

Beechwood \ J. J. Larsen



The founders of Beechwood, the very first settlers, were J. Jens Larsen, a Dane, and his wife, Lebbe Larsen, a highly respected Indian Squaw, whose curtains were snowwhite, whose flower room burst with sunshine, windows, and gorgeous floral blooms. The upstairs of their tin covered house was rented out as a rooming house and Lebbe was a very reputable cook for mainly "lumberjacks" at the time. The two section houses also served as hotels.

Jens Larsen was one of the first postmasters and ran the post office from his home and there settlers would congregate after their day's work around his pot-bellied stove, to chew the fat, to attempt to solve national and local problems of that time, and to reminisce about the old county while the children were allowed to play and scream to their heart's content in the basement which could be reached through a trap door in the floor.

Larsen contrived to make a high post with one arm on it by the railroad tracks on which to hang the mail, since the train did not stop at Beechwood, so the train man could quickly grab the mail bag with a long stick having a hook at the far end of it and then toss out the incoming mail to the ground, the train still moving. Reuben Bloomquist, when he related this incident, remarked, "Quite a feat!"

Early settlers along old U.S.2. toward

Golden Lake and the Beechwood-Basswood Road were two homesteaders-Andrew Johnson, who arrived in 1889, and Charles Halvas who appeared shortly after. Both of them received four forties each, or 160 acres of land, from the government, provided they lived on it for five years.

A string community leader was Albert J. Sandgren, a young man, who came from Gladstone and put up a one-room store, then known as the General Mercantile Store, which was only a lean to, located where the Beechwood Store now stands and which was later moved to the back to make room for a more stately building in that time, known as The Beechwood Mercantile Store. Sandgren sold out to Anderson when retired. Sandgren was also responsible for the erection of Bethany Luthern Church. A.J.T. Anderson's death, years later, resulted from a head injury on the skating rink across the rail road tracks on the site of J.J. Larsen's former home, subsequently lived in by the Trattles, then razed to the ground. The Campion Gravel Company had a pit operated by Emil Dams. The site is now occupied by Darlene Dams Waino.

After Anderson's death, his wife Mayme managed the store until she sold it to her brother. Louis Henrikson, who had worked there most of his life. He wife Mildred Johnson Henriksen then took over the responsibilities until her retirement in 1975 and then their daughter Dorthy Javorski operated the store until it was closed in August 1979.

To touch on notoriety, Beechwood was also frequented by Jimmy Hoffa, "illustrious" head of the Teamsters Union, who maintained a summer home at Basswood and mysteriously disappeared.