



Figure 22. Selma Olivia Larson

Selma (“Sally”) Olivia Larson, daughter of Otto and Anna Märta (Hedin) Larson, was born in Lyons, Colorado, on 18 Jan 1896.¹ She moved with her family to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1904. She attended Phalen Park School, graduating from the 8th grade in Jan 1911. Selma is seen as a lovely, vivacious young woman in several portraits and snapshots (Figures 19, 22, 87, 89, 90, and 91) from her youth. Then a brief, ominous note appears in Jean Larson’s history of Otto Larson’s family. Jean wrote: “There was that flu epidemic (in 1918) that hit Sally pretty hard...”²¹ Another note suggests that thereafter (at about age 24) she suffered from ‘dementia praecox.’²⁵ In 1921, she sent several snapshots of herself to her aunt Emma Johnson at Solway. On the back of one snapshot she wrote, “Southwest end of Nurse’s Home where I now make my home.” She died of pneumonia 2 Aug 1934¹ at the age of 38 as a resident of St. Peter State Hospital.



Figure 23. Arthur
Larson, 1908



Figure 24. Arthur Harald Larson

Arthur (“Art”) Harald Larson,²⁶ son and second surviving child of Otto and Anna Märta (Hedin) Larson, was born in Lyons, Colorado, on 8 Oct 1897.¹ He moved with his family to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1904 (see section on Otto Larson). He attended several different elementary schools in St. Paul, first John Ericsson School, followed by Lincoln School, and he then graduated from the eighth grade at Phalen Park School on 25 Jan 1913. His first job was as a paperboy, starting in 1910, for the *St. Paul Dispatch & Pioneer Press*. He was confirmed in 1912 at the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Mission Tabernacle with the ceremony performed in the Swedish language.

Following his graduation from Phalen Park School, Art’s first full-time job was at the Gotzian Shoe Factory but soon he began working in various positions for the railroad industry. He was employed primarily by the Great Northern Railroad. He was not called to serve in World War I, being exempt by virtue of working for a “vital industry.” In the period 1918-20, he and two of his brothers, Victor and Edgar, purchased 120 acres of “State Swamp Lands” near the farm of their aunt, Emma Johnson, in Lammers Township, Beltrami County, Minnesota. The brothers spent several summers on their property, clearing some land and raising crops. However, each fall they returned to their home in St. Paul and obtained jobs with the railroad companies. By 1921, the three brothers had purchased a Model T Ford automobile in which they drove to their farm each summer. (See sections titled “Boomerville” and “A Trip to Itasca State Park in a Model T Ford.”)

On 8 Aug 1928 on a blind date together with his friend, Roy “Boots” Oberg, Art met Melva M. Alborn, a student at the Mounds-Midway School of Nursing. The couple was married on 14 June



Figure 25. Arthur and Melva (Alborn) Larson

1930 in Superior, Wisconsin, by Melva's father, the Reverend George C. Alborn. The couple returned to St. Paul where the hard times of the Great Depression forced them to live in the family home at 1288 Edgerton St. Art spent fourteen months (Feb 1938 to Apr 1939) in Anker Hospital recovering from tuberculosis. Art and Melva's only child, Jean Emily (name later changed to Jean Astrid) was born in St. Paul on 21 Jul 1941.

Starting in 1945 and continuing until his retirement in 1962, Art worked for the Raymond Laboratories (later Rayette, Inc. and then Faberge, Inc.) in St. Paul. In the fall of 1972, Art and Melva sold their home at 1288 Edgerton St. and relocated to Roswell, New Mexico. Art died there from the complications of a stroke on 20 Mar 1987 at the age of 89. He is buried in Union Cemetery, St. Paul.

Melva Marion Alborn²⁷ was the 4th child and 3rd daughter of the Rev. George Clarence Alborn (1877-1956) and Ida Grace Hubbell/Hubble (1878-1962). Born on election day, 3 Nov 1908 (Pres.



Figure 26. Melva, Arthur and Jean Larson, 1955

Taft), in the village of Allenville, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, Melva grew up in Oakfield and Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, nearly dying of typhoid fever in early 1915. The sudden death of her younger sister, Ardis, in 1917, while her parents were away traveling, may have led to her later career decision to take up nursing.

In the spring of 1924, the Alborns moved to Superior, Wisconsin, where Melva graduated from Central High School, January 1927. Her goal was to be a medical missionary. She entered Mounds-Midway School of Nursing, St. Paul, Minnesota, March 1927. On 8 August 1928, a classmate, Edith 'Eric' Erikson of Iron Mountain, Michigan, got her a blind date with Arthur Harald Larson; they broke up once but after her graduation on 9 May 1930, she and Art were married by her father at Superior, 14 June 1930.

From February 1933, they weathered the Great Depression together with five of Art's kin at 1288 Edgerton Street, St. Paul, a house built by Art's father, which they ultimately purchased from the other heirs in 1953. Melva worked only briefly after daughter Jean was born (21 Jul 1941). A dramatic broken ankle (tri-maleolar bone), December 1946, took 11 months of recovery, after which she resumed community activities: the First Baptist Church, PTA work (President 1953-4; founder "Mother Singers"), Camp Fire/Horizon Club leader, and member of the neighborhood "Harmonettes" singing group. After Jean entered Cleveland Junior High School, Melva became office nurse for Cecil A. Warren, M.D., 1955-1964. Her last job, 1965-70, was as Post-Anesthesia Room nurse at Gillette State Hospital for Crippled Children, St. Paul.



Figure 27. Victor
Larson, 1908



Figure 28. Victor Eugene Larson

After retirement, she and Art relocated in 1972 to Roswell, New Mexico, where she relearned to drive a car, was active in the Westminster Presbyterian Church (choir, women's shelter representative, Hospice representative, Church Women United), in the Five-Stater Club, and being a good neighbor. Famous for her fruitcake, she was also willing to prepare the Swedish 'delicacy,' lutefisk. She died in an automobile accident near Lebanon, Indiana, on 23 Jul 1989 at the age of 80. She is buried at Union Cemetery, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Victor (“Vic”) Eugene Larson, son of Otto and Anna Märta (Hedin) Larson, was born in Lyons, Colorado, on 31 Oct 1899.^{1,28} He moved with his family to St. Paul, Minnesota in 1904. There, he attended Phalen Park School, graduating from the A Class, 8th grade, with thirty-eight classmates on 13 Jun 1913. In 1913, he was a paperboy for the *St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press*. During his adult life, he was employed in the railroad industry by the C. M. St. P. & O. Railroad until physical and mental health problems led to his retirement in 1954. He remained single throughout his life and died of a coronary occlusion on 10 May 1968 at the age of 68.²⁸ He is buried in Union Cemetery, St. Paul, Minnesota.



Figure 29. Edgar Larson, ~1908



Figure 30. Edgar Gustave Larson

Edgar (“Ed”) Gustave Larson²⁹ was born September 16, 1902, in Lyons, Colorado, to Otto and Anna (Hedin) Larson, Swedish immigrants. He moved with the family to St. Paul, Minnesota, eventually settling at 1288 Edgerton St., the family home built by Otto. He attended local schools, finishing the 8th grade. As a young boy he had a paper route, the profits from which he gave his mother to help support the family. At age 16 he began working as office boy for the Great Northern Railway in their downtown offices. He was following his family into railroad work. The work as office boy led to his applying for the “extra list” after learning Morse code with a telegraph. Being on the “extra list” meant that you were sent for temporary duty to fill in for station personnel who were on vacation or were sick, so he was moving around all the time. While on the “extra list,” he was sent to various stations on the Great Northern Railroad from St. Paul to Wenatchee, Washington.

While in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, on one of his more extended stays, he met Helen Caryl Phillips, the “soda jerk” at the local drugstore. They were married on June 27, 1931 in Fergus Falls at the Minister’s office with his best friend at the time standing up for them. Shortly after they were married they went on assignment to Kelly Lake, Minnesota, near Hibbing in iron ore country. Helen’s brother and sister came to live with them after their mother died in 1933. The sister, Margaret, lived with them until 1943, when she joined the Marines. The brother, Bruce, called their



Figure 31. Edgar Larson, about 1931.



Figure 32. Helen Larson, about 1931.

place “home” until after finishing his service in the Army. Ed never expressed dislike or regret that they were there, accepting them as a part of the family.

Ed and Helen were living in Hoople, North Dakota, in 1939 when their daughter Caryl Ann was born. Their next location was Glyndon, Minnesota, where they were moving in on December 7, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Day). Finally, in 1943, Ed had enough seniority to bid on a permanent job in Moorhead, Minnesota. He got that job and made his home in Moorhead until 1972. He was classed as a telegrapher in the depot, but that included selling tickets and keeping the station open when trains were snow-delayed from out west. He and Helen were active in the Congregational Church in Moorhead where Ed was church treasurer for many years. During this time he built his own home. Friends teased him that that was why he could afford to build a new home. Around 1960, he bid for the job of station agent and was given the position. He was given a company car and had the responsibility of overseeing all the activities of the Great Northern in Moorhead.

Ed retired from his lifelong employment in 1972. Helen also retired in 1972 and they moved to Roswell, New Mexico, with his brother and sister-in-law, Art and Melva Larson. They bought houses about a mile from each other and shared many car trips back to Minnesota. Ed was known as a quiet, honest, trustworthy, frugal, and kind man. He also had a talent for math. When asked one time what he would have liked to become, if not a railroad man, he replied, “a doctor.” But railroading was what was available and steady at the time he needed work. His favorite hobby was woodworking. He built much of the interior of his home as well as several pieces of furniture. A corner table for the living room was a piece highly prized by his wife, Helen. He died at the age of 86 on November 28, 1988, from pneumonia while in a nursing home as the result of suprabulbar palsy. His ashes were taken to Moorhead, Minnesota, per his request.



Figure 33. Edgar and Helen Larson, 1962

Helen Caryl (Phillips) Larson was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on 4 Apr 1911, the first daughter and third child of Henderson Frazier Phillips and his second wife, Jesse Caryl (Jefferson) Phillips. She had four brothers and two sisters. The family was living near Fergus Falls, Minnesota, as tenant farmers for a state legislator, when her father died. Helen had become the “homemaker” of the home while her mother cared for her father after a stroke. Jesse and the two older boys tried to keep the farm going. Helen had the responsibility of the house and younger children and learned to bake and cook at a young age. She attended local schools and finished the ninth grade.

She was employed at the local drugstore as the fountain (lunch counter) person and general clerk when she was introduced to the good-looking young man from the train depot. She married that man on June 27, 1931, in Fergus Falls. Within two years of their marriage, her mother died from stomach cancer at the University of Minnesota hospital. The two young children still at home, Bruce and Margaret (about 10 years old) came to live with Helen and Ed. Bruce went on to a Civilian Conservation camp in northern Minnesota and to the Army, while Margaret went on to finish high school in Hoople, North Dakota, where she graduated as valedictorian. She then went to business school in Fargo, North Dakota, and then into the Marine Corp.

Helen volunteered with the Red Cross during the war years in Moorhead. After the war, she was working as church secretary in 1947 when they decided to build their own house. She kept that job until about 1958 when a better offer came to work in the sheriff's office. In 1959 a new junior high school was opening just blocks from her home and a friend was the principal. He asked her to be his secretary and she accepted. That job lasted until her retirement in 1972. After moving to Roswell, New Mexico, she pursued her interest in quilting. She often said that she would never live long enough to make all the quilts she wanted to make. She gave away many of the quilts she made and made quilts for her church sewing group who gave them to people in need. She was never satisfied to just put pieces together; she wanted them to look planned and pretty.



Figure 34. Leonard Otto Larson

After Ed died in 1988, Helen felt free to pursue her love of travel. She visited Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Alaska, and made two trips to England. On one trip, she arrived in London on her 85th birthday. She also took several car trips within the US with her friend Jane. She is remembered as energetic, curious, and honest. She never wanted to move to California to be closer to her daughter. “They have earthquakes” was her reply, after having experienced one in 1971 during a visit. But after Caryl was very ill in 2002, she wanted to move to be closer to her. She moved to Camarillo, California, in July 2003, to a lovely residential care home with two other ladies. She was there only six weeks when she died, August 10, 2003, at the age of 92. Her ashes were taken to Moorhead, Minnesota per her request.

Leonard (“Len”) Otto Larson,³⁰ son of Otto and Anna Märta (Hedin) Larson, was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on 8 Apr 1905.³¹ Following graduation from St. Paul Johnson High School in 1922, he was employed at various railroad shops in the city. He married Violet Esther Christine Peterson on 30 Aug 1930. The couple shared a home until 1956 with Violet’s mother. Len studied on his own to earn licenses as a stationary engineer and spent the majority of his career as an operating engineer, first with the Minneapolis Public Schools and then as a pumping station engineer for the Minneapolis Water Department. He was a member of Local 34 of the International Union of Operating Engineers. He always worked shifts, alternating day, afternoon, and night shifts.



Figure 35. Florence, Otto, and Leonard Larson

Leonard was an avid reader, including poetry. He was an involved father, a helpful neighbor, and he lived in uncommon harmony with his mother-in-law. He was a handyman and did woodworking projects, liked to fish, and enjoyed music with a fine singing voice. Len admired pacifists and was a life-long supporter of the labor movement and worker's rights.

Leonard and Violet were the parents of two children, Judith Anne (b. 20 Oct 1936) and Steven Leonard (b. 18 Apr 1940). Following Violet's death in 1983, Leonard moved to Austin, Minnesota, and lived near his daughter's family. He died of kidney failure on 14 Jun 1988 at the age of 83.

Violet ("Vi") Esther Christine Peterson, the daughter of Gustav and Augusta (Hallbeck) Peterson, was born 14 Feb 1908 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her parents were Swedish immigrants and she had two older brothers. Her father, a Minneapolis fireman, died accidentally in the line of duty when Violet was 14 years old. She attended Irving Elementary School and graduated from Minneapolis South High School in 1925. She was employed as a file clerk by the Northwestern National Life Insurance Co. in Minneapolis.

She met Leonard Larson on a blind date arranged by mutual friends. They were married 30 Aug 1930 at the St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church parsonage. Vi and Len shared a home with her widowed mother until 1956, when they purchased a home in south Minneapolis. Vi was a full-time homemaker, was active in her Lutheran church, enjoyed playing bridge and made friends easily. She liked old china and enjoyed roaming through antique stores and thrift shops. Violet always displayed a lot of common sense and much compassion for the underdog. She died unexpectedly of cardiac arrest on 16 Feb 1983 at the age of 75.