

INTERVIEW WITH VICTOR LARSON & OSCAR SCHOLQUIST
BY LINA NELSON
IN 1972
WHERE ?

Q: ...1972. I am Lina Nelson and we're interviewing Victor Larson of Moonshine Township and Oscar Scholquist of Malta Township. They are sons of the pioneers of this area. And Mr. Larson, you said your father came in...

V: '73, I thought it was.

Q: And Oscar, your father came in...

O: '78

Q: '78 and they both homesteaded in this area. (Well, yeah) And they came and built their regular homestead shacks on this land. Alright, now we'll let you go on and tell about...

O: My Dad drove up from Stillwater with a team of mules and a wagon when they started out here and another man farmed together here for a year or so. They only had two mules so they couldn't...they had to work together. That Munson and my Dad.

V: You bet, yeah.

O: Afterwards when Munson got sick and died, he bought his mule and had the two of them. I suppose they had more afterwards, I don't know.

V: Yeah, Dad had a big team of mules...

O: A small team, I think.

V: Huh?

O: A big one and then a smaller team, I think he did didn't he?

V: Yeah.

O: He probably had more than that, I don't know.

V: He had one real big team of mules, they were very good walkers.

O: Yeah, I know Dad used to talk about them good mules he used to have.

Q: But Larson didn't get the quarter of land he thought he was going to have.

V: No, he got the one joining it on the east, with a awful big slough in it. When he come with the lumber and was going to build there and found out that was the quarter he got he was almost going to take the lumber back, but then he decided no. there's plenty land around here, so he went ahead and built and bought a little more.

Q: And how much land did he buy then?

V: Well, at first he bought, probably was this and then Munson's quarter and then later on bought more adjoining land.

Q: And so he had all totaled, how many quarter? (Seven quarters) and he farmed that with horses?

V: You bet, horses all together, quite different.

Q: How many horses did you have then?

Well, when they counted all of it, the horses, colts and all, 30 and 30...between 35 and 40 head always. We raised a few to sell too, of course. That's quite a bit of land to go over with horses. A little different.

Q: Yes, what did they raise mostly then?

V: Well, I guess it was wheat.

O: Wheat was the main thing.

Q: And then getting it to market, they hauled it...

V: You bet, they had to haul to Morris, there was no Ortonville, may be it was started just a little bit, well very little, Morris was...

O: Morris was the main town.

V: Yes, but that was small too, so the business town was Benson. We'd have to go way over to Benson, 50 miles away. No roads.

Q: That hauled their grain that far?

V: Well, now I think they hauled to Morris.

O: They hauled the grain to Morris, if they had any special business they had to go to Benson.

V: That's right, you bet.

O: I know my Dad used to say he'd walk over there quite often.

V: You bet, huh huh.

Q: That was fifty miles. (Just about.) That was a long way to go for supplies.

V: You bet it is.

O: And then the roads were so bad too, that...

V: Oh, yes, there weren't hardly any roads.

O: They had to pick trails through the country where ever they could go. And then there are so many sloughes out around the Chokio area that they'd have to get stuck out there and then they'd have to carry grain across the low places and reload it again.

V: Ya, that was something, you bet.

O: It's different now, you get in a truck and you get to town in a few minutes.

V: Yeah.

Q: And I think your fathers, then, both of them, were charter members of the Elum Lutheran Church of Clinton and they helped build and organize. (Yes they were, that's right.) Do you remember the first pastor?

(56--5 min.)

O: No, I don't.

V: No. Let's see, Cavalien (?).

O: He was one of the earliest. I think there was one ahead of him too.

V: Yes, there probably was. (Almein, I think maybe.)

O: Probably it was Almein.

V: I wonder who it was, probably it was.

Q: And they planned to build the church out west of Clinton, but then they decided to build it in town. You remember?

O: They figured there wasn't any people east of town to speak of, more of them west of town that belonged to the church at that time.

Q: Then they built it there on account of the railroad is that it?

O: I think so, I think that little church didn't cost so much, \$1,700.00 or something like that.

V: Yeah, lumber was cheaper, of course. It was something to get it through anyway, you got to hand it to them.

Q: That's for sure. And then your father built this barn. He hauled the granite from Ortonville for the foundation?

V: We shipped it up to Clinton and hauled it out. But that was with horses and we handled it all by hand, I mean no loaders or anything. It was quite different than now days.

Q: But it is granite from Ortonville (Yes) for the foundation?

Yes. We used an awful lot of field rocks too, all down in the ground, the field and half of it was mostly field rock. We shipped in nine carloads that we hauled out with horse too.

Q: And that was what year was that, do you remember?

V: Well, you see the stone wall was finished in 1912. We were hauling in '11, we hauled an awful lot.

Q: You built the house before?

V: Yes, yes, the barn was finished in '13, the framework, but the house, that was built in '95.

Q: '95. This was a large brick house, how many rooms?

V: Well, nine rooms, I guess. (I see, and you were...) I was just a kid then.

Q: So you don't really remember living in anything but this house do you?

V: Oh, yes, yes I do. I helped haul brick for the house here too. I was only eight years old. I drove the single team, the others had four-horse teams and we shipped the brick up to Graceville from the brick yard of Big Stone City. Oh, I shouldn't have, but I drove two horses anyway.

O: They drove when they were pretty young too, in them days.

V: What?

O: They drove horses when they was pretty young in them days, too.

Q: And how many were there in your family? There was six children?

V: Well, there was six, but I lost a brother and a sister, infants. (Oh) Yeah.

Q: I believe you have a little unique history too, I believe there are four of you brothers and sisters that have celebrated golden weddings. (Yeah,

that's right.) And now you have a son that's a pastor. (yes) You had three boys. (Three boys, yeah.) The older one is the pastor?

V: Yes, he is. Marlin is now at Strandberg(?) but he was out on the west coast a while ago. But it's handy now, he's close by.

Q: And then your Vincent is an instructor at...

V: Vincent is down at Evanston, Illinois, he's got a teaching job at Northwestern there, but he's going to move to Cleveland, Ohio this summer. (Oh) Yeah, he had it very good where he was, he had a nice home a Wanetca(?) but he bought a home at Cleveland or close by there. He hasn't sold the house yet but he said he didn't have any trouble. About a week ago, he called up...

Q: And then your younger son is here with you in the old home. (Yeah, that's right.) Now, Oscar, can you think of anything to tell about the other pioneers or about your folks?

(113--10 min.)

O: My mother come from St. Paul she was a Haslan. They lived down on that farm as long as they lived, both of them died out on the farm. And then afterwards, until a few years ago.

Q: And there were three children in your family?

O: Yeah, two...Bob and I and Estelle and then a half brother, Art and sister, half-sister, Olive. They all, they're both passed away. But the farm is still in the old family.

Q: Both of these farms are still in the family, which is rather unusual, too.

O: Yes, pretty near 100 years.

Q: Did n't your father have one of the first cars in this country, the country, Victor Larson?

V: Yes, yes he did. _____ Dad had the, the first car this side of town, the side of any town (Laughter) any side of this town and I guess it was. (I believe it was a Maytag.) That's right.

Q: And I believe he drove it to Wartonville one time to bring Governor Eberhardt up to the Clinton Church Festival, Mid-summer's Festival. (Well, yes.) And I remember that and I remember it was called a Maytag. (Ya) The name of it was. Can you tell something about the difference in the cars then and what we have now?

V: Oh, my it was quite a difference, ya, but it was a good car that Maytag was for that time, you know. The motor was under the front...the front seat instead of under the hood so the gas tank was where the motor is now, you know. And then you crank it between the running board and the body of the car, a very unhandy place.

O: Yeah, I remember that too.

Q: And then now, did you have a threshing machine too? To thresh...

V: Well after later years, though, yes, we had a threshing machine for quite a while. But I remember when Old man Watkins, Hi Watkins threshed for us here you know. And Messer, Ruben Johnson, he was a _____, a big stropper. Yeah, a small rig it was.

Q: It would take quite a long time to do the threshing in the fall on seven quarters.

V: That's right, it was quite a job then compared to now.

O: It'd get pretty wet too sometimes, a person would drag on for a long time.

V: Yeah.

Q: How many hired men did you have to have?

V: Oh, we generally had five, six men, yeah, threshing time and then it would be right around twenty-five on the crew and they came all right here and if rain stop her a week or two, well, you fed them all.

Q: That was a lot of work for your mother. (Yes, you bet it was.) Did she have some help?

V: Oh, she quite often, while threshing she got help, she did an awful lot of work.

Q: She didn't have the conveniences that we have now, no refrigeration or gas or electric stoves. And you have the lamps to clean.

V: I have to hand it to them, they did awful good.

Q: And all the chores, they didn't have anything but lanterns.

V: That's right, you bet.

Q: They couldn't press a button for electric lights.

O: No, you need a little water, you couldn't press the button, then, you pump it outside.

V: You pump it then carry it.

(166--15 min.)

Q: In and out. They didn't have laundromats then either. (No) Well, I think this has been most interesting. We've enjoyed it and we're sure that this will be of great interest to coming generations, so we thank you for this.

O: We thank you for making it, you do a lot of work for it. They know the man that homesteaded that place from Marine and he had a big family and he didn't feel they could move out there, so they sold the homestead rights to my Dad for a \$100.00. And then my Dad got out to Benson and he asked them and they said that didn't mean anything, you have to file it yourself. So he filed on it there and they told him if somebody else comes there before he comes out to the farm that he would loose it. But he hurried up here in the spring and he come here and nobody else had filed on it, so he got it. That \$100.00 was just thrown away.

END OF THE TAPE (182--17 min.)