

Dec. 1983

Dear Kathy and Paul,

Paul- when you asked me to remember some of the things our father had told us about the 'early days' of the Larson family I regretted again that I had not asked about more details that would have been so interesting. We appreciate so much the records Louise and Lori had compiled after the Re-union. We re-live that re-union often and thank God for the opportunity of being there. It was so uncertain if we would be able to go- the evening before leaving I still was not too sure. David had been having a queer kind of flu - the Dr. insisted it would be O.K. to go- we were glad we did! One of the memories Father had from Sweden was a touching one. The little sister that is not recorded in the State records- little Maria died when a few months old. I'm quite sure he said she died of whooping cough. Ofcourse medicine was scarce. They had no picture of her but father never forgot his little sister. For her little casket grandma had made a tiny pillow for her head. They had saved it and brot it with them to America. He said it looked almost like a little bird nest- grandma always kept it. He also recalled the big pear tree by their house full of ripe pears. A neighbor had given him a piece of money- about .50. Just before they got on the ship he spent it for pears!! Being as young as he was the trip didnt mean so much to him but he re-called the first nite in Iowa. There were two families traveling together. They had contacted a friend near Chariton who had assured them they would have a place to stay when they arrived. BUT they were all escorted to a hay loft in his barn. It was fall - a cold rain was leaking thru the roof. In the middle of the nite he remembered Kalle Brun (Charley Brown) shouting ' If I only had the address back to Sweden I would go' I'm not sure how soon their first log cabin was built on a small plot of ground north -east of Chariton. He remembered that first winter with a lot of snow and how grandfather walked 7 miles each day to cut one cord of wood - .75 -- then walk back the 7 miles. That was their only source of income. The two older girls soon found work in homes- which wasnt easy when they knew no English. Father baby sat for a family in town - probably got his meals. It was interesting to find out that one of the little girls became the wife a fine covenant pastor - Palmquist. when I attended Minnehaha Academy in Mpls. his son Herbert was my New Test. teacher. Isn't life interesting? He also recalled how his father would sometimes be able to buy a hogs head- they butchered only huge hogs! He would carry it home - miles - that was their only meat- .50 each! They soon raised enough corn to have corn meal and cane to make into a barrel of molasses each fall. It wasnt easy'. Emma G. was talking about it when I was there last Apr. She said she didn't think her mother ever knew her older sister Christine. She had gone away to work so young and then married and later moved to Clyde, Kan. and later to Texas. We have met all of her family except Oscar Cavillin

Father would tell how his sister - (I'm not sure which one) while working as hired girl in a home had to do the family washing , rubbing everything on a wash board - on the back porch when it was so cold she froze both feet. Father worked several years for a millionaire railroad owner- Mallery- near Chariton. He had no overshoes and he too froze his feet so bad the skin came off his heels. I remember how he suffered with his sore feet when weather got cold. Also remember his big felt boots. He thought that was the height of comfort. Also remember trying to get into his boots and falling backwards- much to my embarrassment and how he laughed when he picked me up!

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Father came out to Kan. and filed claim to a 160 A. homestead in 1885. He made a tiny dug-out into the hill side which was his home. He had gone back to Iowa and coming back to his home he wasn't sure just where to look for it- there were other tiny dug-outs here and there. He recognized his home when he saw a pair of boots his brother-in-law Noren had made. He soon became quite a 'carpenter' in building sod houses so mother moved into a sod house when they were married. Later they moved up further up on higher ground and built a very nice sod house- where I was born. It had lovely deep windows where mother always kept flowers all winter without any thought of freezing. He even made 'built in' cupboards into the wall between rooms. We had wooden board ceilings and wall papered walls. He built a lot of houses for the neighbors but think his was special! David says to mention he absolutely couldn't find money to pay taxes for three years and was considered leaving but finally he got \$10. which paid delinquent taxes for the 3 years and they went on from there!

I have rattled on-- if you come out some day we will show you some of the places we called 'home' for so many years. - Do come!

Elna Larson