JULIUS WAGNER

Julius Wagner, son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Wagner, who were natives of Germany, was born August 12, 1853, on a ship coming across the ocean to America. He was the youngest of four brothers: John, Daniel and Paul. The family settled at Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where they were engaged in farming and lumbering. One incident in his early life was being in the great Chicago fire October eighth and ninth, 1871, and having to swim out into the lake because of the great heat of the fire.

Mr. Wagner was married in 1875 to Miss Emelia Klinger. She was two years old when she came with her parents, Wilhelm and Anne (Dallie) Klinger, natives of Germany in 1856. They settled at Manitowoc, Wisconsin. She was sixth in line in the family of twelve children.

Mr. and Mrs. Wagner lived at Ruckland, Wisconsin, for three years. Having relatives and friends in the Fisher, Minnesota area, they moved to Section 23, Fisher Township. Polk County, and settled on a homestead one mile east and one-half mile south of Fisher, Minnesota along the Red Lake River. Their first home there was a cave built into the side of a hill until they could build a more permanent house. They were the parents of the following eleven children: August, Adolph, Gustave, Amil, Wilhelm, Anna (Liebert), Bertha (Klema), Emilia (Hinz), Martin, Amos and Alfred. Alfred is the lone survivor at the present date. The family belonged to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. The congregation organized on December 3, 1886, and Julius held the first office as trustee. Prior to the organization, church services were held in homes and served by pastors that worked in the territory from 1879. Julius died April 2, 1927, having become a successful farmer in the Red River Valley.

LLOYD WAGNER

Lloyd Wagner, son of Martin and Ida Wagner, is the owner of his grandfather Julius Wagner’s farm and lives in the farm house built in 1886. This was his and his father’s birthplace.

Lloyd married Harriet Meyer whose parents are Theodore and Marie Meyer who had immigrated to America from Germany. They are parents of Tamra Jurchen who lives in St. Paul, Minnesota; Deborah (Anderson) who lives in Australia; Timothy who is married and lives in Grand Forks, North Dakota, but farms with his father; Linnette and Joel, students at North Dakota State University at Fargo, North Dakota; and Jill, a sophomore at Fisher Public School.

Garfield Township History

Garfield Township, organized in 1880, was christened in honor of James Abram Garfield, who was elected president of United States in 1881. A few months after his election he was wounded fatally by James Guiteau, a disappointed office seeker.

Two of the earliest frame houses in Garfield Township were built by two of the first settlers here: Knute Bolstad Nelson and Thomas Johnson Lensegrav. The Lensegrav house was built on the edge of the Sand Hill River, with a barn and other farm buildings on a lower level, in a beautiful setting reminding them of Norway. Their “place” was near the Old Mill.

When in 1886 the N.P. Railroad came through, a huge embankment was built separating the house from the farm yard. In modern times, there would be an underpass or the house would be moved; but there it was, literally a huge barricade leaving the house stranded.

The Indians in the 1880’s would often camp in the land around the river below what is now Paul Hegre’s home. They were very fond of bread. Grandma Anna Morvig told her sister, Mrs. Ole Opheim, that one day her cabin door was pushed open and there stood a huge Indian. She tried to speak to him, but he spoke mostly French and some broken English. Nevertheless, he soon told her that he wanted bread. Indians often visited their home. Grandmother Rose would search in the woods for snake root which she sold to the Indians for a penny each.

KNUTE BOLSTAD

Knute A. Bolstad was born at Evanger in Voss, Norway on November 30, 1839, and immigrated to America when he grew up. He came to Dodge County, Minnesota where he worked on a farm. He was a member of the 11th Minnesota Infantry Regiment in the Civil War. He married Ingeborg Rovang and moved to Garfield Township, Polk County in 1880. Along with seven children aged twelve to several months, he came by train to Ada, where he unloaded their household goods, machinery, and livestock. They drove overland by wagon and settled on a homestead about two miles east of the present site of Fertile. Knute’s brother, Lars, homesteaded a quarter Section in 27 on the south and another brother, Nels, settled in Section 26, a short distance east. The seven children, all born in Dodge County, were Gurina, age 12; Arne, age 9; Eddy, 8; Will, 6; Nille, 5; Otto, 2; and Oscar, 3 months. The other children who were born on the homestead in Garfield were Ida, Julia, Thea, Emma and Mabel. This was his and his father’s birthplace.

Knute was a farmer as well as a township and school officer. The district’s first school was on his land. Much of his land had to be cleared before crops could be planted and of course, this was all done by hand. Knute was 78 years when he died in 1917. His wife died in 1930.

Their eldest child, Gurina married Hans O. Strem. Their eight children were: Ingebella, Cora, Ruby, Frances, Rosella,
Elbin, Luther and Gerald. Arne married Tina Kaste and adopted a daughter, Ethel. Eddy married Tina Westad. Their daughter is Edith. Willy married Josephine Johnson and their children were Reuben, Irene, Kensal, Iva and Muriel. Nille married Julia Kaste. Their seven children were Lillian, Knute, Alvin, Joel, Norma, Leroy and Eva. Otto married Ellen Opheim. Their three boys were Kenneth, Erling and Edmund. Oscar (O. K.) married Anna Griffin. Their three children were Glenna, Ellsworth, and Everett. Ida married Ole Strom and their five children were Harvey, Paolo, Thelma, June and Shirley. Mabel married Oscar Landgren. Thea and Emma never married.

**ERICK MIKKESEN DAHLE**

Erick Mikkelson Dahle was born January 11, 1856 at Dale i Brudvig, Norway and in 1873, at the age of seventeen years, he came to America, settling in Winnebago County, Iowa where he lived for seven years. In 1880 he came to the Fertile area in covered wagon pulled by ox-team, in the company of Jacob Aldal. He homesteaded 160 acres in Garfield Township, two miles east of Fertile. The country was covered with heavy timber with a few clearings where the Indians did their hunting, and it was common to see wigwams on the edge of the forest. The Indians were friendly and would often stop and ask for food, especially home-made bread, sometimes trading some of their things. There were no railroads or public roads, only so-called “Indian trails”. He had to grub and clear the land by hand, and built a sod hut to live in. Jens Gronvold, son of a pioneer family, was born in this sod hut.

Gurine Bolstad, one of eight children, was born January 1, 1862 at Voss, Norway, and came to America in 1882. She also had four brothers and a sister who settled in Garfield Township, Einer and Knute were the first settlers. Dr. Arne was the first doctor. and Bertha. Mrs. Lars Knutson. After coming to America, they changed their name to Nelson as their father was Nels Bolstad.

Gurine and Erick were married December 4, 1882 at the Aldal settlement, one and one-half miles northeast of Fertile. The first buildings on their farm were a house, granary and barn, all made of log. Eleven of their twelve children were born while they lived in the log house. Then in 1903, they built a two story frame house and about 1914 a barn. A “summer kitchen” was built near the house. Here they did the cooking, baking and canning during the summer months as the wood stove would heat up the house too much.

Often Erick had to walk to Crookston to trade, a distance of twenty-five miles one way. He was a charter member of Little Norway Church, organized in 1880, and later belonged to Evanger Lutheran Church. In 1923, he was on the committee when the United and Evanger congregations decided to merge into what is now Concordia.

The Dahle children were Martin, Mrs. Mikkel (Clara) Helle, Mrs. Gust (Ella) Olson, Mrs. Gullick (Anna) Flage, Nels, Albert, Edwin, Norman, Theodore, Otto, Mrs. Gust (Edith) Leiser, and Louis. The three latter are still living. Gurine died in 1936 and Erick in 1937.

**MELVIN DALE**

We are Melvin and Pearl Dale, who have lived in Polk County all of our lives. Melvin’s parents were Tosten Dale, who came from Astridslde, Valders, Norway. Thea Sonsdal Dal, his mother, came from Finn, Telemarken, Norway.

Pearl’s parents came from Osterdal and Voss, Norway. Her father was Martin Iverson from Dalton, Minnesota. Her mother was Martha Opheim, who lived all her days in Polk County. Martha’s parents, Knute, came from Voss, Norway. Sod and her mother.

The Melvin Dales have four sons to carry the Dale name in America: Arlen, who lives on the home farm in Garden Township; Rodger, who is a pastor in Mankato, Minnesota; James, who owns the J. R. Dale Farm Supply at Fertile; Charles, who is employed by Comido Company at Dilworth, Minnesota. The Dales have one daughter, Joyce. Mrs. Lowell Bechelt, of Stockton, California.

**ARNOLD AND IDA ERICKSON**

Arnold Erickson was born August 1, 1914, in the Township of Garfield in Polk County, Minnesota. His parents were Emil and Clara Erickson.

Ida Gredvig Erickson was born January 14, 1917 in Garfield Township. Her parents were Gerhard and Clara Gredvig. We both grew up in Polk County and had our education here. We were married July 3, 1939, at the bride’s home by Pastor G. W. Tol. We then lived on a farm owned by Emil Erickson and Arnold farmed with his dad.

We raised chickens and had some dairy cows, also some pigs and raised some grain and always some corn.

On May 1, 1940, our first son was born to us and was named Allen. On January 4, 1945, Barbara Ann was born.

On September 24, 1949, our son, Jerome, was born. In 1952, we bought our farms which was then the Andrew Morvig farm. This was Ida’s grandparents’ farm, and was where her mother was born. We have our home down by the river which we like very much.

Many days have been busy ones. We are raising hogs, beef and dairy cows and also grain farming. In November, 1961, Allen married Diane Nelson to whom three children were born: Nancy, January, 1965: Elizabeth, November, 1968; Paul, February, 1972. Allen is engaged in farming with his dad. In the year 1964, June 12, Barbara Ann was married to Charles Schustad. They both teach school in Fargo, North Dakota.

July 20, 1973. Jerome married Janice Wehner and he farms with his dad. We are farming 600 acres together. We have seen many changes in farming these years, from threshing to combining and milking cows by hand to using the milking machines.

We saw the depression of the ’30’s and also the time when we were snowbound all winter. Also, we have had many happy days. We are members of the Little Norway Church and have enjoyed our religious background. We love to think of our parents and think of the love they gave us.

Our grandparents came from Norway and they talked mostly Norwegian. As a child, I had trouble understanding them.

Now in 1975, Arnold and Ida Erickson enjoy living on our present farm in Polk County in the Township of Garfield in partnership with our sons, Allen and Jerome.

**GILBERT FOSSE**

Gilbert Fosse and Helen Amundson were married on May 31, 1930, by Reverend P. E. Moen at Crookston. Gilbert was born February 11, 1892 near Fertile and passed away October 13, 1962, at the Veteran’s Hospital at Fargo.

After honorable discharge from the navy, where he served in World War II, he attended Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis for a year; he and his brother. Lars, then took over the work on the family farm.

Helen Amundson, daughter of the Iver Amundsons near Erskine graduated from high school and Moorhead State College. She taught school in Polk, Norman and Ottertail Counties several years.

Farming during the depression years of the ’30’s was far
from profitable, but gradually things began to improve. They raised Duroc Hogs and Guernsey cattle. Members of Little Norway Congregation, they were active in many organizations. Gilbert was on the board of deacons and was church treasurer for many years. In civic affairs he served as township assessor, was on the town and school boards and an active member in the Farmer’s Union.

Helen taught Sunday School and sang in the Ladies Chorus; she was a Ladies’ Aid member, where she served as secretary and treasurer.

Their only child, Genevieve, was born June 17, 1932. She was active in 4-H, taught Sunday School, belonged to Youth Fellowship and choir. After graduating from high school and Bemidji State College, she taught second and third grades at Fosston and Fergus Falls. In 1957 she married Bennie Gerhardson, a dairy farmer, near Fergus Falls.

After Gilbert passed away, Helen moved to Fergus Falls to be near her daughter and son-in-law and their four children.

She owns her own home and belongs to Bethlehem Lutheran Church. As a member of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.) she keeps busy at the Y.M.C.A. and the Pioneer Home.

JOHN AND BRITHA FOSSE

John Johnson Fosse was born on the Langeland Farm at Twingedalen I Evanger which is near Voss, Norway on the fifth of August, 1853. His parents were John Torkelson Fosse from Exsingedalen, Norway, born 1815, and Sigrud Larsdatter Gulbrau. His father also came to America as an old man and died here in 1904 at 89 years of age. John and his brother, Nils, came on the sailing ship “Sarah” to Quebec in 1871. Coming to Dodge County, Minnesota, they stayed with relatives who had come before them and attended “Common School” there.

On December 6, 1879, John married Britha Sjursdatter Braekhus. The brothers tried homesteading in Ransom County, North Dakota, but found the severe winters and lack of wood for fuel very difficult. In 1891 they moved to Polk County, Minnesota. John built a log cabin on the Sand Hill River, but later purchased the farm in Garfield Township, which the family owned until 1973. While living in Polk County, he held a number of township and school offices. He was active in dairy improvement groups and in the Norwegian Synod Church. He died November 31, 1924, and is buried in the Evanger Cemetery at Fertile.

Mrs. Fosse was born April 15, 1862, in Vernon Township, Dodge County, Minnesota. Her father, Sjur Olson Braekhus, also called Sivert Olson, settled in America in 1857. Their home in Norway was also in Voss. Mrs. Fosse died in 1910 when her youngest child was only six years old.

There were thirteen children born into their family; four of whom died in infancy. Joe Fosse who was born February 5, 1881, remained a bachelor all his life. He worked in lumbering and the cranberry industry in Oregon. He died February 12, 1962, in Coos Bay, Oregon.

Bertha was born November 18, 1883. She was married to Martin Berg. They had two children, Bertha, Mrs. Ernest Droppo, of Anoka, Minnesota, and Edward recently retired from an army career of Tacoma, Washington. Severt was born October 8, 1885, and died May 3, 1904. Selma, born September 26, 1887, was married to Jack Mosbrucker. They had one daughter, Gertrude, Mrs. William Cowan. They lived in Grand Forks and Thief River Falls and were for many years in the carpet business. She lives at present in Boise, Idaho with her daughter.

Lars was born January 10, 1890 in Lisbon, North Dakota. He lived in Fertile the fall of 1975, where he entered a home for senior citizens in Fergus Falls. He was the last member of the Fosse family to remain in the Polk County area. He has been employed in a variety of jobs including railroading, auto manufacturing, and seed companies, and farming. He farmed the home place with his brother, Gilbert, for many years and worked at K. Cloth Company. Lars served in the Army of Occupation in France in World War I and was very active in the American Legion being Commander for six years. He was finance officer and secretary of the Evanger Lutheran Church of Fertile.

Gilbert’s family history is recounted elsewhere in this book. Jacob was born May 4, 1894 and died May 26, 1904. Julia was born July 29, 1896, and died October, 1924. Knute was born February 14, 1899. He was a career Army man in the Army Air Force; after retirement he settled in Blue Ridge, Virginia, with his wife, Grace. Agnes was born February 26, 1902, and died three days later. Torkel was born March 25, 1903, and worked for many years in telephone and electric line construction in Minnesota. He never married and died December, 1975. Josie, born December 6, 1904, was a victim of multiple sclerosis. She lived in Crookston and at the home farm. She died June 17, 1939.

ROBERT AND OLIDA GULLICKSON

Robert W. Gullickson was born March 31, 1887, in Garfield Township to Hans A. and Margit Gullickson. He was a life long member of Little Norway Church. His occupation was farming and his hobbies were trapping and hunting. He was of Norwegian background. His father Hans was born September 28, 1850, in Lands, Norway. Robert married Olida Kvitne November 14, 1913. Olida was born October 26, 1889 to Oline and Styrke Kvitne at Buxton, North Dakota. She had conferred on her a life membership in the A.L.C.W. at Little Norway Church. Before her marriage she worked as a seamstress in Grand Forks, North Dakota. She was of Norwegian background, her father born on January 1, 1854 in Voss, Norway.

Six children were born to Robert and Olida. Harold lives on his farm near Fertile, formerly homesteaded by his great grandfather, Opal and her husband, Vernon Wahlin, and son Donald live in Hillsboro, North Dakota. Reuben and his wife, Sylvia, and daughters, Mary and Joan live in Fertile and a son Robert in Grand Forks. Verna and her husband, Orvis Nolte, and son, Greg, live in Fertile and son Douglas, on a farm near Fertile. They have two daughters, Cathy in Moorhead and

Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Fosse and daughter Genevieve.

Mr. and Mrs. John J. Fosse.
Marsha in Fargo. Ardith and her husband, James Holen, and son Kevin live in Crookston. They have two sons, Danny and Rodney living in Fargo. Charlotte and her husband, Leonard Swanson, live in Fertile and they have two daughters. Lavon lives in Alex, Virginia, and Cheryl lives in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Robert W. Gullickson died August 8, 1949. His wife, Olida, died February 8, 1975, a few months after her 85th birthday.

LARS JACOBSON

Many pioneers immigrated to America from Voss in Norway. In 1888, Johannes Jound's fourteen year old son came to Blooming Prairie, Minnesota to relatives there before coming to northern Minnesota. Ole and Lars arrived the year before, in 1887, and Jacob came later. Johannes did mason work. Ole took up homesteading on forty acres and later bought another forty acres. They lived in a dugout cellar until a two-room house was built by help of the brothers; lumber cost $150 at that time. The brothers helped to grub and clear away the woods for farming. Ole married Gunhild Ofstedal. She and twin boys passed away in 1906. Ole passed away in 1950.

Jacob changed his last name to Johnson when he took his citizenship papers. In 1893, he married Maggie Horvick and lived in Fertile most of his life. Eight children were born to this union: John, George, Belvina, Josephine, Martin, Obert, Sylvia, and Leona. Jacob was engaged in carpenter work his active life. All passed away except one son, Martin.

Lars changed his last name to Jacobson when he took out his citizenship papers. In 1902 he married Martha Aldal. He took up a homestead near Strandquist, Minnesota, and lived there eleven years; later he moved to Fertile, where he bought the farm from his brother, Ole, and where at present, Obert Jacobson is doing the farming. Eleven children were born to this union: Clarence, Julia, Alfred, Marie, Obert, Mathilda, Bertha, Melvina, Alice, Mary and Theodore. Marie died in infancy, and Clarence and Bertha have all passed away. John Ofstedal also had taken up homesteading near Strandquist, Minnesota. He engaged in carpenter work all his active life. The last years he spent his life in homes for the aged in various places. He passed away at the age of 96 in 1970 at the Fair Meadow Nursing Home in Fertile. These old pioneers settled in Garfield Township, in Fertile, Minnesota. The grandparents, uncle and parents settled where now is the place occupied by Obert Jacobson and sisters, Julia and Mathilda.

Knute Johnson was born in Telemarken, Norway, February 5, 1846, and came to America in 1853. Kristie Dugstad Johnson was born in Voss, Norway, November 24, 1849, and she came to America around 1873 to a farm near Harmony, Minnesota. She came to America with friends and worked for some distant relatives, the Mikkle Rocknes. She planned to learn about housework, but instead was put to work in the fields. Knute Johnson lived with his mother in Dane County, Wisconsin where he remained until 1860. He moved to Winneshiek County, Iowa, where he spent four years before he went to Rochester, Minnesota, to enlist in the Infantry Regiment of Minnesota Volunteers. Knute Johnson not only enlisted to serve his county, but was paid $100 to replace another man who did not want to serve in the infantry. He went from Rochester to Fort Snelling, then to Chattanooga, Tennessee, and on to Altona, Georgia, where he participated in the famous march through Georgia to the ocean. In 1865, Knute went to Fillmore County where he met Kristie Dugstad. Knute and Kristie were married in Harmony or Preston, Minnesota, and for six years engaged in farming. In 1882, Knute and Kristie Johnson and their three children and two other families moved North. They traveled with Peter Christian Bertils, Tom and John Nesseth, his mother, Margaret Ness, and Alfred Johnson, a half-brother of Knute Johnson. They drove horses attached to covered wagons and herded livestock ahead of the teams. The families slept in their wagons at night. The women took turns cooking during the month-long trip. The travelers milked their cows morning and evening, which they traded for butter and bread.

The Johnsons had seven children: Bertina, Mrs. Lars Ystenes; Malla, Mrs. Mikkolie Gunderson; John Sivert and Lewis; Ida, Mrs. Albert Mattson, and Helmer. Knute Johnson was the last one of the Civil War veterans residing in Fertile. Mr. and Mrs. Knute Johnson were active members of Drangeadal congregation and later Concordia. The church stood where the Concordia church now stands. Mr. and Mrs. Knute Johnson built a home in Fertile and retired from the farm in 1918. Mr. and Mrs. Lewyvik own this house now. Mr. and Mrs. Helmer Johnson bought the farm and after farming for 56 years, they retired and moved to Fertile. This farm is now owned by Harvey Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Jerome (Butch) Olson and family live on the place.

Knute passed away December 22, 1928, and his wife, July 22, 1941. Blessed be the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Knute Johnson!

OLE O. AND GURI VIDDEN KASTE

Ole O. Kaste was born September 28, 1842 in Kaste, Gol, Hallingdal, Norway and came to America in 1869 settling in...
Pine Creek, Iowa where he lived until 1880. Guri Viddsen was born in 1860 in Gol, Hallingdal, Norway and came to America in 1879 with her parent, Helge Olson Viddsen and Gunhild Loken Viddsen, brother Ole and two sisters Gunhild and Oline. In 1881 her sister, Ingrid came; and in 1882 her sisters Anne and Margit came to America.

On May 5, 1880 Guri and Ole were married in Iowa, and afterwards they left with friends and relatives on their way to the Fertile community. The trip by covered wagon took five weeks. They homesteaded 160 acres in Garfield Township, about five miles northeast of Fertile, where they farmed and raised a family. Their first home was a log house and later a two-story frame house was built. They were charter members of Little Norway Church which was organized July 6, 1880 at Torger Ostgaardson’s house. The Kastes had eleven children, three of whom died at an early age: Oscar, the oldest, was killed by lightning when he was seventeen years old; Albert died of rheumatic fever when he was sixteen years old, and Nora died at age one. The other children were Mrs. Emil (Clara) Erickson, Mrs. Arne (Tina) Bolstad, Mrs. Nille (Julia) Bolstad, Iver, Gilbert, Otto, Mrs. Albert (Nora) Dahle, and Mrs. Otto (Oline) Nelson. Only the two latter are still living. Guri died in 1924 and Ole in 1928.

SAMUEL CALVIN LA DUE

One of Fertile’s early school teachers and postmasters was Samuel Calvin La Due. He was born in a frontier town on the Iowa prairies in 1867 at Plymouth, near Mason City, though his father, Calvin, was then the first minister at Manson, Iowa. When he was twelve years old, he came to Polk County when his parents, Reverend Calvin and Marilda (Sanford) La Due and young children came north to take up claims on the Crookston Prairie in 1879. They came with his uncle John S. La Due and family and also the aging grandparents, the Reverend Samuel Peters La Due and Sarah M. (Wright) La Due, formerly from New York State. They all came north to take government claims and help tame another wilderness.

Uncle John’s cabin was built first in what is now called “La Due Grove” and they all crowded into that one house the first winter. Clearing the land for farming and growing their food for those first years was time consuming and hard work. Before they could get much started the first winter they lived mostly on rabbits they hunted and rutabagas they grew, as Nelson, the youngest son of Calvin, heard the story later!

During these first hard years while Sam’s father, Calvin, farmed and was the first minister at Fertile’s beginnings; three more brothers and sisters were born. Sam had been teaching in one-room country schools, as well as in Fertile, but he then decided to go to the University of Minnesota to become a civil engineer. During his first term, he caught scarlet fever and came home. His father caught it from him and died in 1891. Thereafter, Sam felt it necessary to stay home and help his mother raise the family. They sold the claim, moved into Fertile and built a log house on the south edge of town, on what became Polk Street. He continued to teach and eventually built a two-story house across the street from the early log house, now 109 Polk Street. Samuel became postmaster in 1906, having helped his two brothers, Thomas and Nelson, to become dentists and his sisters through high school to become self-supporting teachers; he married at the age of forty to start his own family.

Samuel married Gertrude May Black in 1907. She had come to Fertile in work as organizer for her Free Methodist Church in northern Minnesota. Mildred was born in 1909 and when Samuel lost his job as postmaster in 1912 due to a change in political parties, he bought back his father’s claim west of Fertile and returned to farming. A second child, Ethel, was born in 1913 in the small house Sam built almost on the original site of his father’s first log cabin. Later he acquired a house nearer the road. This was a return to almost pioneer living conditions and removed work. It was a one-half mile walk through woods and fields to Lone Oak School, a one-room grade school north of Fertile. This was too much for small children in bad weather and although parents took turns driving and taking them, they missed many days of school in the winter.

During World War I both Sam and Gertrude returned to teaching in country schools, the girls going to school with their mother out on the Beltrami prairie. Then son Milton was born in 1921; and soon after, Sam decided to go to truck-farming in a tourist region. He moved to Park Rapids onto seven acres where he raised strawberries and kept bees the rest of his life.

Samuel C. La Due was a quiet, intellectual type of man. He read a lot on science and once invented a special kind of ruler. He was a good father who tried to do the best he could for his family and realized few of his own personal ambitions. He died in 1942, while Gertrude survived him for nearly twenty-five years. Gertrude once wrote a sketch of her life she called, “From Ox-Cart to Jet” and this well described the span of her life.

Mildred and Ethel married brothers, Sidney E. and Lee O. Mead: Milton married Anna Nell Reynolds and had six children: Russell, Terry, Geoffry, Kieth, Celia and Samuel, and one grandchild, son Kieth’s son Daniel. All of these descendants of Samuel and Gertrude La Due are living in 1975.

HANS H. LARSON

Mr. and Mrs. Hans H. Larson, a sailor, immigrated to America from Norway. They settled in Racine, Wisconsin. Later they moved to Fillmore County, Minnesota. In the late 1870’s, they moved to Fertile, Minnesota to a farm in Garfield Township. They had three sons, Oscar, Herbert and Edwin and four daughters. Edwin died in 1905 at the early age of 20 years. After the death of Hans, Oscar and Herbert bought the farm. Mrs. Johanna Larson lived part time with her sons and also in a small house nearby. They were members of the Little Norway Lutheran Church. She died in 1918.

Oscar was born in Racine, Wisconsin. He moved with his parents to Minnesota in the late 1870’s. He married Margit Sonstol in 1907. Margit came to America from Norway with her sister, Thea, and brother, Halvor. Oscar and Margit had six sons: Walter, John, George, Henry, Morris and Orvin. They were members of the Little Norway Lutheran Church, Fertile, Minnesota.

Oscar and Margit moved to Bear River, St. Louis County in 1909 and there they homesteaded and built a one-room log house with dirt floor. Oscar cut and carried logs to where the house was built. They lived there four years and then they moved back to Fertile, Minnesota, where he farmed fifty-three acres which he bought from his parents’ homestead. He farmed with a team of horses and a walking plow. Herbert bought the remaining acre of the land. Oscar lived there until his death in June, 1917. Their son, Walter, died in September, 1918 at the age of eleven. Margit, alone and without any transportation, raised her family. Orvin, the youngest, was born four months after she lost her husband. She counted on her neighbors for rides to town to buy groceries and deliver the cream. She had a school house moved to the farm and remodeled into a house. She died in March, 1927. The oldest boys went out to work and the youngest stayed with relatives. The farm was rented out for a number of years. In 1932, John farmed it until 1938, when it was sold to Oscar’s brother, Herbert. John Larson bought a 280-acre farm in Garden Township in 1938. He sold it in 1968 and moved to Fertile, Minnesota. He married Clarinda Lewis in 1935. They have two daughters and two sons.

HELMER J. LARSON

Halmer J. Larson was born September 11, 1890, the son of Jacob and Elsie Larson in Twin Valley, Minnesota. He spent his youth working on farms in the area, learning automobile mechanics through an apprenticeship in Western North Dakota, and eventually passing the test and obtaining a license to operate a steam engine. He operated a “threshing rig” up and down the valley during the harvest season.

On November 18, 1915 he married Emily P. LaFlash, daughter of George LaFlash and Clara Kingslien LaFlash
Berg of Hillsboro, North Dakota. Emily and Helmer were married by Reverend Henderlie at Ada, Minnesota. Emily's stepfather, J. B. Berg, was the owner-proprietor of the Meat Market in Hillsboro.

After the Larsons were married they farmed near Ada and Gary, Minnesota. In 1922 the family moved to Hillsboro. In 1924 Helmer purchased the dray line which at that time consisted of a team of horses, gravel, dump wagon and runners. In subsequent years the dray line was modernized with Model T and Model A trucks. Every year at harvest season the "threshing run" was made.

Mr. Larson was an advocate of youth recreation, serving as manager of the local baseball team, flooded the skating rinks in winter, helped build a ski slide, assisted in building and maintaining the swimming pool, and helped construct a golf course.

In 1940 farm life again beckoned, and the family moved around to various farms in the area. In 1951, the Larsons purchased a quarter of a section of land on Rural Route #2 in Fertile, Minnesota. They had a large herd of cows, and sold milk to the local creamery. They saw farm machinery advance from the horse drawn, to the steam, to the diesel driven, and never ceased to marvel at the advances in farming methods. In the later years they sold the dairy herd, leased the farm, spent the winters in Olympia, Washington, but enjoyed the summer living on the farm and the visits of family and friends.

Mr. Larson passed away in June, 1967, the farm was sold and Mrs. Larson now resides in Hillsboro, North Dakota.

Ten children were born to the Helmer Larsons: Gilman, Downer's Grove, Illinois; Mrs. William Beck (Cleo), Fargo, North Dakota; Mrs. John Raymond (Bernice), New Orleans, Louisiana; Merl, Spring Lake Park, Minnesota; Mrs. Warren Miller (Elsie), East Grand Forks, Minnesota; Mrs. Charles Allert (Hazel), St. Paul Park, Minnesota; Odin, Portland, North Dakota; Mrs. John Zimmerman (Phyllis), Alliance, Nebraska; Victor, Saukville, Wisconsin; Lyle, Racine, Wisconsin.

LUDVIG AND EMMA LARSON

Ludvig Larson (May 5, 1873-October 21, 1949) was the son of Jacob Larson who was born in Oie Voss, Norway and of Brita and Trefald Larson, who was born at Vik Sogn, Norway. Jacob came in 1861 to America and from 1862-65 he served in the Union Armed Forces 10th, Minnesota Regiment under General Smith. It was in 1862 that his regiment chased westward the Sioux Indians who had molested and killed some 450 white settlers in southern Minnesota.

Jacob and Brita were married in Dodge County, Minnesota July 4, 1867. They lived until 1882 on a farm where some of their children were born. That year, they acquired homestead rights on land in (now Garfield township) five and one-half miles northeast of Fertile. Here they farmed in the 80's, 90's and early 1900's. They built sturdy farm buildings still being used. Eight of the ten children grew to womanhood and manhood. They were members of the Little Norway Congregation where Brita was one of the Ladies Aid founders. They are all deceased.

Emma Juelson Larson (September 23, 1881-August 28, 1968) was the daughter of Hans Juelson, who was born in Aurdal Valdres, Norway, and of Eli Juelson who was born in Vosenvangen, Norway. Hans served in the Union Forces during the Civil War as a calvaryman. Eli was a dressmaker by trade in Madison, Wisconsin. Hans and Eli were married in Otter Tail County, Minnesota where they farmed before moving to their claim near Fertile. Having a good education in Norway, and America, Hans served the community as chairman of Sundal township, and county commissioner of Norman county and as state representative. He was one of the founders of the Lutheran Church at Fertile, which is now called Concordia. Eli and Hans had seven children, all deceased. Ludvig was born in 1893. They lived at Mayville, the Lutheran faith in Dodge County, Minnesota and he was confirmed in the Little Norway Lutheran Church near Fertile. Emma was born in Norman County and baptized and confirmed at the Fertile Lutheran Church. They were married on November 15, 1899 at the Juelson home in the presence of many relatives and friends. A bountiful dinner was served to all guests. The invited guests didn't come empty-handed but brought gifts of fur, leather, linens, silver and dishes for housekeeping. There were also cows and horses for farming.

Nine children were born to them but two died in infancy. The children were baptized in the Lutheran faith, and the seven living were confirmed at the Little Norway Church near Fertile. The seven children attended the Fertile High School and graduated even though we lived five and one-half miles from town. This was quite a sacrifice for our parents in many ways. During the week, much food in large quantities was prepared to fill the food boxes that we brought with us as we roomed and boarded ourselves during the week. I have often thought what warmhearted folks Fertile had to take us country kids in over a period of eighteen years from one family.

These are the seven children, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Bertha born December 1900 married Leo Laurin of Argyle in 1928. Leo is deceased. Bertha taught for a number of years in Minnesota schools.

Helen born January 31, 1905 married Gustav Gunderson of Buxton, North Dakota in 1935. Gustav is deceased. Helen is a University of North Dakota graduate and taught for twenty-four years in Minnesota and North Dakota schools. She was born in Marshall County and resides in Fertile.

Lloyd E. born February 21, 1907 married Alma Haugen, daughter of Osten and Adina Haugen in 1935. They farm in Garden Township. Lloyd was born in Marshall County. Their children are Mrs. Darrel (Glora) Ruud, a Concordia College graduate, they have three children, Nancy, Kathy and Darin. Their son Jerome married Connie Mosher. They farm in Garden township. Jerome has three children, Timothy, Melissa, and Julie, a Korean girl. Their son Charles, a University of Minnesota graduate and a Master's Degree from Columbia University of New York, lives and works in New York.

Joseph A. was born September 22, 1908, married Josephine Dambro in 1933. They live at Mayville, North Dakota and own an implement business and farm. Their daughter Mrs. Herman (Jacqueline) Kresback is a University of Minnesota graduate. They have two children Mark and Michelle. They live at Stacyville, Iowa.

Hazel born June 29, 1912, married Martin Throne in 1933. Hazel is a Winona State University graduate, and she is completing her sixteen years of teaching at Pratts, N.D.

These are the Martin Throne children and grandchildren:
Mrs. John (Lois) Duff. They have two children, Mrs. Robert Yoder and John Duff. They live at Fort Myers, Florida. Richard is married to Karen Sunde. They have six children: Michael, Robin, Carol, Myrna, Bryan and Teresa. They live at Scarville, Iowa and farm there. Mrs. Robert (Marlene) Sorenson. They have two children, Scott and Karen. They live at Decorah, Iowa. Mrs. James (Audrey) Whitney. They have two children, Connie and Cynthia. They live at Fort Myers, Florida. Mabel born July 23, 1916, married Elmer Hanson in 1939. They have one son, Duane. They live northwest of Fertile and are engaged in farming. Part of their land is the old homestead.

Arnold born October 12, 1918, married A. Dagmar Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Soren Smith, Nielsville, Minnesota, in 1946. They reside on their farm in Garfield Township. They have six children: Mrs. Gregg (Anita) Andres who attended University of Minnesota and works for Northwestern Bell
Telephone Company, St. Cloud, Minnesota; Mrs. Mark (Vickie) DeSchane is a graduate of Moorhead State University and lives in Minneapolis. Jeffrey is a student at Lee County Technical School, Fort Myers, Florida. Rosalyn is a student at St. Cloud University. James and Donald are students at the Fertile-Beltrami School.

With the exception of a few years, Ludvig and Emma lived their early married life on their farm (land purchased from his father, Jacob) five and one-half miles northeast of Fertile. They were active members of the Little Norway Church. With very few modern conveniences they struggled along raising their seven children, and doing many menial tasks. There was the clearing of the land of forest and chopping of cord-wood. I recall the long rows of cord-wood piled along the driveway. It was hauled to town during the winter months by horses and sled. When the ruts were deep, the wood would start sliding off and it had to be piled upon the sled. Farming was diversified, and so we raised cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens. There were field patches of wheat, corn, barley, oats and hay. The wheat was ground into flour at the Fertile Mill, and the other grain was ground at the feed mill for the stock. From about 1916 to 1930 we raised from ten to forty acres of potatoes per year. We children did the picking, father did the digging and the hauling, and mother the housework and the milking of cows. Later in the fall father would haul two loads per day of potatoes at first with wagon and horses and later by truck. Potatoes had to be sacked most of the time and so it was mother's duty to expertly sew the sacks shut. Farming was a family project and we all pitched in. The house was constructed in 1910, silo in 1918, and a modern barn in 1924.

TOMAS AND SIGRID LENSEGRAV
Among the earliest settlers in the Fertile, Minnesota area were Tomas and Sigrid Lensegrav, who came from Drengetal in Telemarken, Norway, to settle in the Kenyon, Minnesota, area in 1845. They moved to Fertile in 1879. Their children (some of them, then married) moved there with them. The Lensegravs built a log cabin in 1879, the first abode erected in the area. It was built on the Sand Hill River near the present Highway 32, railroad under-pass one-half mile south of Fertile. It had a barn and other farm buildings near the Old Mill, a beautiful setting reminding them of Norway. Ole Hamery and wife, Johanna, a Lensegrav daughter, spent the winter 1879-80 in a sod house, as did several other settlers. Their son, George, born April 5, 1881, was the first white child born at Fertile. The First National Election in the area was held at the Lensegrav house in 1880, when Garfield was a candidate. At the same time they organized their Township and named it Garfield.

Tomas and Sigrid were married in Norway in the same church where they were both baptized and confirmed, and they left for America on their honeymoon. They had a large family, at least thirteen children. The twentieth and thirteenth children were named Elenora, Tolenia and Tortine. Several of the children died in infancy but at least three boys: John, Enert and Halvor and five girls: Johanna, Julia, Mary, Elenora and Andrina lived to adulthood. Johanna married Ole Hamery, Julia became Mrs. Johnson of Fertile, Mary became Mrs. Ole Torvestad and Elenora married Lars Gulseth. Julia and her husband adopted a boy named Frank, who graduated from Fertile High School. He became an instructor in music and made a name for himself in the California public schools.

John Torvestad, a son of Ole Torvestad, graduated from Fertile High School about 1912. He became an attorney and was employed in Washington, D.C. Elenora married Lars Gulseth and they settled in Tynsid, Township, Fisher, Minnesota. Several children were born to this union namely: Martin, Alfred, Julia, Louise and Hannah. Martin married Christina Christianson of Crookston and they had Orville, Evelyn, Maurice, Leslie and Alice. Julia married Leonard Henrikson of Crookston and became the parents of: Elnora, Harold, Emma and Luverne. Louise married Bernt E. Bredlie of Eldred in 1901 and they purchased a farm one-quarter mile southeast of Eldred. They had two children, Elmer who lives on the home place and Lillian Bredlie Gorter, who lives a quarter mile north of Eldred.

Now back to the Lensegrav log cabin tucked into a cozy spot on the Sand Hill River. When the Northern Pacific Railroad came through in 1886, a huge embankment was built separating the house from the farm yard. In modern times there would be an underpass or the house would be moved, but there it was, literally a huge barricade leaving the house stranded. The Lensegravs crawled up that embankment to cross the tracks, to crawl down a longer steep embankment on the south side to go to the barn, to do chores, to do farm work, to go to church or school, go shopping or visiting, or for visitors to come see them. The Lensegravs did not complain and never seemed disturbed by the inconvenience. As time went on the young people left and the old folks lived there to a ripe old age. Tomas died first, when he had suffered exposure and fatigue after he had become tangle in the fence along the railroad, through which they often crawled to do farm work. Sigrid was hit by a freight train which he did not hear on a windy day. She was standing on the tracks calling to Andrina doing chores in the barn. The train came to a stop, and the railroad crew brought her into her house, where she died immediately.

A typical pioneer couple they were and their place should have been preserved as a landmark! Tomas was a Civil War Veteran, a peppy fellow who was always willing to lend a hand. Sigrid always had room in her heart for all who came by. An Indian squaw gave her a tiny beaded bag in appreciation of some kindness. Sigrid always said, "They were as hungry as we were, and we always shared."

ANDRES O. AND INGRID MORVIG
Andres O. Morvig was born in the district of Bergen, Norway, December 19, 1848. He came to Freeborn County, Minnesota, in 1873. In 1877 he returned to Norway but came back the year after accompanied by his brother, Askell.

In June, 1879, Andres and Askell came to Garfield Township and took claim on land in Section 27. Claims were filed at the land office in Crookston. They lived in a sod house while breaking sod and improving their homesteads; cutting trees to build their log houses. In 1879-1880, there were six homes being lived in through that winter. Andres O. Morvig, Knute Nelson and Peer Stromme were the committee formed to organize the township of what is now Garfield. The meeting was on September 13, 1880, a few weeks before the general election. The name was taken from the then President-elect, Garfield. About forty settlers assembled for this meeting.

Andres O. Morvig married Ingrid Viden Myhre, a widow. She was born at Vidden Gol, Hallingdal, Norway, on July 18, 1859. Andres O. Morvig was the first judge of Garfield Township and was also town constable, supervisor, treasurer and school board member. Morvig was on the boards of Garfield Farmers Elevator and Mercantile Co., Fertile Cooperative Creamery, Farmers Cooperative Produce and Farmers State Bank. By 1916, Andres owned more than a section of land. During this time, Andres built and paid for a bridge across the
Sand Hill river at Alda.

Anders and Ingrid Morvig had eleven children and Ingrid’s daughter by her first marriage, Nels Myhre: Olava, born 1882 and married to Haugen; Clara, born 1885, and married to Gerhard Gredevig; Anna Maria, who died in 1886; Mathilda, born 1887 and married to Jens Gronvold. Alfred, born 1888, and married to Mabel Johnson; Olaf, born 1890 and married to Ella Johnson. Ida, born 1892 and married to Nels E. Nelson; Karl Theodore, born 1894 and died in youth 1915; Ivar Andreas, born 1897 and died in 1966; Lloyd, born 1899, and married to Amy Lundby; Melvin, born 1901, and died in 1935; Edwin, born 1903 and died in 1962.

Andres O. Morvig died at his home on October 4, 1942, at the age of 94 years. Ingrid Morvig, his wife, died April 18, 1930, at the age of 71 years.

Ida Morvig Nelson, now 82 years old, lives in her own apartment. Ida Nelson has ten grandchildren and two granddaughters.

LLOYD H. MORVIG

Lloyd Herman Morvig was born June 14, 1899. His parents, Anders and Ingrid Morvig were among the first settlers of Garfield, Fertile in the early 1870’s. Lloyd attended “Lake View” Country school and has been a life-long member of the Little Norway Lutheran Church near Fertile.

In 1925, on June 4, he married Amy Sylvia, daughter of Elmer and Maria Lundby of Fertile. They have two children: Leroy Alden, a farmer living in Garden Township; and Mrs. Iva Broske living in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Mr. Morvig has farmed most of his life and they have lived on their farm in Garfield Township except for eighteen years when they lived in St. Paul. Mr. and Mrs. Morvig have owned their farm since 1931. On June 15, 1975, Mr. and Mrs. Morvig celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary at Little Norway Lutheran Church.

EINER (BOLSTAD) NELSON

Einer was a Bolstad when he came to the United States. His name was changed to Nelson as his father was Nels Bolstad. Einer, one of the early settlers in the now Garfield Township, Polk County, came here with his brother, Uncle Lars Bolstad from Dodge County, Minnesota in May 1879.

He and his brother, Carl, farmed in Crookston; they secured plots of what is now the four townships of Garfield, Garden, Spring Creek and Sundal. They selected land in what is now the Township of Garfield, May 17, 1879, filing their claims two and one-half days later in Crookston. After building sod huts and doing some breakings, Bolstad and Einer Nelson returned to Dodge County, leaving Knute to take care of their claims. He married Kari Opheim there and returned to his homestead in Polk County. Einer was born in Voss, Norway, January 13, 1855; Kari was born in Dodge County, May 8, 1858. To them were born eight children: Rosa (Mrs. Ed Hamre); Elsa (Mrs. Edward Storing); Nels E. Lars; Gurina (Mrs. Lewis Johnson); Clara (Mrs. Louis Boileau); Arne E.; and Norman died as a youth. As of 1975 this family are all deceased.

In 1909-1910 sons, Lars and Arne, went to Saskatchewan, Canada and homesteaded about 70 miles from North Battleford. In 1913 and 1920 Gurina and Clara and their husbands went to settle in Canada — farming, too.

Rosa married Edward Hamre and lived on farms in Liberty Township and in the McIntosh area, Polk County, all of their lives. Ellen, a seamstress, married Ed Storing from Norway; they lived and died in Minneapolis. Nels married Ida Morvig on July 9, 1913. They lived on the family farm and took over the farm after Einer’s death in 1917. They carried on diversified farming operations until Nels’ death in 1951. There are eight children from this marriage (2 having died as babies): Ernest, Irene, Norma, Edith, Robert and Rose; Ernest who married Gladys Carlson; Robert who married Shirley Wagesland. Irene married Melfred Roragen; they farmed in Garfield Township; they are active members of Little Norway Church and in community affairs. Edith married Melvin Rocker; they live on a grain farm near Lockhart, Minnesota, Norman County. Norma married Ned Boyce; they live near Horsehead Lake, Parkers Prairie, Minnesota where he is a rural mail carrier. Rose married Don Sorben; they live in Fergus Falls where he is employed by Mid-American Dairy and Rose is a salesperson at the Bible Book and Gift Store.

In 1958, sons Ernest and Robert bought the original farm. Ernest lives in the same house his grandfather built. Robert’s home is an adjoining land that Einer’s Uncle Lars Bolstad has as his homestead. Ernest and Robert have two sons each, so they hope for a fourth generation to remain on these farms. They have a Grade A Dairy and grain farm.

Einer’s brothers and sisters were Dr. Arne Nelson, a doctor, who also established a drugstore in Garfield Township, Fertile; Knute, who was a postmaster in Fertile; Mrs. Erick Dahle, Guri, a farmer’s wife in that area; Mrs. Lars Knutson, Bertha (she and her husband had a general merchandise store); Dr. Nels Nelson (Moland); and Lars (Bolstad) Nelson, a soldier in Spanish American War.

KNUT OPHEIM

Knut Opheim was born at Opheim in Voss, Norway, on September 20, 1872 and immigrated to America in 1871. He sailed on the “Caspianian”, landed in Minneapolis, Minnesota and moved West to Dodge County, Minnesota. He married Martha Sjurdsatter Brekhus in 1876. In the spring of 1880, they came to Polk County and homesteaded in Section 27, Garfield Township. Knut was a farmer and active in township, school and church. He helped organize the Little Norway Church in 1880 and Evanger Church in 1890 and the First Evanger in 1920.

Knut’s wife died in 1917 and he lived until 1930. He was 78 years. Their eight children: Axel, who married Otto Stangeland; Sivert, who married Lena Aune; Albert, who married Alice Mahlund; Otto, who married Louise Iverson; Bertha, who married Ole Lutnes; Marie, who married Louis Bolstad; Martha, who married Martin Iverson; and Hilmen.

RONGENS

Johannes Rongen and his wife Agatha Bjorge, with their two children, Synneva and Brynje, came from Voss, Norway to Big Canoe, Iowa. From there they migrated by covered wagon to Fertile, Minnesota with two more children, Lars and Ole. They settled on a tract of land, Section 9 in Garfield Township in Polk County. The land was granted by President Grover Cleveland in 1886. They lived in a log house while homesteading. In 1894 they built the first frame house in the area. In 1896, Johannes built the only completely round barn in the area. Both the house and the barn are still being used and in very good condition.

To this union another child was born, a daughter, Inga. They all grew up here and attended the Little Norway Church and Lone Oak School. Synneva married E. P. Roragen and they raised a family of eleven. Brynje, or Brown as he was called, married Clara Osgarden and they have four daughters. Ole married Anna Duckstad and they have two children. They moved to the state of Washington. Ole’s sister, Ingna, married David Carlson and they have four children. Lars married Martha Brudvig and they have five children.

Johannes still had two granddaughters, Norma and Betty, and went to the state of Washington where he homesteaded some land. He started and built a church in Olalla, Washington. Their daughter, Inga, went with them and there she met husband to be, Dave Carlson. Johannes made a couple of trips to the West Coast. He and his wife died in 1921. His son, Ole and family moved to Olalla and bought the Johannes’ land and lived there until his death.

Lars bought the homestead in 1918, which he farmed with his son, Arthur. Lars and his wife had five children; twin daughters died in infancy, another daughter died when she was four years old as well as his wife, at the age of twenty-six years. He was left with two sons, John Alvin and Arthur. John Alvin, the oldest son, joined the army and served his country for thirty-one years. He married Floy Smith and lived in Los Angeles until his death in 1971. He had no children.
Lars, before his marriage, attended Fertile High School and a business school in Grand Forks. He was a director at The Farmer’s State Bank, the Farmers Elevator, Creamery Board, Shipping Association and as trustee for the Little Norway Church.

Arthur farmed with his father until his father’s death in 1959. Arthur tells that his grandmother told about Indians coming to the well to get water and hunt for roots; she was very frightened lest they would want to come in the house. Arthur also remembers peddlers and tramps would come for hand-outs and to sell articles. He says, “Those were the days of steam threshing and going to the neighbors for threshers coffee.” He also talks about the sleigh riding days.

Arthur married Hilma Gredvig in 1930. They raised a family of five. He went to Lone Oak School also and served on the school board. He also belongs to Little Norway Church. He was baptized and confirmed there, as were his children. The children all belonged to the Fertile 4-H Club. The three sons all served their country, Arvid in the Army during the Korean War. Charles and Douglas in the Marines, Charles in the Puerto Rico and Douglas in Okinawa.

Arvid married Bev Hornseth of Thief River Falls. They have three children, Shannan, Peder and Kristopher. They live in Auburn, Washington. Arvid works in refrigeration and air conditioning and Bev works for the County Welfare Department.

Marlys married Howard Lee of Portland, North Dakota, where they reside. They have one child, Cal Ray, who is attending Rainy River Community College at International Falls. Marlys is a beautician and Howard is in grain farming.

Charles married LaVerne Helgaas. They have a family of five: Barry, Tommy, Lisa, Daniel and Kirk. Charles is the manager of Fert-L-Flow. They live in Crookston, Minnesota. He belongs to the Jaycees, the Colonels and he was a candidate for King Agassiz.

Judith married Marilyn Sandness and they reside in Fertile. They have four children: Mark, Lionel, Dione and Melissa. Marilyn and Judy run the Texaco Station as a family project.

Douglas married Bonnie Buck of Sebeka, Minnesota, and they live on the homestead land with their two sons, Wade and Aaron. They are the fifth generation to have lived on this farm. Douglas is farming the 160-acre farm plus rented land. He has beef cattle and hogs and grows grain and corn. He bought the farm in 1972. His wife, Bonnie, taught Home Economics in the Fertile-Beltrami School.

His father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Rongen, are living in a mobile home on the farm. They are grateful for this, as Art is semi-retired and they are enjoying it.

HENRY L. RUDE

Henry L. Rude was born in Garfield Township and grew to manhood in that area. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Rude, (Antonette Nelson). His mother came over from Sweden with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gustava Nelson, brothers Victor and Pete. She was born May 17, 1878 and passed away in the spring of 1943.

John, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Rude, was born December 16, 1870 in Iowa. He died in the fall of 1947. He had one brother, Albert; two sisters Lena (Mrs. Eric Erickson); Nora (Mrs. Carl O. Johnson). Mr. and Mrs. John Rude married in 1894.

Henry had five brothers, William, Reynold, Alfred, Elmer and Arnold. He had four sisters; Edith who passed away in childhood; Clara (Mrs. Arthur Olson), Mable (Mrs. Otto Eidinger), and Violet Sykes. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rude (Ida L. Lewis) were married at Crookston, Minnesota November 24, 1920. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lewis (Minnie Garness). Ida was born at Thompson, Iowa December 16, 1897. Her father was born at Sogn, Norway. He came to America at the age of sixteen with a sister. Her mother was born in Iowa. The family moved to the Ada-Lockhart area about 1902.

In 1910, Ida Lewis’ father bought the Chris Olson farm in Garfield township. In later years this farm was worked by her brothers, but most recently the Arthur Lewis family have owned and lived there many years. Ida had six brothers, Elmer, Chester, Oliver, Oscar, Arthur and Walter; two sisters, Clarinda (Mrs. John A. Larson), and Evelyn (Mrs. Sander Horn).

In 1927, Ida and Henry Rude moved their family to the Ole Rude farm in Garfield Township. They were members of the Faaberg Church at Rindal. Their children went to District #72 school. In the spring of 1935, the family moved to a farm southeast of Winger; again in the fall, to the Gunner Hagen farm near Union Lake. Their children attended the District #14 school. In those days Saturday night at Fertile was looked forward to by the whole family!

In 1943, the family moved again, living on several farms until finally on the Grambo farm in 1946. This farm is located north of Winger and was homesteaded by Martin Ostby. There they joined the Gosen Lutheran Church.

Henry and Ida had six children: three boys and three girls: Alvin, Mylen, Irene, Blanche, Erwin and Edna. There were nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Alvin, wife Beverly Evansen, with children: Kimberly (Mrs. Ed Murphy) and son John; Mylen, wife Hermina VandenEinde, with children: Steven, Liane, Keven, Allen and Darrin; Irene (Mrs. Arnold Anderson) with children: Gary, Susan, Gail and Marilyn; Erwin, wife Ann Salverson, with children: Jerry, David, Cindy, Randy, Quailly, Steven, Terri-Ann and Wade Rude; Edna (Mrs. Ervin Helgaas) with children: Cheryl (Mrs. Ronnie Wang), Randy, Eileen, Kathryn and Rodney.

On December 12, 1962 their home burned down and a new house was built in 1963. Ida passed away June 21, 1969 and Henry passed away August 2, 1972. Their final resting place is Gosen cemetery.

ANTON SWENSON

In the year 1880 Johannes and Anna Lisa Lundin, who had migrated from Sweden to southern Minnesota, left Sibley County by covered wagon arriving in Garfield Township three weeks later. They settled on the homestead which Johannes had filed papers for during the previous year. In 1881 Mr. Lundin became a charter member of St. John’s Lutheran Church.

In the meantime Anton Theodor Swenson, born in Guillababy, Sweden, on February 5, 1865, had heard the call of America, the land of hope and opportunity. He arrived in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1888 and after spending a year there settled in Fertile, where he went to work for Johannes Lundin and later married Mr. Lundin’s daughter, Elisabeth. The Swenson farm was purchased from Elisabeth’s father. Anton Theodor became a member of St. John’s Lutheran Church in 1898.

Eleven children were born to Elisabeth and Theodor, seven
of whom are living. August and his wife live on their farm in Norman County. Elaine and her husband, Harold Sirjord, reside on their farm near Bejou. Carl and his wife Margie, live on their farm in Montello, Wisconsin. Bernard, an ordained minister, now retired following several years of directorship in International Child Evangelism Fellowship in the Scandinavian countries and Germany, lives with his wife, Harriet, in Molalla, Oregon. William and his wife, Iva, live near California but have close ties in Fertile. Leonard whose twin brother, Raymond, is deceased, is now retired and lives with his wife, Charlotte, in Fertile. He also runs his farm in Norman County. Evelyn and her husband, Raymond McBurney, live on their farm in Garden Township.

It is interesting to know more about the origin of the A. T. Swenson family which goes back into Sweden. We are indebted to Harriet and Bernard Swanson formerly in Sweden for twenty years as directors of the programs of Child Evangelism Fellowship in the Scandinavian countries, for the historical facts and Swedish pictures that are here recorded.

A. T. Swenson's parents were Sven August Olsson and his wife, Kajaslena, who lived in Gullabybo, Smaland province, in southwest Sweden. As was customary in Sweden, Sven Olsson's sons took the father's first name, Sven, and added "son" to it thus getting the name Svensson which in the U.S. became Swenson. This then became Swenson and some of the family have changed it to Swanson to avoid mix-ups with so many Swensons.

The accompanying pictures (pictures 1 and 2) show the original home in which the children were born and raised and the smaller home built by Sven Olsson after some of the children had left for the United States.

There were five children born to Mr. and Mrs. Olsson all of whom migrated to America over a period of time. A. T. Swenson's brother, Elof, often spoke of the fun he and Anton had playing by a brook that ran by the houses. This brook is shown in the picture. (picture 3). Anton Theodor, the eldest of the children, came to America first, in 1888, and his brother Elof and sister, Ida, soon followed to Fertile. Elof and Ida, who became Mrs. E. G. Erickson, lived and raised families in this vicinity.

Elisabeth Lundin who became the wife of A. T. Swenson after she moved to Fertile from Sibley County with her parents, was born in 1871 after her parents, Johannes and Anna Lisa, had come to the U.S.A. four years earlier. Elisabeth was one of fourteen children born to the Lundins. Her father, Johannes, was born in 1835 in Hogsäter socken (township) in Sweden. Elisabeth's mother was born Anna Lisa Svensson (no relation) in 1838 in Färjeland, not far from Hogsäter in Dalsland province. The accompanying picture (picture 4) is of the lake and wooded area is near their home on the border of the city of Ed in Dalsland province. Johannes and Anna Lisa were married in Dalsland, Sweden on August 8, 1861 and came to the U.S.A. in 1867, settling in Girdon, in Sibley County, Minnesota, a few miles southwest of Minneapolis. They moved to Fertile thirteen years later as mentioned at the beginning of this report.

It may be of interest to mention Mrs. Ida Bergstrom, shown in the accompanying picture, (picture 5). Mrs. Bergstrom, whom the author of this book found quite a bit of time at their home, was very much with her mother who was a relative of the family by marriage and helped a great deal with the household work. Mrs. Bergstrom died in 1965 at the age of 93. Mrs. Bergstrom and Ida (Sven Olsson's daughter — later Mrs. E. G. Erickson) were close childhood and teenage friends. Evelyn Swenson McBurney and family, while on a visit to Sweden, were entertained by Mrs. Bergstrom in her home in Stockholm.

Elisabeth Lundin Swenson died on January 2, 1945. Her husband, Anton Theodor Swenson, died on February 1, less than one week prior to his ninety-sixth birthday.

The preceding was traced from the front page of Sven Olsson's Bible.

THORVALD TORPET
Thorvald Torpet was born near the copper mining town of Roros in Norway in 1852. His father worked as a miner. Tor

sons for an Englishman who captured and trained falcons which he shipped to England, where the lords used hawks for hunting.

After serving his time in army training, he worked for a time as a shoemaker's apprentice, then went to work in the timber, both in Norway and Sweden. Finally he worked on railroad construction. While working on the new Meraker branch he met his future wife, Elen Brende of Meraker.

Times were hard in Norway at that time; a scanty living was all a hard worker could expect, so Thorvald, like so many others, decided to emigrate. At first New Zealand was considered, but finally he and some friends signed up to work on the Canadian Pacific railroad, which was being built across Canada at that time.

However, when they arrived in the fall at Fort Garry, the work was shut down for the season, so they ended up in Crookston, where work was available on the section, mostly shoveling snow.

Polk County was opened for homesteading at that time, so in 1880 he filed on a homestead in Garfield township, Polk County. He and Albert Anderson built a log cabin straddling the line between their homesteads, each one living in his end of the cabin.

In the summer he worked on the railroad out of Beltrami, or Edna, under a foreman named Fitzpatrick. Torpet was the only Norwegian, the rest were Irish, so, of course, Thorvald became "Tom" from that day on.

In 1881 his parents, Ingebrit Haugen and Johanna Torpet, arrived from Norway with the rest of the family, Christen, Ingeborg, Berit and Marit. They settled in the area. Berit married Sven Kuraas, and Ingeborg became Mrs. Tuff.

In 1883, Elen Brende, from Meraker, came to join Mr. Torpet on the homestead. They were engaged before he left Norway, and waited until he had a home where they could start married life.

The homesteaders had a rugged struggle to survive, but they worked hard, and did not give up. Mrs. Torpet carried eggs and butter to Alda Valley, or the Ladue Grove to exchange for some of the most necessary items.

Before the railroad came to Fertile in 1886, wheat was hauled to Beltrami by oxen for sale, and usually to Red Lake Falls to be traded for flour.

The Torpets were members of the United Lutheran Church of Fertile, and attended regularly.

Nine children were born to the Torpets, six of whom grew to adulthood: Johanna, the oldest daughter, married Selmer Lien of Hazlet, Saskatchewan. They had two daughters, Thelma married Ed Colter. They had nine children, and many grandchildren. Phyllis married Orlie Robertson. They have two sons, as yet unmarried. Minnie, the youngest daughter, married Oscar Lien of Hazlet, Saskatchewan. They had two children. Dennis lives in Medicine Hat, Alberta, they have four boys; Janice married Ken Davies of Edmonton, Alberta, and they had two boys. Bertha married Oscar Gullickson of Fertile.

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They have three children. Ervin married Gertrude Nephew. They have six children and five grandchildren. Russell married Fay Gast. They have two boys, and one grandchild. Evelyn married Hector Huard. They live in Detroit Lakes and have three children. Sophus married Nellie Berg. They had one son, Allen who owns and farms the original homestead of his grandfather, Allen married Elaine Brown of Winter, Saskatchewan. They have two children, Todd and Terry. Thea and Edward never married. Of the nine children, only Bertha Gullickson and Edward Torpet survive. Thorvald Torpet died in 1930, and Elen in 1933. They helped to build a community and a nation.

Gentilly Township

Gentilly Township and Gentilly, the settlement village, in Polk County are made up mainly of descendants of the French Canadians who settled here in large numbers during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Nobody seems to know how the township or village got its name, but it most likely was named after Gentilly, Quebec, Canada where some of the early settlers came from.

The village of Gentilly is built along the Gentilly Creek which is one of the natural drainage systems of part of the township. There is also another natural coulee north and east of the village of Gentilly that is a natural drainage system. The natural elevation drop across the township linked with road and drainage ditches makes for a well drained township.

Gentilly township lies in the ancient bed of Lake Agassiz and the eastern part of the township makes up part of the Campbell Beaches. It has more types of soil than most towns.

The Pembina oxcart trail that crossed the Red Lake River at Huot headed across Gentilly Township in a southeasterly direction.

In 1873 a petition was signed to organize the township of Gentilly in Polk County. In 1874 the outline sections of Gentilly were surveyed. There were two different groups of surveyors that surveyed the township. The second group finished the township surveying a few years later.

In the spring of 1876 Joseph Beaudette came to the Red River Valley with some fifteen others, driving a team from St. Paul to Red Lake Falls. He took a claim of 160 acres in what is now Gentilly Township and put up a claim shanty. This is the first legal record of a claim and is recorded on page 475 in the Album of Biography by the Alden Eagle Company in 1889.

In 1878 the township of Gentilly was formally organized. Joseph Beaudette not only had the first claim shanty in Gentilly Township, but also had the first Homestead Patent in Polk County for Gentilly Township. (Homestead Patent dated September 4, 1879 — Whereby the United States of America gave and granted to Joseph Beaudette and his heirs and assigns the northeast quarter of section 30 in township of Gen-

tilly 150 N. Range 45 W. Filed for record March 1, 1880 — Book of Deeds, page 328.)

In 1879 J. B. Bottineau, son of famous Pierre Bottineau, brought 119 French families to settle in Gentilly Township and the Red Lake Falls area. Some of the prominent first settlers were Joseph Beaudette, Edward Lancot, Chas. Regimbald, Joseph Suave, Joseph Lafromeboise, Ted Arel, Basil Duval, J. B. Duval, Joseph Martel, Frs Pisinneault, Remi Fortier, and others. Some of the settlers homesteaded and others purchased land that was the odd sections from the Railroad Land Grant. After a dispute of title on the railroad land was settled in favor of the railroad, the railroad land was taken up fast.

Gentilly the inland village was a rest stop and a change over for horses for the stage line. The stage hauled passengers and mail seven days a week, weather permitting, from Crookston via Louisville on the east side of the river to Red Lake Falls. The Gentilly stop had a saloon, and eating and sleeping accommodations.

The first school was organized in the village February 4, 1880 and continued to operate until 1970. This school lasted longer than any other school located in the township. Most of the township schools consolidated with the Gentilly village school which had an average of 42 pupils in attendance from 1901-1969 when the school consolidated with the Crookston Public School system. The five school districts in the township were districts 1609, 1617, 153, 191, and 1665.

Rev. Theillon promoted diversified farming in Gentilly Township and started the Gentilly Dairy Cooperative. A cheese factory was built in the village and in the fall of 1899 went into production. Gentilly cheese took first prize at the Minnesota State Fair and also at the Dakota State Fair at Grand Forks, beating all old established cheeses. Cheese was made until 1948 when the Gentilly Dairy Association stopped making cheese. There is still some dairying in the township but most farmers now grow grain and some row crops.

A quiet winter day in Gentilly about 1908. Note the frame church in distance.

About 1914.
Gentilly Premium Cheese Home.

SAINT PETER PARISH HISTORY,
GENTILLY

The French were possibly the first white men to tread the Pembina Trail which then wound its way over the present territory of St. Peter's Parish of Gentilly.

But it appears that no permanent settlement of the white man was made until after the Old Crossing Treaty at the Red Lake River in 1863.

Bishop L. LaFleche of Three Rivers, Quebec, Canada, traveled from Fort Gary, Manitoba, along the Red River down to the Minnesota River in 1868, attending to the spiritual needs of the fur traders, some of them very likely to Polk County.

It is possible that settlers who came from the Parish of Gentilly on the right bank of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec gave this name to their new hamlet seven miles east of Crookston.

The first pastor and missionary of Red Lake Falls, Pierre B. Champagne, celebrated the first Mass in the Gentilly schoolhouse in 1880.

A small chapel and modest rectory were constructed in 1882, under the direction of Father Alexander Bouchard, the first resident pastor.

Father Clement Gamache enlarged the church in 1885. The parish at that time counted 118 families, comprising 769 souls, all of French-Canadian nationality except two Irish families. Bishop Rupert Seidenbusch of St. Cloud was the first Bishop to visit Gentilly in 1882. He confirmed 25 of the faithful in