

**Ole Barsness
Narrator**

**Lee Tempte
KMRS
Interviewer**

1975

Interview done for the Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota KMRS Feature

LT: 00:00 This is Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a KMRS Saturday news feature. We're talking now with Ole Barsness of Glenwood. Ole, when you were farming, which area did you farm in?

OB: 00:12 Well, it's in Pope County and in Barsness Township.

LT: 00:17 How did you get a township named after you?

OB: 00:19 That was six Barsnesses that came from the same part in Norway. And the law was that way in Norway in them days that if you change—move from one locality to another, you would have to change your name.

LT: 00:36 Yeah. So the name Barsness came from what then?

OB: 00:40 And then when my father was born, that was Runi. But then his parents moved from one locality down to another place, what they call Barsness. A bar that sticks out in a low place or little water, so that name was then changed from Runi to Barsness.

LT: 01:07 Now, a couple of your uncles homesteaded around this area along with your father. Tell us about how they homesteaded. Where did they have to go to homestead at the land?

OB: 01:18 St. Cloud Land Office.

LT: 01:21 And how did they get there?

OB: 01:23 By—well, they had to have feet on, they couldn't crawl on their fingers to get to St. Cloud, 60, 70 miles, they walked.

LT: 01:31 They had to walk the whole way.

- OB: 01:32 The whole way. No aeroplane sliders.
- LT: 01:35 Well, now, a lot of are using oxen around here. Now, your dad was the first one to bring horses in, right?
- OB: 01:40 Yeah. When they came across Wisconsin, they came across from Norway over, and then the Civil War was on to free the Negro from slavery. And so then they join—they wasn't drafted in there, but they joined in for three years to free the Negroes from slavery. But the war still went on, so they joined up another three years, but then—no, three years. And then it was on for two years, and then the war was over. And then they came across here into, now, it's Pope County.
- LT: 02:20 Well, now, you farm for many years around here. What type of crops or livestock did you have?
- OB: 02:26 Well, it was wheat, oats, barley, flax, all that for the grain. And look at the price it was in them days. And same thing with whole hogs, \$2 to \$3 for a good grown-up hog, so we're putting ahead to give it a way to get rid of it. But look at—go to the butcher shop now and try to buy some hogs or meat or anything, and then look—you twist your head and look at the sun, still up there price on it?
- LT: 03:07 Now, you had a car around here that probably turned some heads, it was a Chevrolet. Were there many of them around here then?
- OB: 03:15 No, not when I bought that 1940 model. That was the brand new one that came in here, and it's still—I turned it over to the historical building, and it's in there.
- LT: 03:28 Most of them are, what, Fords in around here?
- OB: 03:31 Huh?
- LT: 03:31 Were there Fords around here at that time?
- OB: 03:33 Yeah, it was, Model T, and that's just like an umbrella over your head. But then, two, three years or five years, then they came with a Ford, and I think it was H. Do you know the name of the H Ford?
- LT: 03:50 No, I'm not. I wasn't around here then, I'm sorry.

OB: 03:53 But they were a wonderful—it would've been a H—when they had the Model T around here, I would've bought a Ford then.

LT: 04:02 What were the roads like back then when you had your Chevrolet?

OB: 04:08 Just stones and mud.

LT: 04:11 So how—when you—let's say that you're going to the cities, how did you get down to the Twin Cities?

OB: 04:15 Well, we drove muddy roads from here to St. Cloud, and then follow in the woods, the trees in the woods, then from there, Mississippi River to the Twin Cities.

LT: 04:31 What do you think about the roads today?

OB: 04:33 Oh, my, now—the roads now, they're just like the floor in the house.

LT: 04:41 Really a lot different then.

OB: 04:43 Oh, my. If the old 1940 model come back now, he'd shake his head sideways and there's no sense to roads now.

LT: 04:53 Well, now, did you ever get married, Ole?

OB: 04:55 No, I was too busy, too busy entirely. But a lot of my neighbors told me that you should go and get married. Yeah, I says, but I showed respect for religion all my life, and there's family trouble now. So that man and the wife get family trouble, throw bottles or whatever it is to each other, and small children that's brought up in a home like that is a sad affair.

LT: 05:25 Well, now, you're living here at the Lakeview Home. You've been looking for a wife here when you're living here?

OB: 05:30 Oh, they asked me that question, and there's a lot of women around here, and I says, are you all married or are you single? I'm looking for a housekeeper for myself out on the farm there.

LT: 05:45 Well, Ole, how old are you?

OB: 05:47 Well, now, next month I will be 92.

LT: 05:50 Have you enjoyed living in West Central Minnesota?

OB: 05:53 Yeah. I've always lived here.

LT: 05:55 We've been talking with Ole Barsness of Glenwood on Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a KMRS news feature.