



Figure 52. L. to r., unknown, unknown, unknown, Stone Johnson, Gustaf Johnson, unknown, Gust Johnson. Gustaf Johnson farmhouse in background.

Stone married Elin Olivia Olson on 12 Jun 1923⁴³ in Bemidji, Minnesota. Elin was a teacher at the Meadowview School for the terms, 1916-17, 1917-18, and 1920-21.⁵ Stone and Elin built and developed a farmstead on the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 26 in Lammers Township, forty acres that originally were part of the homestead of John Lindell. They also were given forty acres (the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 23) from the homestead of Stone's father, Gustaf Johnson. Over the years, they added several other forty acre parcels to their farm. In addition to a herd of dairy cattle, Stone occasionally raised and cared for a small flock of sheep. He was active in community affairs, serving on the local township (Lammers) board and on the school board of the Solway school.

Stone and Elin were parents of two sons, Donald Stone Johnson (b. 28 Feb 1924;⁴³ d. 4 May 1989⁴⁸) and Merle William Johnson (b. 16 Jul 1928;⁴³ d. 27 Jun 1980⁴⁹). Stone died on 28 Apr 1958 at the age of 59 from lung cancer. He is buried in the National Cemetery at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.⁵⁰ Elin continued to live on the Solway farmstead until after Merle's death. She then moved to the Seattle, Washington, area near Donald's home. She died 6 Sep 1990 at the age of 96.



Figure 53. Gust Arvid Johnson (enlargement from snapshot).



Figure 54. Lydia (Gack) Johnson

Gust Arvid Johnson, son of Gustaf and Emma (Larsdotter) Johnson, was born on 27 Nov 1906⁴² in the family home in Lammers Township, Beltrami County, Minnesota. He spoke only Swedish when he entered the first grade at Meadowview School (something that was true for many of the children in the local community). He completed school through the eighth grade and then worked with his father on the farm. He worked occasionally during this period for the Nordheim Roofing Company of Bemidji. At one point, he considered a career in the Minnesota Forestry Service but chose to remain on the farm when promised that the farm would pass on to him when his parents were no longer living.

Gust married Lydia Bertha Bernhardine Gack in Bemidji on 18 Oct 1936.⁴¹ Lydia was born 17 Mar 1906 in Winfield Township, Renville County, Minnesota, and grew up in Badoura Township, Hubbard County, Minnesota.⁵ She came to Lammers Township as a teacher at the Meadowview School. She taught at the school for four years (1932 – 1936) before her marriage to Gust. While teaching at Meadowview, Lydia boarded in the home of Arvid and Victoria (Peterson) Johnson who were operating a neighboring farm. Arvid was the son of Gotfred and Anna Lisa (Larsdotter) Johnson (see entry on an earlier page). Gust and Lydia were the parents of Roy Allen Johnson, born 26 Jul 1937.

Gust served at various times on the local town board (Lammers Township), on the local draft board during WWII, on the board of the Beltrami Rural Electrification Association, and was fire warden for Lammers Township for over fifty years. In addition to the innumerable chores on the

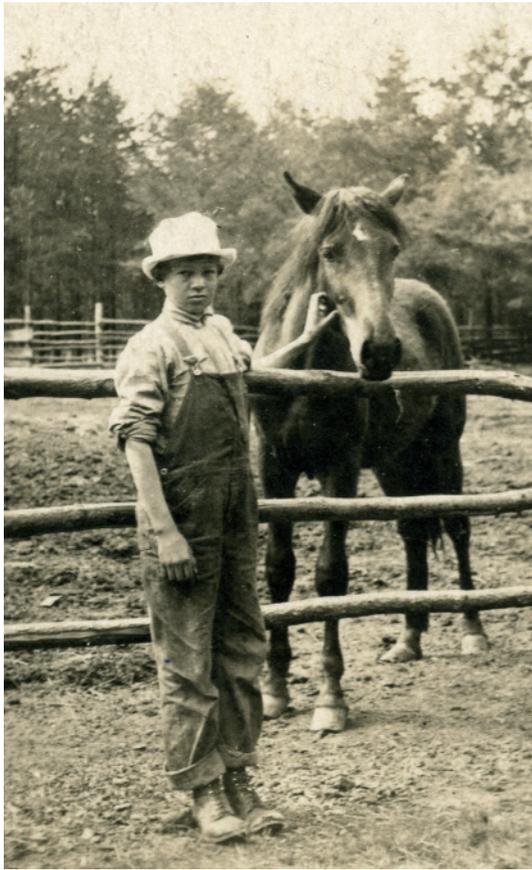


Figure 55. Gust A. Johnson



Figure 56. Donald (front), Elin, Stone Johnson

farm, he enjoyed fishing, was an avid reader – always stopping at the public library when “in town” to check out a handful of books, rarely missed the deer hunting season, and loved a good card game (whist, pinochle, or cribbage).

With the help of Lydia, he built a small but excellent dairy herd of Guernsey’s (maximum number of cows was twelve, dictated by the size of the barn in which they could be housed during the winter). He was forced to sell the herd in 1948 due to illness, eventually diagnosed as a gall bladder problem. Once corrected by surgery, his health returned and he again built up a dairy herd, now selling Grade A milk to the local cooperative creamery association until increasing regulations became too expensive to implement. In retirement, he raised a few beef cattle, was the Beltrami County weed inspector for a number of years, put up firewood, and went darkhouse spearing in winters with good friend and neighbor, Stanley Tweten. Gust died on 28 Jun 1986⁵¹ at the age of 79 of complications from intestinal cancer and is buried in Meadowview Cemetery, Lammers Township. Following his death, the homestead was sold and Lydia relocated to Bemidji where she lived until her death on 26 Jan 2004⁵² at the age of 97. She is buried in Meadowview Cemetery.

Elvina (“Ella”) Larsdotter (1869-1910)

Elvina Larsdotter, twin to Emma Larsdotter, was born 7 Mar 1869^{8,9} at Rosendal croft, Nedre Ullerud, Värmland, Sweden. She moved with her mother in 1885 to Risätter and emigrated from Sweden, leaving from the port of Söderhamn, to St. Paul, Minnesota, on 10 Jul 1889.¹ She married,



Figure 57. Andrew and Elvina (Larsdotter) Carlson

probably in St. Paul, Andrew Fredrik Carlson of Bjurtjarns, Närke Province (Örebro), Sweden¹⁵ (see Figures 4 and 57).

Jean Larson writes, when describing Otto and Anna Larson's early residences in St. Paul, "Down at Decatur and Bedford streets there was another saloon, operated by Andrew Carlson, where Ella's (Elvina) red-haired bulk could be seen as she cooked the hearty free lunches that came with your beer in those days. But of this some Larsons did not approve. About 1907, the Carlsons left St. Paul to open a hotel in Brainerd, Minnesota, but for a short time before that, they had operated a grocery on East 7th Street."¹

Elvina died of heart disease at the age of 41 in Brainerd, Minnesota, on 20 Dec 1910.¹ She and Andrew Carlson did not have any children. Andrew then married (unknown date) Elvina's niece, Helga Elisabeth Johnson (Emma's daughter). Andrew and Helga raised a family of six children while living in Menisino, Manitoba, Canada.⁵

Oscar Larsson/Larson (1875-1961)



Figure 58. Oscar Larson, about 1895



Figure 59. Oscar and Hulda (Person) Larson

Oscar Larson was born at Rosendal croft, Nedre Ullerud parish, Värmland, Sweden, on 5 Feb 1875.^{8,9} He moved with his mother to Risätter in 1885 and emigrated with his mother, and possibly with sister and brother-in-law Gustaf and Emma Johnson, to Minnesota. He lived with his sister, Emma, and her family near Fertile, Minnesota, for some brief time, a conclusion drawn from the fact that he was enumerated as living in the Johnson household in the 1895 Minnesota census.

Oscar married Hulda Person in about 1916. She was from Deje, Nedre Ullerud parish, and was born 6 May 1884.⁵³ She was a niece of Ingeborg Larsdotter, wife of Oscar's eldest brother, Lars Gustaf. Oscar was employed by the Great Northern Railway Co. in their car repair facility in St. Paul. He worked as a carpenter for the railway company and in the construction industry. Oscar and Hulda did not have any children. They resided at 1311 Burr Street, St. Paul. He died on 14 Dec 1961 at the age of 86.⁹ Hulda died 19 Oct 1965 at the age of 81 and is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery.⁵³

Related History

Boomerville. As I grew up on my parent's farm near Solway in Lammers Township, Minnesota, I often heard talk of "Boomerville," the nearby piece of land on which stood a small cabin owned by my father's cousins, Arthur, Victor, and Edgar Larson from St. Paul. When, for example,

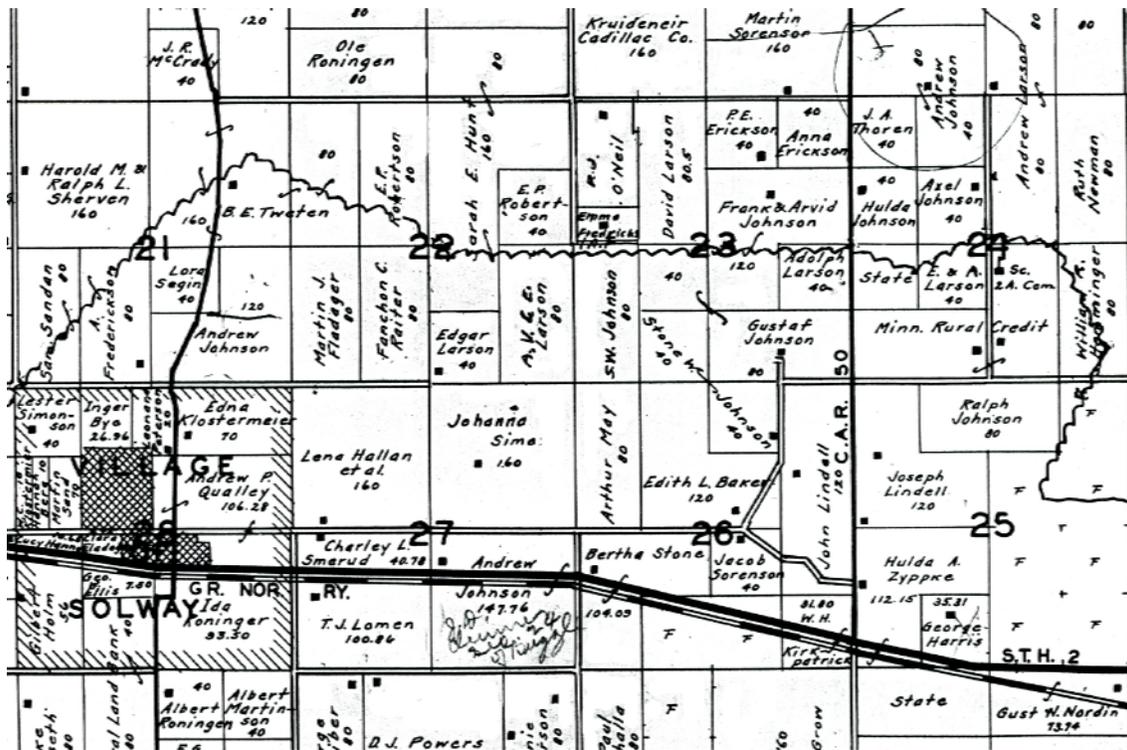


Figure 60. Detail from 1942 plat map of Lammers township showing Larson-related holdings.

the locations of deer hunting exploits were being discussed, the “Larson boy’s shack” often was used as a point of reference. In Jean Larson’s words, the building was “a ‘railroad shack,’ 12 x 20 feet with a tar-papered exterior, equipped with four bunk-beds and a table” built for them by their father in the summer of 1921.¹



Figure 61. Cabin at “Boomerville.” L. to r., Victor Larson, Russ Frisk, Edgar Larson, 1921.



Figure 62. Jean and Art Larson in doorway of “Boomerville” cabin, July, 1949.

The cabin was located on 120 acres of land the brothers had obtained in 1918-1920. Eighty acres were purchased from the state for a nominal fee plus payment of delinquent taxes on the property. The remaining 40 acres were purchased from a private landowner. The location of the land was in southeast portion of Section 22 of Lammers Township as can be seen on the map shown in Figure 60. If one looks carefully at this map, one can see that between them, several descendents of Lars and Lisa Larsson at one time owned 560 acres of contiguous land in Sections 22, 23, and 26. The various owners were Adolf Larson (40 acres), Gustaf Johnson (husband of Emma Larson; 120 acres), Stone W. Johnson (160 acres), Frank and Arvid Johnson (120 acres; Frank was the husband of Sophia Larson and Arvid the son of Anna Lisa Larson), and the three Larson brothers.

The three brothers opened some of the land for farming and for a number of summers grew a variety of field crops. They traveled from St. Paul to their property in a Model T Ford (see next section). However, as they became more involved with other pursuits, the land remained idle and became a good location for deer hunting. By the late 1940s, visits by the brothers were primarily of a nostalgic nature and in 1962 they sold the land to a neighboring farmer, Mr. Max May.¹



Figure 63. L. to r., Russell Frisk, Ed Larson, Art Larson, Stone Johnson



Figure 64. L. to r., Vic Larson, Art Larson, Ed Larson, Stone Johnson

A Photographic Record of A Visit to Itasca State Park. A series of old snapshots gives a glimpse of five young men as they visited Itasca State Park, located in north central Minnesota, in 1921. Itasca State Park has long been a tourist destination because it is the site of Lake Itasca and the source of the Mississippi River. Five of the photographs are reproduced in Figures 63-67. In each, four of the men are pictured, while the fifth clearly must have been acting as the photographer. The men are identified as three brothers, Arthur, Victor and Edgar Larson, their cousin, Stone Johnson, and the fifth, Russell Frisk,⁵⁴ is a friend. In one of the snapshots is seen a building that almost certainly is Douglas Lodge, thus placing the site of the photographs in Itasca State Park.

The men were traveling in a Model T Ford automobile. The date on the license plate of the automobile is 1921. The Larson brothers together with Mr. Frisk lived in St. Paul while Stone Johnson lived on his parents [Gustaf and Emma (Larson) Johnson] farm in Lammers Township near Solway, Minnesota. The three brothers had, in the period 1918-1920, purchased a total of 120 acres of land near Solway and the Johnson farm. A small one-room cabin was built on the land, serving as



Figure 65. Douglas Lodge, Itasca State Park, Minnesota



Figure 66. L. to r., Ed Larson, Stone Johnson



Figure 67. L. to r., Russell Frisk, Stone Johnson, Art and Vic Larson

living quarters for the brothers when visiting from St. Paul. The farm was often referred to as “Boomerville” (see short account of Boomerville, above). According to Jean Larson’s family history, the brothers owned the Model T and used it to drive from St. Paul to their farm near Solway.

Swedish Potato Sausage and Other Ethnic Foods. Living in a Swedish community imparted in me a strong sense of ‘Swedishness’ but, in fact, I carried very few Swedish traditions or customs away from the local environment. One area in which tradition may be more easily carried on is the kitchen. Several typically Swedish, or more broadly Scandinavian, food delicacies that I recall are lefse, Swedish (or Christmas) potato sausage, krup kakker (potato dumplings), and pickled herring (gaffelbitar). Lutefisk is the stereotypical Scandinavian dish that still is the subject of much Midwestern humor and a few Lutheran church dinners. I have been told that my grandparents and my father prepared and ate lutefisk but this was one dish that my mother did not prepare, perhaps reflecting her German heritage.

My mother did make Swedish potato sausage every year at Christmastime, carrying out every step of the process from start to finish. I have taken the liberty to include below a written version of the recipe that she used and which is still carried on in our family. The recipe also appears in a local Beltrami County cookbook.⁵⁵

Ingredients:

3 lbs. ground pork (shoulder or loin roast)	1 c. chopped onions
2 lbs. ground beef	8 tsp. salt
5 lbs. peeled potatoes	1 tsp. ground black pepper
hog casings (approx. 10 yds.; if only a larger quantity can be purchased, the excess casings can be packed in salt and kept frozen for a year or more)	

Grind potatoes just before preparing the recipe with a home meat grinder set to a coarse grind. Drain excess juice from the ground potatoes. Mix together meats, onions, salt, pepper and ground potatoes. Mix thoroughly. Cut hog casings into lengths of 20”-30”. Stuff the casings with the sausage mixture – do not fill tightly. Tie ends of the filled casings with strings. Heat 4-6 quarts of water to boiling in an 8-10 quart pot. Add the sausage lengths to the boiling water, bring to a simmering boil, and cook for 30 minutes. (If sausages split during cooking, they likely were filled too tightly – next time reduce fill.) Remove from the boiling water, cool, and store in refrigerator. To serve, place sausage in single layer in an oven pan and brown on both sides at 350° in oven. Cut long sausages into smaller pieces and serve while hot.

Hog casings can be purchased in some grocery stores and meat markets, either prepackaged or from the meat department butcher. However, on the farm, the casings (which are the small intestine of the hog) were obtained on the spot when the hog was butchered, usually in the fall of the year after cold weather had set in. I still can picture my mother using a large teakettle of hot water to wash out the casings, then scraping them thoroughly with the back edge of a butcher knife and packing them in salt.

It is not difficult to find a variety of recipes for potato sausage, especially if one searches the Internet. Perhaps the most frequently seen variation from the above recipe is the inclusion of allspice as a seasoning agent.