LOOMIS

Shortly after the Civil War, two men, Wise and Loomis, began lumbering in the area of what is now called Loomis. During the building of the Flint and Pere Marquette railroad in the late 1860's, 700 to 800 people lived in Loomis in anything that afforded shelter.

Loomis is now somewhat of a ghost town, but at one time it was a booming little metropolis. Sam Zeiter owned a combination saw and shingle mill, one of the largest. He also owned a race track and race horses. Loomis contained a frame school house which was moved in 1895 and replaced with a brick one, which still stands.

The village was never incorporated but had a justice of the peace, a dog warden, and a constable. During the logging days, Tom Lommison, a husky saloon keeper, was turnkey in a makeshift jail attached to the townhall. Town records were kept by the Justice of the Peace, but burned with the townhall.

Until about 1960, when passenger train service was ended, four trains a day pulled into the depot. A hit-and-miss stage line operated to Gladwin via a plank road. "If you could catch it and hop on, then find room, you could ride," says an oldtime resident of the area.

Until the 1890's lumber was stacked along the streets in very available space, leaving only a narrow aisle for wagons and sleighs to pass. Mills ran full time, until the timber ran out. "You could stand in the street, if you didn't get knocked down, and you could look in any direction and see a fight going on," quotes another old timer.

1970 was the centennial of the one-time booming town of Loomis, but there are not enough residents to stage a celebration. The village has been crossed and criss-crossed so many times by roads and highways that little remains. Ten years ago the expressway (U.S.-10) bypassed the town and there is little

through traffic. One store and a gas station are doing business. Perhaps 15 families live there. A store, gas station and townhall stand near the main corners.[1/]

EARL: "Dad (William G. Kaul) told me once that Loomis had 9 or more saloons during the lumbering days."

ELSIE: "When I was young Loomis didn't have anymore saloons. Just 2 grocery stores -Tuckers and Burgies. Plus an old Swede by the name of August Sundon ran a blacksmith shop. There must have been a post office - perhaps in one of the stores.

We lived just 2 miles north of Loomis, on the Loomis Road, so we often went there. Many times one of us kids would walk to the store to get something for mother. I remember walking through the woods on the way to Loomis and hearing the yowl of bobcats. Another time when walking home from Loomis, a big bobcat ran across the road in front of me and I was so scared that I ran the rest of the way home.

Near the south corner of our farm, near the Loomis Road, stood a huge elm tree. I remember one time my younger brother, Harold had gone to Loomis. A while later he ran in the house, scared to death, "Mom, there's a wild cat in that elm tree!"

When walking back home, as he had approached the corner of our farm, a horrible screeching and yowling had come from up in that big tree. Poor Harold, terrified, had run the rest of the way home - 1/4 mile.

Well, a few minutes later in walked Joe, a silly grin on his face. We easily figured out that he was the 'wild cat'!"

1/ Source of Loomis information: Michigan Ghost Towns, Volume 1; R.L. Dodge, Glendon Publishing; Sterling Heights, Michigan; 1970.

MUSCIAL FAMILY

One may wonder where the muscial talents of present family members came from. Well, we know that Earl Kaul is a very talented singer, so the Kauls contributed much to our talents. But the Larsons contributed much, too.

ELSIE: "I taught myself to play marches and other songs on the organ when I was young. Never had any lessons, just learned to play by ear. Playing chords while accompanying my brother George, who played the violin, came easy to me.

My sister, Martha, bought an organ and could play, and my youngest sister, Milly, can play many songs on her organ - and like me, she learned them all by ear. "

MARTHA LARSON, TEACHER

Martha Larson, the eldest child, attended the Mt. Pleasant Normal (now called Central Michigan University) and earned a teaching degree. To pay for her tuition, books and room rent, Martha worked.

ELSIE: "One summer Martha and Mary worked at the Island House on Mackinaw Island. They saved all of their money for their school expenses. The folks helped the girls out by giving them food.

I recall that Martha would come home with her trunk and mother would pack it full of canned vegetables, butter, bread, etc."

Martha's first teaching assignment was at the Vernon school, south of Clare, and she boarded with the Thomas Kidd family.

Later Martha taught at the Phinnessy School and boarded with a successful farm family, the Stoys.

Occasionally Martha would want to come home on the weekends. When she was old enough, Elsie had the job of leaving school early on Friday afternoons, going home and harnessing the buggy horse to the buggy or sleigh, and driving to the Stoy farm to fetch her older sister.

ELSIE: "Maggie had the heaves so I couldn't trot her very much. Therefore, it took quite a while to pick Martha up and get back home again. We'd arrive long after supper was over and Martha would run in the house crying, "Oh, mother, I hope you have something good to eat!"

Mother always saved us some supper, for Martha had told her that the usual evening meal at the Stoy's consisted of fried potatoes, biscuits and applesauce!"

Andrine and Ole Larson had assisted Martha through school and in return, she helped her family out after she began teaching. She gave Ole $40.00 to purchase lumber and he built on a large kitchen with a good sized pantry at one end. Ole then made the original kitchen into a good sized dining room.

ELSIE: "I remember Martha purchased wallpaper of a lavender shade that contained a grape design. I helped her put that up on the dining and living room walls. She also bought linoleum that matched the wallpaper and dad put that down on the dining room floor. I helped her paint the trim around 5 doors and 4 windows a pretty lavender shade that matched the wallpaper. To top it off, she bought some lovely lace curtains and new window shades.

The addition of the braided rugs that mother had made completed the now lovely rooms.

I recall what our neighbor, Elmer Clute, said when he came over to see the rooms. He sat in the rocking chair in the dining room, looked around and said, "This made a hell of a nice room!"

Martha and I did this work when she was home on summer vacation. I believe I was about 11 or 12 years old, and it was probably about 1909 or 1910. "

Martha also made their Christmas - for she would purchase one or two gifts for each of the children and her parents, plus buy candy, peanuts and fruit.

MARTHA LARSON STOY

Martha married one of the Stoy's sons, Clyde, and together they farmed on their place on Isabella Road, in Vernon Township, two miles south and 2 miles east of Clare.

The Clare Sentinel had an article on the front page of the July 16, 1915 edition briefly describing Martha and Clyde's wedding on July 15th:

LARSON - STOY

A pretty wedding occurred at the Larson home in Sheridan Township last Wednesday afternoon when Martha Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Larson, became the wife of Mr. Clyde Stoy, a prosperous and popular young farmer of Vernon Township.

Rev. William J. Coates of the Methodist Church was the officiating clergyman and the full Episcopal ring service was used.

Promptly at 2:30 the bridal party entered the room to the strains of the wedding chorus of Lohrengrin, played by Miss Glee Duncan.

The bride was attended by her sister, Ruth, of Mt. Pleasant and the groom by his brother, Ellsworth, of Farwell. The bride carried a bouquet of white carnations while her sister used one of pink carnations. The bride was gowned in green crepe de chene and the bridesmaid in silk foulard.

Only the members of the two families and a few friends were present. These included Mr. and Mrs. Luther Braley of Mt. Pleasant, and Miss Ruth Larson of the same place.

Following the ceremony, a dainty wedding supper was served by Mrs. Braley and Miss Elsie Larson.

The happy young people were the recipients of many pretty and useful gifts. They went at once to their home in Vernon which has been furnished in readiness for them.

The Sentinel extends cordial congratulations.

Martha continued teaching until their first child arrived. The Stoys had 5 girls, Welthea, Gladys, Virginia, Ruth, and Milly, They had one son who died at the age of 2 years.

Martha wanted her daughters to have a chance in life, so she went back to work to put her girls through high school and professional school.

Martha worked in the laundry of the Doherty Hotel in Clare. Usually she would have a ride from a neighbor who worked in town, or perhaps Clyde would take her. But the days she didn't have any transportation, she would walk the four or so miles into town, and be there by 7:00 a.m. She would also ocasionally walk the distance back home again when she was through, about 2 or 3 p.m. Even in the winter she would walk through the snow drifts to get to work.

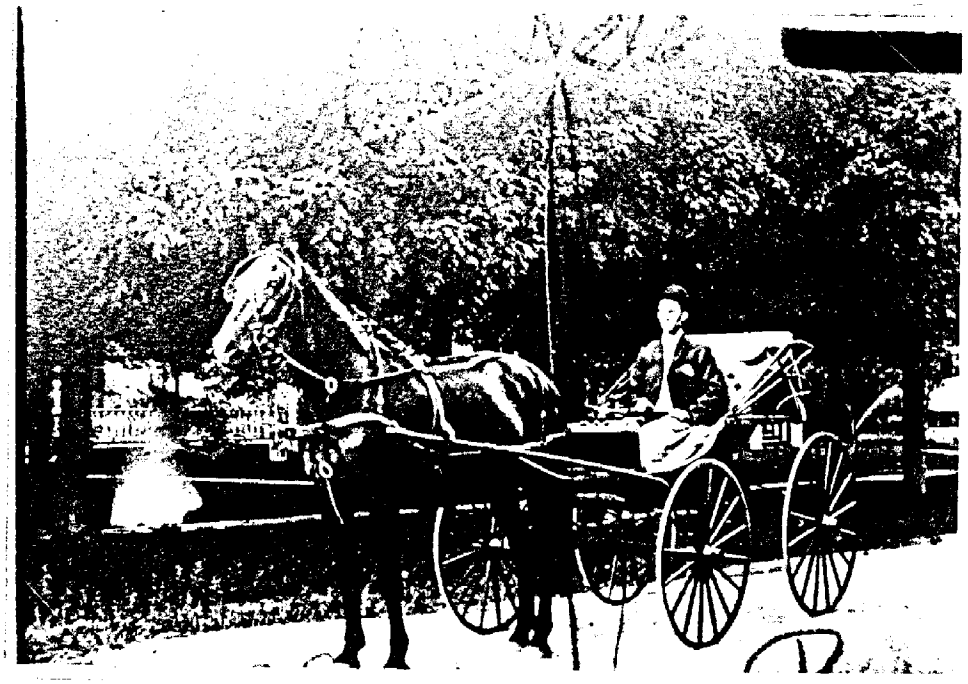
After working all day, Martha would come home to take care of the housework, plus in the summer she would put in long hours in her garden, and in the fall, she would tackle the job of canning fruits and vegetables after putting in a long day at the hotel. Needless to say, Martha was a very hardworking woman.

Throughout their lives on the farm, Martha was the guiding influence in the operation of the farm. Clyde wanted to grow only grain crops, but Martha knew they would not be able to survive on just that, so she convinced him to raise cattle. Years later, they had a good sized herd and Clyde decided to replace the old, log barns he had been using with that of a large barn, which still stands today. He borrowed $2,000 to build the barn and was not sure how he would acquire enough cash to pay it off. Martha convinced him to not sell all of the calves, but to keep them another year and sell them as yearlings. He did this and was able to pay off his barn loan when he drove his herd of cattle to town and sold them the next year. (This took place in the 1940's).

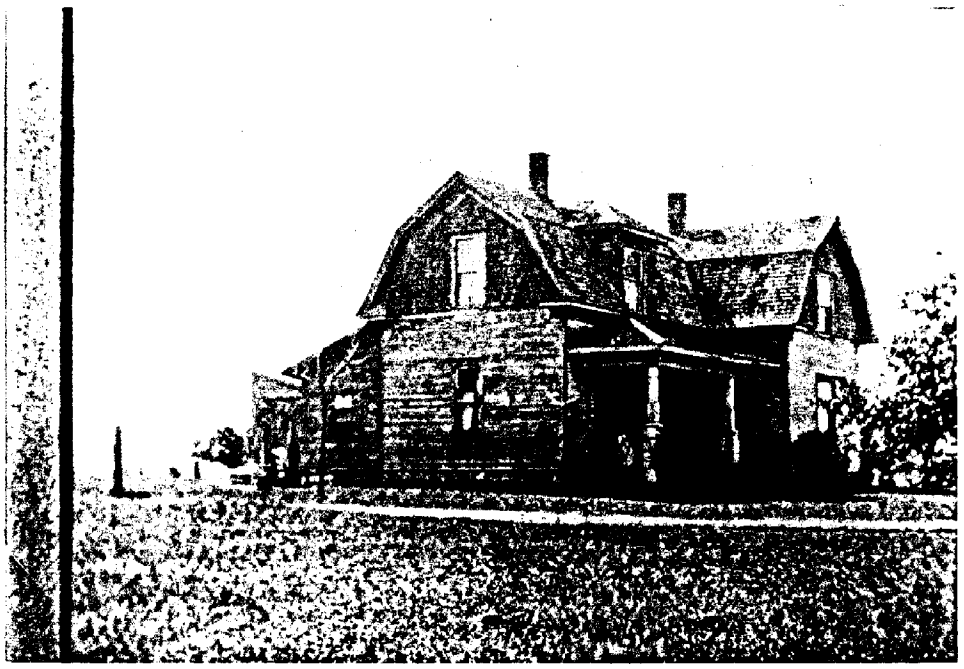
The Stoys had always had pigs, but Martha felt they needed to raise them to

Mary Larson Braley

George Larson and Earl Kaul's 1927 Model T Ford.



Clyde Stoy. This is the buggy he had when he was courting Martha Larson. Horse's name was Ted.



Clyde and Martha Stoy's farmhouse in Isabella County.

sell. So, Welthea, and Martha's sister, Mary Braley, pooled their earnings and purchased a breeder sow to get the Stoy's started in raising pigs.

I'm sure there is much more to be added about the Stoys and hopefully someday I will expand on their life story. But for now, I will just say that Martha and Clyde remained on the farm even though the rest of the Larson family moved away.

MODERN CONVENIENCES

Modern conveniences came more quickly to the cities than to the country areas. Elsie describes her experiences as a child with some of those modern conveniences.

ELsie: "The only modern household convenience that came along when I was a girl was the telephone. Sheridan Township obtained telephone service about _____. Area farmers helped put up the poles and stretch the wire.

Our first telephones were those big, rectangular, wood boxes that hung on the wall. All of the telphone lines were connected to a central office in Clare. Actually, it was like one big party line! Everyone was assigned a particular sequence of rings. But, when the central operator rang in - which could be distinguished by a "sharper" ring, everyone would pick up the receiver to hear just what was going on!

Anyone could eavesdrop on their neighbors' conversations. You'd have to ask repeatedly for them to get off the line. I had several girlfriends from school that I'd often talk to over summer break. When neighbors eavesdropped on our conversations, which was called "rubbering in on the line", we'd have to ask them to get off. If too many people were listening in, it would cut down on the power and then the two people that were supposed to be talking couldn't hear each other.

There was one neighbor, Mrs. Zimmerman, who never went anywhere or did anything, but she knew all of what was going on because she'd listen in on her neighbors' telephone conversations.

One day her son had gone over to his cousin's to go rabbit hunting. Well, that same day his mother listened in on a telephone conversation to hear someone telling that the Zimmerman boy had been accidentally shot to death. I guess Mrs. Zimmerman just went hysterical. What a horrible way to find out your son had just been killed!"

Elsie: "The farms in Sheridan Township didn't get electricity until probably the 1940's - 1950's. I remember visiting my sister and brother-in-law, Martha and Clyde Stoy on their farm in Isabella County sometime after they had hooked up to electricity. I'll never forget Clyde's amazement as he demonstrated how you just flick a switch and the whole room lit up! He was so in awe - just like a little boy with a wonderful new discovery!

I also recall that when the folks sold the farm and moved to Pontiac, they were so amazed to be able to use a heated bathroom!

Automobiles

The automobile gradually came into its own in the early 1900's. For a number of years, the automobile and the horse-drawn vehicles had to share the roads. Elsie tells of one experience of having to share a narrow country road with an auto.

Elsie: "The 10-mile buggy ride to Vernon to pick up my sister, Martha, took quite a long time because the horse had the heaves so I couldn't ask her to go very fast. One time I was driving along and I kept hearing this noise behind me. I had no idea what it was - I thought perhaps it was in the telephone wires.

Finally, I leaned out of the buggy to have a look around and here was a car - the driver had been beeping the horn for me to get over so he could pass!"

It is difficult to say which mode of transportation was safest in those days, the new and unpredictable automobile, or the centuries-old horse-drawn vehicles. Today, we think of the automobile as a rather dangerous mode of transportation. Actually, travelling by horse and buggy has never been the safest way to travel, either.

Elsie: "One time mother and I'd been shopping to Clare. On our return trip, we were only a mile from home when a rabbit or something jumped out in the road, spooking the horse. Well, the mare jumped sideways and went right into the ditch - buggy and all!

Somehow, she pulled loose and took off for home, leaving us in a ditch full of water! We didn't want to get wet, so we sat there hoping for rescue.

No doubt the folks at home became quite worried when the horse showed up in the barnyard. I imagine it was either Joe or Harold that ran across the fields as a shortcut and found us first. The others brought the horse by way of the road.

The boys took hold of the shafts and pulled the buggy up into the road and hitched the mare back up to the buggy to pull us the rest of the way home!"

TEMPERMENT OF PARENTS

Ole and Andrine were of very different temperments as explained by Elsie.

ELSIE: "Dad had quite a temper. He would get mad but he would always be sorry later.

One night two of my brothers had wanted to use one of the work horses. They had wanted to go to a dance or some such event. Dad told them "no" because the horses had to work tomorrow in the fields and they needed to rest. Well, the boys harnessed one of the horses to a buggy, anyway, and took off. When they got home, they put the horse back but didn't go into the house because they knew Dad was up, waiting for them.

That same evening Earl and I had gone to an ice cream social. Upon returning to the farm, my brothers were down by the road. They warned Earl not to go up to the house. So, he let me off and said goodby at the road.

As I walked in the door, dad hit me and chipped my tooth. He was mad at the boys but hit the first person to come in the door.

A week or so later, he and I were driving the team and wagon into town for some reason. He asked me to forgive him for hitting me. I Told him I would forgive him but I would never forget, because I hadn't done anything wrong.

Occasionally dad would get mad at mother and later he would always feel bad, so he would go out and buy her something. One time he went to town and bought her a new washing machine.

I remember another time when one evening he came in the front door of the house. Mother was sitting at the dining room table. He bent down and gave her a big kiss, then walked on out the back door!

One Sunday afternoon there was some entertainment down to the church. I believe it was a childrens' program - Ruth and I were probably in it.

We were all cleaned up and ready to go. Dad, dressed in his good clothes, had the team hitched up to the wagon and waiting out on the edge of the road in front of the house. We climbed in the wagon.

At that time our front yard was fenced along the road, but we didn't have a gate across the little gateway by the mailbox. We had a piece of wire stretched across there to keep animals out of the yard - in case any got out in the road.

Well, dad had forgotten something and had to go back up to the house. Unfortunately, he forgot about that wire and he fell flat as he rushed through the gateway!

We sat on the wagon trying not to laugh, for fear he'd give us all a slap; but, we couldn't help it and laughed so hard we about cried. It's a wonder he didn't get mad, but he joined us in laughing, too!

Each fall we would have two days off for teachers' institute. Those two days we always helped dad get the potatoes in from the field. One year, dad was digging the potatoes and the rest of us were picking them up in bushel baskets and loading them in the wagon.

Well, Milly went way off to pick up potatoes, and she had to travel quite a ways back to the wagon with her heavy load.

Dad asked her, "Why don't you pick them up closer to the wagon, Milly?"

Milly replied, "I'll pick them up where I damm well please!"

We all laughed at her reply, and believe it or not, dad laughed, too. It's a wonder that he didn't get mad!"

Andrine was of a very different temperment than that of her husband.

ELSIE: "Mother never had a harsh word for anybody. She was no hand to scream and yell. If she had to tell you something, she'd do it in a nice way."

EARL: "She'd get mad at the old man everyonce in a while, but that was understandable. They all do!"

ELSIE: "Mother raised ten children but never talked harsh or raised her voice. She always asked in a nice way if she wanted us to do something for her. Mother and I never had a cross word between us, no, we never did."

"I'll never forget the one day when I was in my early teens when mother and George spent an autumn morning making sauerkraut. They had been busy at it all morning - it was quite a job. About noon, mother walked into the house just as I was coming out into the kitchen, and said, "It's noon and no potatoes cooked - lunch isn't started. What have you been doing all day?"

I started to cry because I'd spent the whole morning cleaning the house. Mother saw me and then said, "Oh, now, I've made you cry, dearie."

She came over and gave me a kiss on the cheek. With that, we both set to getting potatoes peeled and lunch ready."

Andrine had a faith, wisdom and courage of a true pioneer woman, and a temperment uncommon to most people.

ELSIE: "Mother would never sit down and complain or feel sorry for herself. She worked so hard to raise us. On the farm we had to work so hard for everything. We didn't come into the house and turn on a faucet to get water, turn on an electric stove to cook food, or flip a switch to turn on some lights.

Mother worked so hard and it used to be her Sunday if she could sit just for an hour and rock the baby.

Occasionally mother would walk with us to church. She wasn't used to walking on those rough roads. (Roads back then weren't like they are today. They weren't graded, but were rough, sandy, and full of stones.) Mother's ankles weren't strong and she would have to stop along the roadside and sit down to rest a while before she could go on.

I was about 10 or 11 years old and mother must have been in her early 40's when she got false teeth. Over the years she gradually had to have a tooth pulled here or there. It got so quite a few of her teeth were gone. But, I don't ever recall her complaining about her teeth bothering her.

One day I came home from school and walked in the back door to find mother sitting in a chair by the kitchen cabinet, peeling potatoes. She turned and smiled at me, and then laughed. She had a mouth full of teeth! She must have laughed at the look on my face - it was quite a surprise! But, I was so glad to think she'd finally had the last of her few teeth pulled, had impressions made and had gotten false teeth."

My brother, George, was a good looking young man and a sharp dresser. One time he was getting ready to go to a dance and he put some shoulder pads in his jacket to look even more impressive. Mother did not approve of this and suggested he remove them. She told him, "dress as good as you can and act respectable, and let the rest do the thinking."

Andrine and Ole were quite strict with their daughters' social lives.

ELSIE: "Mother was very strict with Martha, she being the oldest. Mother wouldn't let her date or go to parties because she was afraid something would happen to her. Martha always felt bad that she never had any fun. I guess she did let Martha go to 1 or 2 parties, but Martha would come home to find mother walking back and forth, crying. Martha decided it was not worth it. Apparently the reason for mother's fears is because she never did anything socially when she was a girl.

I don't believe Mary was allowed to go to parties, either. But when she moved to Mt. Pleasant she went out whenever she wanted.

Years later, when us younger girls were in our teens, mother made up her mind she wasn't going to be so strict. She let us go to parties and other social functions. ---We knew how to behave ourselves! But, we were not allowed to dance. Ruth got to go out some, and so did I, but when Milly got old enough, she being the youngest, she went to lots of parties - and even danced!"

MEETING EARL KAUL

Elsie Larson lived a distance of 5 miles from the young man who one day would be her husband. She does not recall knowing of Earl Kaul when she was young, but he knew of the Larsons.

EARL: "I remember your grandma when she was 4 years old or so. I used to go down to the Sheridan Baptist Church for fun!

My church didn't have any young peoples' meetings, so I'd attend the ones at the Baptist church - which is where the Larsons worshipped.

I also remember the day Ole Larson drowned. I was about 7 years old. Mother, Aunt May and I were leaving Grandma and Grandpa Bell's place when a neighborboy came out to the road and told us that the Larson boy had drowned in the Tobacco River."

According to Elsie and Earl, they officially met at an ice cream social at Colonville when they were about 13 or 14 years old. Their mutual friend, Harold McClung (his sister, Jenny, was Elsie's best friend) introduced them. Elsie had come with her 2 brothers, Joe and George, but accepted a ride home from Earl in his horse and buggy.

Elsie says she then saw Earl at other events.

ELSIE: "Oh, I met Earl just around to house parties. You see, people didn't actually date back then, because there really wasn't anyplace to go. About the only places to go were to neighborhood parties, ice cream socials, school and church events and perhaps, dances.

Whenever we would have a party in our neck of the woods, we'd invite the kids down from Hermansdale (area Earl lived in) and vice versa. I think one of the first times I saw Earl was around to Clutes - they lived across the road from my family."

Elsie recalls that the usual procedure at the neighborhood parties was to play some games and then have lunch or some refreshments.

ELSIE: "At the parties we would play all kinds of games, often kissing games. There was one game where everyone would gather around in a circle and one person would be in the center. Everyone would circle around, holding hands and sing:

EARL: "Sailing on the ocean, the tide runs high,
Sailing on the ocean, the tide runs high,
Sailing on the ocean, the tide runs high,
Waiting for a pretty girl to come by and by!

ELSIE: --Then the person in the center would grab someone from the circle and pull them into the center and they would kiss. Then the new person would stay in the center and the game would begin all over again.

I remember one time we were playing this game and the first time I was in the circle, I didn't chose Earl. Then the second time I went to choose him - he linked his hands behind his back and stepped back! -That was Earl's little German temper!"

EARL: "Another game we would play was with two people locking hands and forming a "bridge" - which the other people, one by one, would go under. We'd sing:

"Choose your partner and stay all day,
"Choose your partner and stay all day,
"Choose your partner and stay all day,
"We don't care what the old folks say!"

-Then the people forming the bridge would drop their hands and "capture" the person they wanted a kiss from.

Oh, we used to play lots of different games like these."

ELSIE: "I remember one time there was a party at my friend's - Vivian Sowles. I was sitting with Vivian and her brother, Harley. When it came time to eat lunch, I just stayed where I was. I was just a kid, and not thinking - because here I was supposed to be Earl's girlfriend, but there sat Earl, all alone.

He got mad and up'd and left. He went to his Aunt Kate's who lived on the next place up. He'd put his horse and buggy there.

A little while later a friend walked with me and we stopped to Earl's aunt's place. He was there and he finally got over being mad and took me home.

'Oh, those little boys was jealous back in them days!'"

"I probably didn't see Earl again until the next party around. We didn't make dates- there was no place to go!"

Earl and Elsie would meet at parties, ice cream socials, and dances. Sometimes she would probably go with her brothers, sisters or friends, and other times Earl would arrange to pick her up.

ELSIE: "Earl liked to dance and he would go to the Clare and Dover dances. I would go along, too, but I wasn't allowed to dance. My brother George played the violin at many of the dances, and

when I went I would accompany him on the organ. (I'm self taught- I learned to play songs by ear. Playing chords and accompanying my brother was very easy for me.)

So, I'd be up there playing the music and your grandpa would be on the dance floor with all of the girls!"

EARL: "There used to be a dance every week. One week it would be at the Gleaners' Dance Hall in Dover and the next at Duncan's Hall in Clare. So, there was a dance to go to each weekend. Sometimes my friends and I would go to a party and later to a dance."

ELSIE: "Earl and I didn't see each other every week. I remember one time though, that we must have been going kind of steady, because he then suggested perhaps we should see other people for awhile, just to see if there was anyone else around we would like better.

So, I hadn't seen or heard from him for a couple weeks, so when Bill Stoy asked me for a date, I said yes. He came over and we decided to go to the church program at Elm Grove. By the time we got there it was pretty crowded and we had to walk all the way up to the front of the church to sit. Of course there sat Earl in the back, with 3 girls!

After the service, Bill had to go around the side of the church to get the horse and buggy, and Earl came up behind me as I stood waiting out in front. He took me by the arm and asked, 'Why didn't you tell me you were coming down here?'

I replied, "Well, you didn't call me and tell me that you'd be here.

The next day, sure enough, Earl called. I was gone to help a lady who had just had a baby. But when it came time for me to come home, he came to get me.

I guess we went kind of steady after that."

Elsie recalls the many buggy rides she and Earl would take.

ELSIE: "I would be ready and tell mother that Earl was coming. I'd go in the living room and sit on the floor beneath a window that openned up to the north. I would listen until I'd hear the creak of the buggy or Earl singing, "The Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, on the Trail of the Lonesum Pine."

I'd walk out to the road and down aways, about 100 feet or so to meet him. I'd get in the buggy and we'd go for a ride.

Dad was probably up to the barn and he probably never knew that I was gone. Mother would never tell him, oh mercy, no, or he wouldn't have let me go.

One time I guess dad found out I was gone and he had a fit. Mother said, "She only 'vent' to a party with little Earl Kaul."

One time Earl had been to Clare most of the day - having a tooth pulled at the dentist, and he stopped on his way home. I went out and sat in the buggy and Earl laid his head on my shoulder and fell asleep. Well, I sat there and let him sleep.

He woke up when my sister, Martha, worried that I had been out too long, yelled, "ELSIE! ELSIE! ELSIE!

I later told Martha there was no reason for her to do that and she shouldn't worry about me."

" Another time we had gone someplace and on the way home a horrible electrical storm came up. Earl drove the horse and buggy up to the farm and parked it in the drive shed. We sat there and waited out that horrible storm."

EARL: "One evening your grandma and I went out for one of our buggy rides. It was a bit cool, was in the fall, so we had the top up and the lap robe (buffalo robe) on. We weren't too far from the Larson's place on the Loomis road when we decided we'd gone far enough and we'd better turn around because it was getting dark.

Well, we pulled off a little too far and the buggy tipped over into the ditch! Elsie rolled out of the buggy over the top of me, and we were both tangled up in the lap robe - it was quite a ditch!

It's a good thing that I was using old Queen, because Maggie would have panicked and run away. But Queen stood still even though the shafts were twisted up on her. I had to unhitch the horse and get the buggy straightened out.

We laughed about it later, but Elsie had been quite scared at the time!

Back then, the roads were so narrow that there was hardly room to turn around. There was hardly room to pass someone either and you had to be careful that the wheels of the vehicles didn't hit or that one of you didn't go in the ditch."

ELSIE: "Another time we had a bit of excitment was on a Sunday afternoon when I was about 15. I'd set a kettle of water to heat on the cookstove. Later, I leaned over the stove to see if

the water was boiling yet and sure enough it was - because I got my face scalded by the steam!

I remember running around the table, screaming!

The folks called Dr. Art Muscle and he came out to take care of me. He wrapped my face up but left slits for my eyes, nose and mouth.

Someone called Earl and he quickly harnessed up his mare and buggy and rushed over. He sat on the edge of the bed and held my hand - and looked in through the slits!"

The incident was even reported in the Clare Sentinal:

APRIL 9, 1915
Southeast Sheridan news column:

"Miss Elsie Larson was very unfortunate in getting her face badly scalded with steam last Sunday. Dr. Mussell was called and suffering was soon lessened. Her many friends truly hope there will be no serious results."

ELSIE: "Dr. Muscle did a wonderful job because there was no sign of any damage to my face.

I recall my good friend, Jenny McClung, had said that she "cried and cried all day" when she had learned about my getting burned."

MT. PLEASANT NORMAL

At the age of 15, Elsie set off to continue her education at the Mt. Pleasant Normal, more than 20 miles from home. Earl had hated to see her go so much farther away, but wrote to her and occasionally would catch the train and go visit her on a Sunday afternoon. Elsie would also occasionally come home for the weekend and of course, the holidays.

No doubt Earl felt Elsie was the girl for him. He had given her a beautiful gold locket for her eighth grade graduation. When asked about this, his reply was, "I felt this was an appropriate gift for such an achievement - and to pass the eighth grade - plus score the highest in the county, was quite an achievement back then."

When asked how she wore her hair when young, Earl promptly replied "Buster brown!" Elsie said she wore her hair long, parted in the middle and braided, - "if we were lucky, we'd have a little ribbon with which to tie it up underneath." As a teenager, she wore her hair shoulder length.

Asked how he would have described Elsie back then, Earl replied: "She was a cute little girl, always looked neat and clean, she was quiet, wasn't mouthy, she had a pleasant manner, was quiet and reserved and good natured. She had blonde hair. She was the only girl that I went with for any length of time."

Future stories: coming next: "The Kauls -Life of Earl Kaul" and "Elsie and Earl Kaul - plus the remainder of the story of "The Larsons"

CORRESPONDENCE FROM NORWAY

Ole received an inheritance from Norway, which no doubt was from his parent's estate.

Elsie: "I remember the day they got the letter - it was from an aunt of Dad's. Other family members in Norway had told her to never mind - that Dad would never know about any inheritance. The aunt told them that Ole was going to get his share.

I believe the first check he received was for almost $1,000.00 and later he received another check for I believe $600.00. His folks had died and the family was selling the homestead, I would guess.

We have in our possession several letters sent to Ole Larson by his relatives in Norway. Letter #1, dated April 11, 1932 or November 4, 1932 is addressed to O.S. Larson, 56 Marquette St. Pontiac, MI, USA. The return address is: Jens Larson Tellesås, Prestebakke, Norge.

However, the letter appears to have been written by Anna Hofft in Oslo. Perhaps she was in Prestebakke when she wrote the letter. The reason for the letter is to inform Ole of Jens' death.

I am not sure how Jens, Anna and Ole are related. I would guess that Jens was Ole's younger brother, and Anna was the daughter of Ole's older sister.

All of the correspondence received from Norway was written in Norweigan and has been translated recently.

LETTER #1

Oslo, 4-11-32
(Greetings)

On the occasion of Uncle Jen's death. I was called into court and have from a lawyer your address, and it seems that it was necessary to write to you. If you will also send me a few words in reply.

As you know, we will inherit. It probably won't be so much. The whole property is assessed at 2,000 krone. We think it is quite little value but the times are poor and property goes for very little price and also there is a little extra inheritance. (Somewhere in the letter it mentions "engine" which means a meadowland or pasture. They had a main farm plus property in the mountains, called an engine.)

We thought about re-appraisal but aren't sure it will be much different and will have to pay again.

How are you? Are Uncle and Aunt living well? I remember so well the day you left. Martha was 3 years and Ole 1-1/2 years. This is now Anna, the oldest child. I am married and have four children, 3 daughters and 1 son. The oldest daughter is 20, the boy 19, another girl is 16 and the youngest is 10 years of age.

We get by. My husband is a drawer-painter in the streetcar factory. He is from Denmark. If you should ever come to Norway, you are always welcome. We did not get to know Uncle Jens (or Jentz) was dead so we didn't get to the funeral. It was right after the (pasture) shuffling. They were unhappy over the shuffling. It was disgraceful the way they handled the widow. For that reason they wouldn't come and visit Mother and the will he had made was not legal so the court decided it. Some bad feelings about relatives.

It would be a great pleasure to hear from you regarding this problem and also know how things are going for you. I am sending pictures of us from the place where we lived this summer. Father lives in the country during school vacation. He is from Hadeland and the large one - they see Goustad (spelling) toppen from the place. Olga and Jenny are married and live there. Olga has 7 grown children - 4 are married. Jenny has 4 - 2 of which are grown-up. I am now 52 years old. Olga will be 50, Jenny is 44 but we feel young yet.

If Uncle is still living, I must greet him from Lorenty Anderson at Orebakke. He lives 3 Norweigan miles (29 kilos) from Oslo. He is here occasionally. He is

married for the second time. He has 2 sons, twins, 14 years old.

Now I don't know much more to write about and I am sending You greetings.

Mrs. Anna Hofft

Bergsliens Ct. #10

Oslo, Norge

POSTCARD #1

Ole and Andrine received a postcard from Anna Hofft. The card is a picture postcard of the mountains near Oslo, and does not contain a date. Anna does mention, however, that she'd received a letter from Ole and Andrine about 1 year ago, which was after Uncle Jens had died. Since her first letter was written in 1932, we can assume Jens died in 1931 or 1932. Therefore, this card was probably written in 1933.

Contents of Postcard #1

(Greetings)

I can tell you that Aunt Engene now also is dead. She was sick for a long time. Her place (or belongings) are up for sale, but I don't know how it has gone, but it of course is her family which will have it.

I have got a letter from you 1 year ago after uncle died - but have not yet responded, so I must ask forgiveness.

Here for a while I was with my husband in the summer. It was a 4-day trip. I hope that we will soon hear from you and how you are. Greetings to all of you.

POSTCARD #2

Postcard #2, dated December 7, 1933, is addressed to Mr. O.S. Larsen and familie, 56 Marquette St., Pontiac, MI, USA. In pencil "91 Hamilton" was written on it, so, apparently Ole and Andrine had moved to that address. The post card was a holiday one and Anna Hofft wrote a short message on the back.

Contents of Postcard #2

Dear Uncle and Aunt,

I wrote to you last year but have not heard. It would be fun to hear from you. Things are going well for me here. I hope that things are good for you.

It is now many years ago since I've seen you, but I remember you very well. But, naturally, we have changed a little from those years.

Holiday Greetings,

Anna Hofft

LETTER #2

Letter #2, dated March 20, 1934 is also from Anna Hofft. She mentions that she had heard that Uncle was poorly. Also, that her mother had told her that Ole (Jr) had drowned. Actually, Ole (Jr.) had drowned in 1904 - over 30 years earlier!

Contents of Letter #2

Oslo, March 20, 1934

Dear Uncle and Aunt and Everybody,

Thank you for the letter I received quite a while ago, I have been poorly for awhile and one does not feel like writing.

I have gotten this illness and I have bronchitis and it is the worst on me in February and March. Then I have to keep to my bed for awhile but now I am a little better so I get the interest back again.

I hear that Uncle is poorly - this is sad but that is the way it is with many of us. We all have what is due us.

It would have been a pleasure to see a picture of you. Can you not send a picture of yourself and where you live? I hear you have a big family. I have heard that Ole drowned. Mother had heard this. It is sad when misfortune happens. And so now you have such a young daughter as 27 years old. If she has a desire to come to Norway, she is welcome.

Our oldest daughter is 22 now soon. She is married and lives outside the city here and has it very good. Our son is 20 and is a sign painter and figure drawer. We have another girl, who will be 18 and she goes to business school The youngest is 11 years old.

I must also greet you from Olinae. She has it very good. I got her address through Lorenty. He got it from Jens Anderson who has a shoe factory here. He is no doubt Auntie's cousin. I talked to Olinae on the telephone. She sounded very happy. She wanted to hear from you. She lives at the same place, Snekken Dahl on Ski Street. (Mrs. Carpenter Dahl).

Now it is approaching spring again and summer again. And then we go to live in the country. We rent a place 5 miles (30) from town. But that won't be until 1 July, and we will stay until the end of August.

Well now we have come to Easter. The young ones here are going to the high mountains for ski tour. It is probably like this in your country, too.

I am wondering if Uncle remembers whether Grandfather Engene had any sisters whose name is Barbara (or "Barlra" or "Barla"). Here is a family that belongs to her if you can remember - then write to me about it next time.

I am hoping we will hear something about you soon. And to hear how it goes with Uncle, and for that matter everyone else. Maybe I will have a trip to Enningdahl and visit at Aunt Berte's. She is now in her 90's. Last Sunday her youngest daughter and family were here at our place. They live in Drammen, 4 miles from here (24 miles). Maybe you have heard from Lorentz. He was going to write to you.

Live so well and give friendly greetings,

Anna Hofft.

P.S. I am sending the little picture from last year at our place. It is taken with magnesium so we are all staring a little from the light.

This is a picture of those that belong to me, taken by our son-in-law.

Happy Easter, I wish to you all!

POSTCARD #4

Postcard #4, written December 15, 1934, is addressed to Mr. O. S. Larson and family on Hamilton St., Pontiac, MI.

Contents of Postcard #4

Dear Aunt & Uncle and Everybody,

I have waited to hear from you. I hope that you will send a few words. How is Uncle doing? I can tell you that Aunt Berte died just recently, close to her 90th birthday.

Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas,

Greetings,
Anna Hofft

LETTER #3

Letter #3, dated January 14, 1936 is from Lorenty (Lorentz) Andersen, Ryese (Ryen) Fetsund St., Norge and is addressed to Mr. Severin Larson, 91 Hamilton St., Pontiac., Michigan, North Amerika.

Apparently, Mr. Andersen had written to Ole the year before but had sent the letter to Williamsport, and it was returned to him, undeliverable. Ole had not lived in Williamsport for 35 years!

Contents of Letter #3

January 14, 1936

Greetings Severin and Andrine:

I can greet you from Anna Hofft - who was here on Monday. She said she had heard from you at Christmas and that everyone was ok. I got your address from her and got the notion to sit down and write to you.

There have been many changes for me since I wrote to you last spring. Last spring I was at Kroken and then I addressed correspondence to you in Williamsport, but the letter was returned later in the summer - it had

been openned to find my return address. The letter came to Kroken and then I was in Kristiana. The Letter was forwarded to me there, but I didn't attempt to write to you right away.

As you know, I married Karolina Mjolsnerod but she died in 1910. We did not have any children. I was a widower for 6 years and then I went into marriage with Adolfine Melby who I knew from before. She and her folks lived at Orebekke and I and Karolina saw them when we were neighbors there. Now, I am a widower for the second time, she died the second day after Ascension Day.

But now I am not alone. I have 2 small boys, 17 years old, twins, and they are good and want to be with their religion. They are in missionary work and sing and play. I am happy they have chosen this path. I came here to Fetsund (Felsund) in the spring of 1916. That ended my stone masonry because the war broke out and then I had to travel from Berly. The first 3 years I worked at the woodcutting (lumberjacks - probably spring logs).

After that I have been working at loggerbrukke. In March 1931 came an end of this place, too, and since that time, I haven't gotten back and neither have I had employment.

I do have a little pension, 37-1/2 krone per month which isn't so much to live from. Food is somewhat expensive and we do have a little house, which my father-in-law had built. He died in 1916. I came there in the summer- it is not very far from Oslo - about 29 kilometers.

The railroad goes right past here. It is about a 3 minute walk to Sojy, a place _____ which has been here for many years. (Maybe it is only a 3 minute walk to the railroad station.).

You must greet Martha. She may not remember me but I remember so well that afternoon when the auction was held at your place then she began to cry and then I took her on my arm and she said "I will be with someone_____ _____ (not sure what this means.)

There has been much rain here. There was quite a bit of snow here by Christmastime. But after Christmas a strong melting occurred and it has diminished a lot.

Now I am beginning to become old and if the Lord wills I will be on the 6th of April, 75 years old. You are no doubt a little older. My brother, Martin, was 85 last April. Berthe died one year ago since this fall and missed 3 days from being 90 years old.

Now I must wish you all a good and blessed New Year. A hearty greeting to all of you from Lorenty Andersen.

Additional Correspondence

The Larsons received a New Years card from Anna Hofft in 1936. The card was a black and white photo of the Oslo harbor. It was addressed to Mr. O.S. Larson and family, 91 Hamilton St., Pontiac, MI.

We also have an envelope, I believe dated 1927, from Jens Larsen Tellesas, Prestebakke, Norge. It is addressed to Mr. O.S. Larson, Clare, Michigan, North Amerika. Whatever correspondence was in it has been lost.

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