 1863, they came to the U.S.A. and settled in Modina, Wisconsin. Iver enlisted in the Wisconsin Voluntary Infantry on January 5, 1864, and was mustered out of service on August 29, 1865. He served in Company H 27 Regiment Wisconsin Voluntary Infantry during the Civil War. He married Maria Hillestad in 1868 in Modina, Wisconsin. Iver and Marie lived in Wisconsin till 1875 when they moved to the Crookston area and farmed Section 28 in Andover Township. They had eleven children; Joe Carry, Ed, Inger, Chris, Mary, Frank, Clara, Robert, Phillip and William. All the children had Iverson for their second name taken from their father's first name. Chris Lerum farmed Section 29 in Andover Township until his death in 1942, when his step-son Merriam Simonson took over. Ed Lerum also remained in Crookston and worked for the Great Northern Railroad.

Frank Iverson Lerum was born November 12, 1883 in Andover Township. The country schoolhouse was about 500 feet from their home. The teacher lived with them. Mr. Lerum was employed by the Great Northern Railway in 1903 and retired in 1951 after his forty-eight years of service. He married Elsie Bjorgo on March 6, 1912 in Crookston, Minnesota. Her father was Erick Bjorgo who was born in Vosavongen, Voss, Norway near Bergen. Her mother was Marie Flage who was born near Bergen, Norway. She was married in Norway and she and her husband came to the United States in about 1865 and settled in Lamberton, Minnesota. They lost their home and farm buildings in a very bad tornado. He rebuilt a large home on a hill plus other farm buildings. They had eight children: Annie, Nels, Julia, Hannah, Knute, Ole, Elsie and Fred. The Bjorgos moved to the Red Lake Area in about 1909.

Frank and Elsie Lerum had six children: Elba, Mrs. Roland Breed of Crookston, Minnesota; Frances, Mrs. John Sands of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Leota, Mrs. George Franklin of East Grand Forks, Minnesota; Bette Jane, Mrs. Loren Knudson of Bismarck, North Dakota and two sons: Robert who passed away in 1967 and had married Lorraine Casavan; Galen who married Lillie Fournier. She passed away in 1962. He later married Emma Erickson in 1968. He has worked for the Coast to Coast Hardware Store for about thirty years and is the present owner. Elba and her husband Rolland C. Breed remained in the Crookston area and farmed approximately 1,350 acres in Sections 14, 22, 23 and 27 in Lowell Township. He is also an antique car collector.

Frank and Elsie have 13 grandchildren: Barbara and Lora-lee Breed; John Sands; Carolee and Robert Sabin; Sandra, Gary, Bonnie and Gregory Lerum; LeAnn and Lori Lerum, David and Pamela Knudson. They also have 11 great-grandchildren. The Lerums are members of the Trinity Lutheran Church. Frank passed away November 7, 1970 and is buried in Oakdale Cemetery. Mrs. Lerum survives him.
JOHN LETNES

John Letnes was born in Norway October 30, 1867. He immigrated to the United States in 1888 via Canada and first settled in St. Thomas, North Dakota. In 1891, he came to Vineland Township where he was employed by Andrew Steenerson, who was Sheriff of Polk County. He was prudent and thrifty and bought land in Vineland Township where he erected buildings and farmed for 10 years.

In 1900 he sold this land and bought 320 acres of land in Andover Township. Mrs. Letnes lived in the southeast quarter of Section 30 Andover, northeast quarter of Section 31 Andover, northeast quarter of Section 32 and finally the northeast quarter of Section 33 Andover in 1920. The crops in 1915 amounted to 8,000 bushels of oats, rye, wheat. He had good herds of cattle and horses and erected most of the larger buildings himself. His methods of farming were modern and progressive and the land was well drained and cultivated. He had a gas tractor and his other equipment was up to date. He used such implements as a shock loader and manure loader. He also operated his own threshing rig. Mr. Letnes was an active board member on the Andover Township Board and also served as chairman.

In 1894 he married Margaret Oustby of Climax also a native of Norway, and they were the parents of ten children: Lawrence, Thomas, Pauline, Anna, Lars, John, Magnus, Daniel, and Isabelle. A daughter, Dolly, died in infancy.

Lawrence Letnes (1895-1959) was born in Andover Township and worked for N. P. Stone Co. in Crookston, Minnesota before starting farming on his own in 1929. He farmed in Andover, Vineland, Scandia, and Hubbard Townships. It is reported he had the first combine in the state of Minnesota. He quit farming in 1932 and became the Massy Harris Implement dealer in Crookston and later Grand Forks, North Dakota. Lawrence was an active flyer and helped organize the Great Grain Harvest Brigade in Texas, Kansas, and Nebraska during World War II. He built new houses in Grand Forks from 1946-1948 and retired in Seattle, Washington in the early 1950's. He was married to Lillian Tiedman and had two children, Virgil and LaVonne.

Thomas A. Letnes (1897-1972) was born in Andover Township and was a student at Dakota Business College in Fargo, N.D. He worked in a bank in North Dakota before going into the army during World War I. He started farming in 1929 and farmed extensively in Hubbard, Vineland, and Andover Townships. Tom was active in the American Legion and D.A.V. and was also a pilot and had his own airplane and hangar on his farm in Hubbard Township. He was Minnesota State Representative in St. Paul in 1947. Mr. Letnes married Marie Ayotte in Minneapolis, Minnesota and had three children: Marilyn, Marjorie, and Thomas Jr. A son Donald died in infancy. Marie passed away in 1953 and he later married Charolette Kunkel and resided in Nielsville, Minnesota. After retiring in 1959. He later moved to Tucson, Arizona.

Pauline Letnes Gienens (1899-1971) was born in Andover Township. She attended the University of Minnesota and taught school in North Dakota and Minnesota. She married Adolph Gienens of Oklee, Minnesota and they were the parents of three children, John, Margaret, and Alf.

Anna Letnes Johnson (1901--) was born in Andover Township. She married Oscar A. Johnson in 1923 and they had four sons, Wallace, Luscuis, Roger, and Douglas. Anna lived in Hammond Township all her life before moving to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Lars (Louie) Letnes (1902-1972) was born in Andover Township and farmed with his brothers, Dick and John. Later he farmed his own land of which he had considerable holdings in Vineland Township. He was on the Climax School Board, and Climax Church Council. He was married to Clara Dale and they had two daughters, Darlene and Fern. He retired from farming in 1966 and died in Phoenix, Arizona in 1970.

Magnus Richard Letnes (1908-1945) was born in Andover Township and started farming with his brother, John, in 1931. He also farmed on his own. He was an avid pilot and spent many hours flying. He was killed when his plane crashed in November 1945. He was married to Ina Thompson and they had three children, Richard, JoAnn, and Ronald.

Daniel S. Letnes (1911--) was born in Andover Township and worked on his father's farms before attending the Northwest School of Agriculture, Crookston. He attended the University of North Dakota and graduated in 1936. Dan served in the Navy in World War II as ensign and was Assistant States Attorney of Grand Forks County in North Dakota. He has been secretary of Masonic Blue Lodge for twenty-eight years. He is married to Alpha Bruin and has two children, Gwen and Richard.

Isabelle Letnes Hudson Sailor (1913-1968) was born in Andover Township. She taught school and was a beauty operator in North Dakota. Bell married Donald Hudson and they had two children. Donna and John. Mr. Hudson died in 1965 and she married R. J. Sailor and lived in Bismark, North Dakota where she died in 1967.

John (Jack) Letnes (1906-1958) was born in Andover Township and started farming on his own in 1931. He bought land in Hammond, Andover, and Vineland Townships and farmed all his life. He and his brothers plowed up much of what was called The Great Beltrami Swamp and transformed it from hayland into virgin farm land. Jack had one of the first crawler tractors in the area and was one of the first innovators of multiple hitch pulling of farm equipment. He served on the Andover Town Board for many years and was also chairman. Mr. Letnes was one of the first directors on the R.E.A. Board at Halstad, Minnesota and was a member of the Elks, Eagles, Shriners, and a member of the Climax Lutheran Church. He was married to Vivian Vignesh and they had one son, John Gary. Mr. Letnes also had his own airplane and flew from his own airstrip on his farm.

The Letnes Brothers: Laurence, Tom, Louis, Jack, Dick and Dan.

JOHN GARY LETNES

John Gary Letnes (1939--) was born in Halstad, Minnesota September 22 and attended Crookston and Climax Public School. Gary was active in many school organizations espe-

Laurence, John and Louis Letnes with I.H.C. tractor 1912, Crookston.
cially school publications. He started farming on his own after the death of his father John in 1958. Gary served seven years in the North Dakota Air National Guard in Fargo, North Dakota attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was North Dakota Air National Guard Airman of the Year in 1969. Gary is a supervisor on the Andover Town Board of which he is chairman. Gary is a member of the Crookston Police Reserve of which he is Captain. He also is a member of the Elks, Eagles, Masonic Lodge, Farmers Union, Farm Bureau. Gary and his family are members of the Climax Lutheran Church and he is a member of the Church Council and past president of the Congregation. He is a past board member of the Crookston Farmers Union Oil Co. Gary operates the family farm which consists of 2,000 acres in Hammond, Andover and Vineland Townships. He is also a private pilot. He is married to Nancy Boyer and they have two children, Lisa and David.

JOHN T. PERRY

John T. Perry was born on November 26, 1873 near Humansville, Missouri. His father was a Civil War veteran. John moved with his family to Boone County, Iowa, where he married Laura E. Woodruff on March 22, 1899. With their two children, they moved to Andover township near Crookston in March 1903. The farm was owned by H. F. Woodruff, Laura's father. The Perrys had three more children after moving to Crookston. Mrs. Perry died on December 16, 1906 after the birth of her last child. Of the five children; Clarence died at the age of twenty-one. Clifford, lives in Florida. Hazel, who married John Alderman of Crookston, lives in Fosston, Minnesota. Charles married a Crookstonite, Clarice W. Thompson and Laura married John Damhoff. They farm and still live in Fanny Township.

Charles later purchased the farm. He and Clarice had five children: Carol, Mrs. Richard Ducharme of Washington, D.C.; Carolyn of Crookston, Patricia, Mrs. Aural Ekvall of Bagley. Janna is Mrs. Del Wall of Minneapolis. Jon married Marlys Hackett and now owns and operates the farm.

Clarice Thompson Perry's grandparents were early residents of Crookston. Her grandfather is John Alderman, also the father of John Alderman of Fosston. They first came to Crookston when there were only a few log cabins on the river. Later he lived here, operating a livery stable, hotel and a hardware store. In the early 1900's, he left Crookston and homesteaded a claim in Canada. Her grandfather, T. G. Thompson, came to Crookston in the 1870's and operated a saloon. Her mother, Cora Alderman, was born in Crookston. Her father, William Thompson, was born in Moorhead and came with his parents to Crookston as a child.

In 1937 as newlyweds, Marlys Hackett Perry's parents came to Polk county where they farmed. They were raised in the St. Cloud area.

JOHN S. ROHRER

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Rohrer were both born in Lucerne, Switzerland. In 1849, they settled in Wisconsin, and later migrated to a covered wagon, settling near Kasson, Minnesota. Of the six children born to this couple, a son, John S. Rohrer, was the only one who moved to northwestern Minnesota.

John S. Rohrer was born in Newcastle, Wisconsin, on July 24, 1871. He moved with his parents to Kasson, Minnesota where he received his education. Later he graduated from Valparaiso Business College, Indiana where he had studied business and legal law.

John S. Rohrer married Kate Meyer, of Sargent, Minnesota on June 18, 1898. The bride's parents, Charles and Elizabeth Meyer, were born in Germany. They came by boat to America, and settled in southern Minnesota.

After his marriage, Mr. Rohrer was manager of a grain elevator in the Austin, Minnesota area. Later he was a grain buyer for grain companies in the Austin-Minneapolis area.

It was while traveling for these grain companies that Mr. Rohrer became familiar with the Red River Valley and its fertile farm land. He decided to go into farming instead of pursu-

Mr. and Mrs. John Rohrer, Golden Anniversary 1949: L. to R.: Mabel, Ruth, Mr. Rohrer, Mrs. Rohrer, Ben and Aaron.

ing a career in the city.

Mr. Rohrer and his family came to Polk County in 1902 and settled on a farm in Section 11, Andover Township. He became a leader in the business of agriculture. Among his many "firsts" were serving as chairman for the Agriculture Adjustment Act in Polk County, and as director and organizer of the Farmers Union Oil Company. He also served as director of the Red River Valley Livestock Association. He was among the first of the sugar beet growers in this area. He was also a promoter of the building of ditch drainage in this area.

In addition to grain and sugar beet farming, the Rohrer family maintained a large Holstein dairy herd. In 1942, the barn, adjacent dairy buildings, the herd of cattle, and a team of horses were destroyed by fire. This was a great financial loss. The barn was never rebuilt. Mr. Rohrer devoted himself strictly to grain and sugar beet farming after that time.

In addition to his farm activities, Mr. Rohrer took an active part in community affairs, serving on the rural school board, and also as clerk and director of Andover Township.

Mr. and Mrs. Rohrer were members of the Methodist Church of Crookston. Mrs. Rohrer was a member of the Ladies Aid, W.C.T.U., and of the Fairfax Andover Club, of which Mr. Rohrer was an honorary member.

Mr. and Mrs. John Rohrer were parents of seven children, Ruth, Erwin of Seattle, Washington; Aaron, Raymond, Hazel, Mabel, and Ben, all living except Raymond, who died in 1944. Also surviving are six grandchildren: Beverly Rohrer Rabiodeau, Audrene Rohrer Rightmire, Donna Rohrer Nelson, Karen Rohrer Morehouse, and Jennifer and Lee Rohrer and thirteen great grandchildren.

Mabel (Mae) became a registered nurse, Ruth, Aaron, and Ben remained with their parents helping with the work on the Rohrer farms.

In 1940, because of the labor shortage, a group of Crookston women worked sugar beets on the John Rohrer farms, supervised by Ruth Rohrer.

Mr. and Mrs. Rohrer retired from farming in 1945 and moved to Groveland Avenue in Crookston. On July 19, 1949, they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, which was hosted by the children living in this area: Ruth, Aaron, Mabel, and Ben.

Mrs. Rohrer died on February 24, 1953 and Mr. Rohrer on April 24, 1954.

The children of John and Kate Rohrer treasure the memory of their beloved parents, and are honored and blessed by the heritage of their love and the farm land given to them.

ERIC SAMUELSON

In 1878 Eric Samuelson emigrated from Sweden at the age of seventeen. He landed at St. Paul, Minnesota and stayed one year. He later heard about farm employment on farms in

northern Minnesota. He came to Crookston and got a job on the Corser Farm, a large farm six miles southwest of Crookston near Girard Station, Polk County Minnesota. The farm consisted of six sections of land; three in Andover township, Sections 3, 16, and 17, and several outlying quarters nearby. On section 16 there was a three story barn which stabled sixty head of horses in the basement, had machine storage on the second floor and a hayloft on the third. The living house on Section 16 is still there but has been made into a granary. I was born in this house.

During harvest, they used twenty-five grain binders and three steam threshing machines. Since there was no traction on the engines, horses were used to pull them. Most of the laborers were Scandinavian immigrants.

After a few years, he was made foreman on this farm. Here he married Clara Swenson who was also employed on the farm. They had a family of four sons and one daughter. In 1898, they went back to Sweden for a year. When they came back, Eric bought Section 16 in Andover and farmed there until 1902, when he sold that and bought land in Section 6 in Andover on which he resided until his retirement in 1947.

Eric Samuelson was a member of the Township Board for several years; was Township Assessor for thirty years and a member of Covenant Church in Crookston. Some of his neighbors in those early years were: Alex Burnham, J. C. Knutson, T. Thyeson, Tom Bjorn, Ole Volland, Frank Bivens, Chas Matson and Louie Locken.

He often told about the severe winters and deep snow. He made few trips to town, so had to stock up on provisions to last a long time. The biggest part of the food supply was raised on the farm, including: butter, eggs, meat, potatoes. His wheat was traded for flour to last all winter. Wood was the fuel used and that was cut in the fall to last all winter. There was no rural mail delivery. The local newspaper was a weekly one. Kerosene lamps provided light for both the house and barn at night.

RICHARD SAMUELSON

Richard was born in 1895 of Eric and Clara Samuelson on Section 16 in Andover Township. Other children in the family were Youngve, Oscar, Arthur and Gertrude. The family moved to Section 6 in 1901. The children attended school in District #110, Burnham Creek School. Richard attended the Northwestern School of Agriculture in 1913. He farmed with his father and in 1925 was married to Helen Olson in Litchfield, Minnesota. Helen was born in Illinois of Eugene and Christine Olson. Helen and Richard lived in Andover for 40 years. They had a large herd of dairy cattle and bottled and delivered milk and cream daily in Crookston. Poor roads and winter storms were no deterrent, but made the chore nearly impossible at times. Community activities included leadership in the Sunny-side 4-H Club, the S. Lowell Homemaker's Club and the Burnham Creek School Board. They had four sons: Robert, Charles, Lester and Roger. They also attended Burnham Creek School and the Northwest School of Agriculture. Robert was drafted into the Armed Service in 1945 and served over a year when illness forced him to return home. In 1951, Charles and Lester were inducted into the service the same day. Charles served in the United States and Lester was sent to Korea. Roger served in Germany during the United States occupation there.

Richard retired in 1974 and moved into Crookston. Robert operates the home farm. He was married to Ramona Juren, deceased, they had three daughters: Margaret, Mary, and Marlys and a son Eric. Roger bought a farm in Section 17, Andover. His wife is the former Loire Deboer. They have one daughter, Lynn. Lester lives in Crookston and is employed by American Crystal Sugar Co. He married Bernice Tinkham and their children are: Julie, Janna and John. Charles' wife was Idella Mitchell. He is a professor and teaches in Northland Junior College in Thief River Falls, Minnesota. They have three children: David, Sara Beth and Matthew. The families are all confirmed members of the American Lutheran Church and take part in all of its activities. Helen serves on the wedding committee and is a member of the Altar Guild and past president of A.L.C.W.

Richard and Helen celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in June of 1975.

HAROLD V. SWAIN

Harold V. Swain, of Scotch-Irish, English, and German ancestry, came of a family whose paternal side traces its English blood to the times of Elizabeth I. He was reared on a family farm near Viroqua, Wisconsin. Despite only an eighth grade education, Harold was always interested in self-improvement. Most of his life he carried in his pockets scraps of paper on which he listed the new words he was learning. A veteran of World War I, Harold came to Crookston in 1919 to assist his father with land in Andover township. Once here, in addition to his farming, he worked as a hired hand, a gravel hauler, an accountant, and an interior decorator to pay for his own quarter of land. When banks closed in the '30s, Harold bartered grain for lumber to erect a barn, shed, and well house. He, his wife, and his daughter, with the aid of Richard Ott, farmed at one time nearly two thousand acres in a successful attempt to defray farm and educational costs, to buy land, and to plan for the future. Eager for progress, Harold was one of the first farmers to purchase a Titan tractor to replace horses, and one of the first to buy a combine to replace the threshing machine. Also, he was among the first, if not the only farmer in Andover, to install and use the Jacobs Wind Electric power
History of the Angus Community

The township of Angus was organized in the year 1879 and is a part of Polk County which was organized in 1872. It was first started with the railroad stop in the year 1878. This first stop was located near what is now the former Leroy Wood farm and where the Clarence Arnolds now live. At that time it was known as South Angus.

Some of the first businesses of the community were a blacksmith shop started by John Nadvarnick in 1890 and another blacksmith shop in 1884 by John Staska. The first store was built in 1880 with G. C. Winchester as owner and it was later sold to J. F. Montgomery, but it has been closed for the past six years. The last owners were Mr. and Mrs. William Stewart who had the Post Office along with the grocery store. The first postmaster was William Lemen in 1882 and the first mail carrier was Ole Iverson.

The first church was a Presbyterian Church built in 1881 and was torn down in 1952 and a new building was erected on the same site. The first school was built in 1890 and it was later moved away and a two room building was erected in 1908. This building is now being used as a town meeting place. The first depot burned in 1904 and the present building was built on the east side of the tracks. At the present time we have no train service only for the freight cars for grain as needed for the elevators. One of the early business men of the Angus area was Jim Stroble who bought cream, worked in one of the elevators and the lumberyard as well as acting as town assessor for this township. He walked many miles in taking the information needed for the county.

The first Modern Woodman Lodge was organized about 1890 and their hall was built in 1895. That hall has now been sold to Hubert Anderson who uses it for storage. No longer is there a place in the community to have gatherings such as was had in the past. There are no more Christmas programs, community clubs or other social events. The first lumber yard in Angus was started in 1888. At one time there were three oil line elevators but one burned to the ground in 1923 which was owned by the Great Western Company. The Farmers Elevator was built in 1916 and it has had additions added in the past years. The St. Anthony and Dakota was sold to the G.T.A. in 1943.

LAURIE VOLLAND

Representing the second generation of his family in Andover Township, Laurie Volland, now retired, chose to live on the farm where he was born. Ole Volland, born in Norway in 1861, came to Crookston in 1882. He worked as a farm laborer here, and also in the state of Washington. In 1892, he bought his farm of 160-acres in Section 14, Andover Township. This had been the homestead of Gust Olson and the only building there was a small log cabin. In 1893, he married Julia Anderson also a resident of Andover. They built a basement barn three years later and a house eight years later. They had four children: Andy, Stella, Laurie and Edna.

Laurie was born September 20, 1907, and has lived all his life on this farm. In June of 1938 he married Hildegard Gustafson, also a resident of Andover. Gust Gustafson, Hildegard's father, moved his family to Minnesota from Nebraska in 1927. He purchased a farm in Section 36 in Andover Township. He was a native of Sweden and had married America Nelson in Fremont, Nebraska. On one of his trips to Sweden, he and his wife brought back to America a niece, Hildagard. They adopted her as their only child. She graduated from Central High School and taught seven years in the rural school in this area.

The Gustafsons moved to Crookston because Mrs. Gustafson was a sister of Mrs. Ebbe Anderson who were also farmers in Andover. The Laurie Volland's had four children: Loren, now living in Burbank, California, where he is a machinist at Disneyland; Larry, deceased; Carol, a mother and housewife living in Minnetonka and Wayne a student at the University of Minnesota.

The Volland's, in their retirement, live on the building site on Burnham Creek. As a hobby, they have a large garden and sell farm produce.