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20th Century at Glendalough

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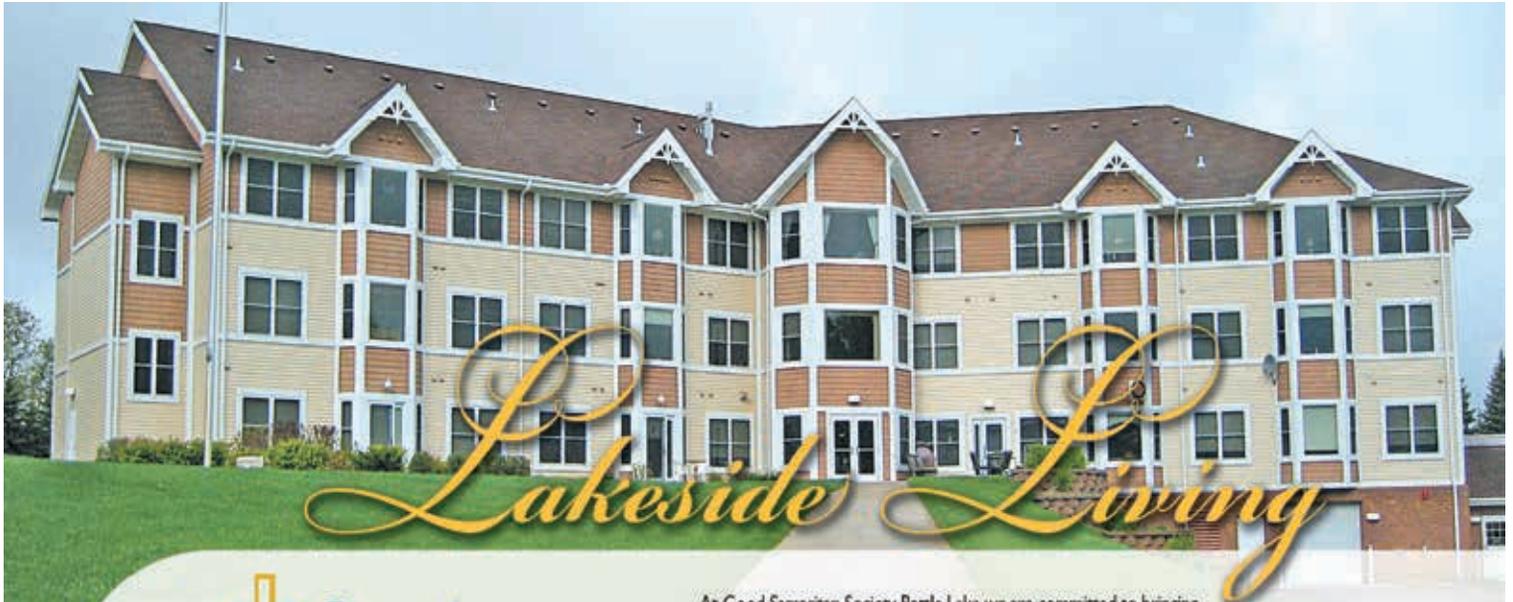


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BY REBA GILLIAND

PHOTOS COURTESY MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES AND GLEN DALOUGH STATE PARK

COVER PHOTO BY ED PAWLENTY

OTC

Otter Tail County

Summer 2020



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Otter Tales

Thought I had seen it all by now...not the case. This COVID-19 thing keeps us guessing on what else can possibly happen in our lifetimes. Maybe very few of us remember the flu of 1918 and all the loss that came from it. We had it pretty worry free in recent years and that is a good thing. Here's hoping all of you are well.

Finally, summer is here...although, maybe a different summer. What is best about being in Otter Tail County lakes area is the fact that we self-isolate by choice. Yes, we still love to eat out and enjoy some shopping, but time spent with family grilling on the deck or on the boat is a good, and safe thing too. I hope everyone can enjoy the summer as close to normal as we can.

As for the ongoing saga named Boomer, you can see by the picture above, he's become a fine water dog. He can't wait to hit it off the dock on a full run. On the real hot days, he just likes to wade in and lie down to cool off. I guess it is easier to take a drink when the lake's right at chin level. Most

impressive is the dock jump. He tries to get so much air and distance — it really looks like he just enjoys the thrill. I wish I could get a shot of his face when he is in the air just to see if he is smiling. Remember when you were a kid doing the same thing...pure fun! Maybe I'll try jumping off the dock this summer and see if I get that same smile back...and not end up in the hospital.

Our summer issue is another good one. We have great stories again starting with the history of Glendalough State Park. Being an outdoor guy and a history buff, I really like to read about how people long ago built these retreats in the middle of nowhere. Escaping the summer heat makes sense, but then there's the rich history of creating a game farm and the noteworthy visitors who came to the area to enjoy what we have here.

Next up is another history piece about farms in OTC celebrating their 100 and 150 year designations...simply outstanding milestones. These stories always make me wonder what life was like back then. I hope it was easier than I think it was... simpler times for sure. Then, we have another adventure to enjoy through the lens of Pam Larson, who always gives me a sense of being there without leaving the sofa.

Shhh...Boomer's sleeping for a rare moment. Nope, he's back up...gotta go jump in the lake again! See you all out there.

— Ed Pawlenty, OTC Publisher



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Spring 2020

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20th Century Glendalough

STORY BY REBA GILLIAND

VINTAGE PHOTOS COURTESY OF MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND GLEN DALOUGH STATE PARK

Glendalough, one of Minnesota’s newest state parks, neighbors Battle Lake in Otter Tail County. As I live nearby, I consider it “my” park and have great affinity for it.

Maybe you know it because you’ve canoed peaceful Annie Battle Lake, visited a heritage fishery or biked the 12-mile loop connecting Glendalough with Battle Lake. Perhaps your grandchildren have splashed in crystal-clear water and built sandcastles on the beach. Or your family has camped in a yurt, trekked through native prairie or cross-country skied by candlelight.

“My park,” of course, is just one of Minnesota’s state parks. All offer recreation and natural habitat at its best. Glendalough, however, has something else, something I find fascinating – a unique history.

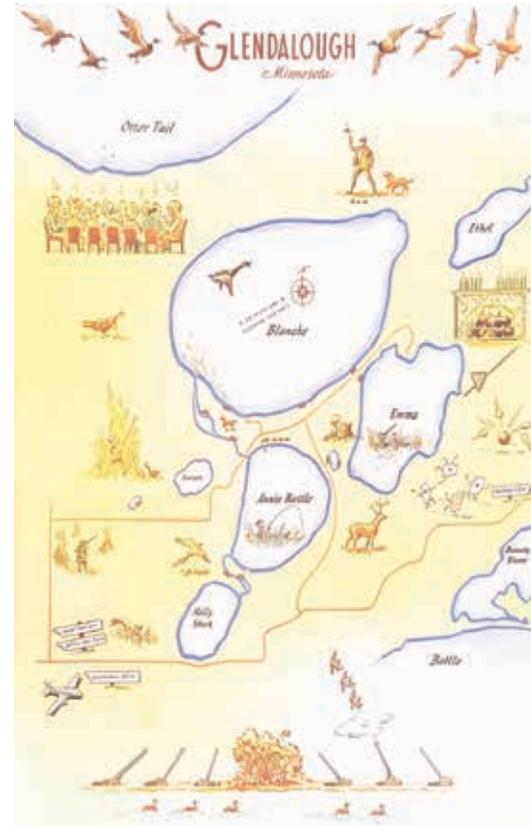
I’m not talking ancient history – although there is that: while surveying to put in a recent trail, archeologists discovered an earth oven used for cooking around A.D. 1350. Indigenous people have been hunting and fishing on land that is now Glendalough for thousands of years. But that’s another story. I’m talking 20th Century transformation.

Glendalough’s 20th Century Transformation

Between 1901 and 1990, Glendalough land underwent several transformations, growing both in acreage and prominence in state and national affairs. It grew from 30 acres of scenic land to almost 2,000 acres dedicated to game and wildlife preservation, and then to a retreat paradise for wealthy and prominent guests.

How did this transformation take place? By the 1900s, several trends were underway that would

change rural Minnesota: prosperous men were building elaborate lake homes to escape summer heat; science-based agricultural practices were taking hold among Midwest farmers; pressure on game populations were increasing; and Minnesota newspapers were reaching their height of influence.



People’s actions, of course, are what lead to transformation, and such is the case at “Glendalough.” Over a span of 90 years, three men – Ezra G. Valentine, Fredrick E. Murphy and John Cowles – brought vision, money, foresight and passion to bear on this beautiful land to leave their marks on local as well as Minnesota history.

1901 to 1925 – Ezra G. Valentine Begins the Transformation with a Summer Haven

The story begins in 1901 when Ezra G. Valentine, by then in his mid-50s, bought 30 acres of land situated between two small lakes. He and his family had previously vacationed near Battle Lake and found it a place “greatly admired for its fishing and scenery,” according to the *Battle Lake Review*.

Born in New York, Valentine had lived in Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois by the time health

concerns prompted him at the age of 35 to leave a thriving law practice in Chicago to move to Breckenridge, Minnesota. It wasn't long before he established himself again, making a name for himself in law, banking, real estate and farming.

Shortly after Valentine's 30-acre purchase, he turned his attention to creating a summer haven on what would later become Glendalough land. He constructed a two-story cottage, stables, boat and bath houses and called it all Valentine Camp. In 1902, he added a bowling alley and drew up plans to build a summer residence. His pride was apparent in a quote from the May 4, 1904, issue of the *Battle Lake Review*: [There is] "no place as beautiful and picturesque as the location of my summer home."

Sadly, Valentine died of a stroke in 1905 at the age of 58 while walking on his land. His son and daughter continued to enjoy Valentine Camp until the early 1920s, but gradually visited less and less often until they finally stopped coming altogether.

Valentine's summer residence (eventually becoming the Glendalough Lodge) on scenic Otter Tail County land heralded a movement that spread development to lake areas throughout Minnesota.

1928 to 1941 – Fredrick E. Murphy's Glendalough Legacy: Wildlife Refuge & Game Farm

In 1927, Fredrick E. Murphy, a 55-year old publishing tycoon and pioneer conservationist, leased land near Lake Emma to raise pheasants. The following year, he purchased the former Valentine property and added land bordering Lake Emma and Sunset Lake. The result was 300 acres on which he could begin game-farm production. Murphy

eventually owned almost 800 acres of what is now Glendalough State Park.

By the time Murphy's pheasant-raising venture began, his life's path had taken many turns. Born in Wisconsin and a graduate of Notre Dame University, he started work at age 21 in the circulation department of *The Minneapolis Tribune*, published by his brother, William J. Murphy.

F.E. Murphy advanced with the newspaper over the next 25 years before retiring to a large farm in Breckenridge for health reasons (ironically, just as Valentine had). Three years later his brother died, and Murphy returned to the newspaper as president and publisher.

Although a consummate newspaper man, Murphy's passion was agricultural innovation.

His return to *The Minneapolis Tribune* allowed him to use the newspaper as a vehicle to promote modern farming concepts and thus influence the spread of science-based agricultural practices throughout Minnesota. In a state that was mostly one-crop farming, he advocated crop rotation, the use of natural fertilizers, and soil conservation. He urged controlled breeding of livestock and was instrumental in establishing a loan program to help bankrupt farmers. He showcased his innovative ideas on his 7,000-acre FEMCO (F.E. Murphy Co.) Farms near Breckenridge.

Following FEMCO's success, Murphy turned his attention to creating a waterfowl refuge and game farm, "working for preservation hunting," in his words. By now, Murphy and his wife had renamed the property "Glendalough" after a monastery in Ireland, an Irish word meaning "the glen between two lakes."



Dressed in swimsuits of the day, guests pose before taking a dip in Annie Battle Lake. 1904, Valentine Camp

By 1932, he had a hatchery with incubators at the Sunset Lake location with a capacity of 20,000 ducklings: six years later capacity peaked at 60,000.

Murphy had not only created a thriving waterfowl refuge and game preserve, he had an excellent retreat boasting eight miles of bridle paths, saddle horses, archery, bowling, boating, fishing, croquet, ping-pong, tennis, surf-boarding, and swimming.

He used his retreat to promote his agricultural interests, bringing in U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Arthur Hyde and Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen, among others, to

observe game farm operations. In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt chose Murphy to serve as U.S. delegate to the World Wheat Conference in London.

In 1940, Murphy died of a heart attack at age 67 while staying at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. He was widely recognized for his innovative agricultural work and the growing influence of *The Minneapolis Tribune*. He is credited with the increase of farm incomes at a rate of 95 million dollars a year across Minnesota, Montana and the Dakotas at a time when much of the nation was reeling from the Depression.

Murphy's success at creating a wildlife refuge and game preserve is still apparent today as startled drivers brake for deer, pheasants and wild turkeys crossing roads near Glendalough.



Glendalough Lodge in the 1930s, used as retreat for visiting agricultural dignitaries

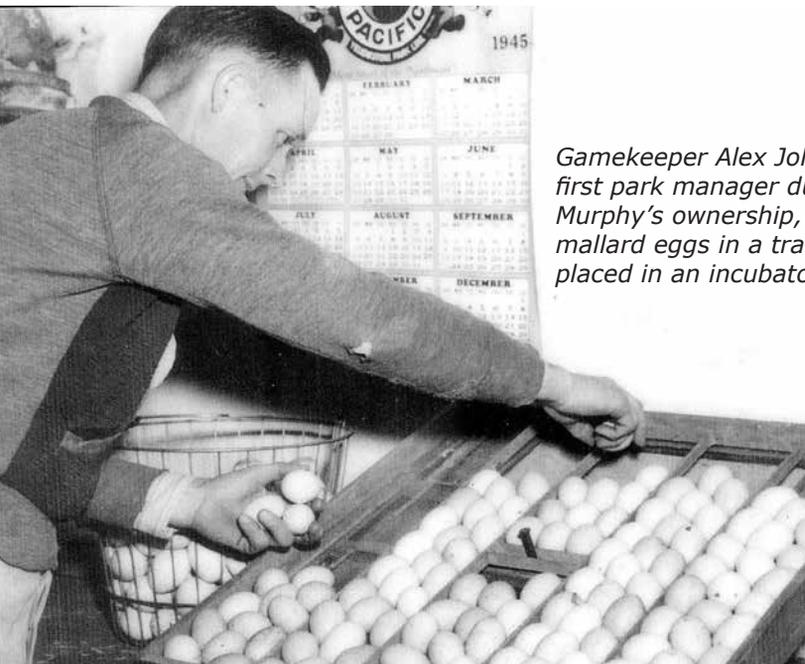
1941 to 1990 – Glendalough under Cowles Ownership: Marketing Paradise

John Cowles acquired the Glendalough property upon Murphy's death in 1941. The backstory began, however, in Iowa when John was five years old – about the time Ezra was building Valentine Camp.

In 1903, Cowles' father bought *The Register and Leader*, a Des Moines newspaper. In 1923, when John was 25 years old, his father made him vice-president, associate publisher and general manager. He had graduated with honors from Harvard University, where he served as editor of the school's three newspapers.

When John was 37, he and his brother Mike decided to branch out from the successful Des Moines operation, resulting in a purchase of the struggling *Minneapolis Daily Star*. Within three years, circulation of *The Minneapolis Star* had surpassed its rivals and in 1939 Cowles announced the purchase of another rival, *The Minneapolis Journal*. Not long after the death of F. E. Murphy, he arranged a merger with *The Minneapolis Tribune* and acquired Glendalough.

By the time Glendalough came under Cowles' ownership, the game farm had become as much of an attraction as it was a business and conservation effort. Although Cowles continued Murphy's game farm operation, he shifted the focus of advertising



Gamekeeper Alex Johnson, first park manager during Murphy's ownership, puts mallard eggs in a tray to be placed in an incubator

Hatchery Poster

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l-r: John Cowles, Sr., Dwight Eisenhower and Alex Johnson by the "duck house" on Sunset Lake

from agriculture to weekend retreats. A popular retreat was "Eastern Weekend," the opening of pheasant hunting, reserved for bankers, media executives and political leaders from "the East."

Over the years, the guest list included presidents of United Airlines, Proctor and Gamble, Honeywell, and the University of Minnesota, as well as vice-president Walter Mondale, just to name a few. The most memorable guest was then-presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower. In September 1952, during a campaign swing, Eisenhower stayed at Glendalough, touring the game farm and attending church in Battle Lake.



Eisenhower Fishing in Annie Battle Lake, 1952

By the time John died in 1983, the Cowles company, under the leadership of his son John Jr., had become a media giant, having acquired newspapers and magazines as well as television and radio stations.

During John, Jr.'s reign, Glendalough had grown to 2,000 acres, but by the late 1980s the family visited Glendalough less and less often and hunting weekends ceased to have the marketing impact they had in the past. The family decided to transfer the property to the Nature Conservancy rather than sell; the transfer was completed on Earth Day, April 22, 1990. A year later, legislation was prepared to transfer Glendalough to the State of Minnesota for use as a state park. Finally, on August 15, 1992, the deed for the Glendalough property was presented in a special ceremony to

Glendalough's first park manager, Les Estes.

On your next visit to Glendalough, consider the land on which you walk and how three 20th century men shaped it to fulfill their visions and make history.



Les Estes worked at the Glendalough Farms from 1965 to 1991 as farm manager and then joined the DNR as the first Glendalough State Park Manager.

Thanks to the DNR and Glendalough State Park for access to Archives, Photos, and Displays



I appreciate Glendalough's history and all the people past and present that make the park what it is today!

Travel Destination:

North Dakota:

Fort Ransom State Park and Theodore Roosevelt National Park

STORY & PHOTOS BY PAM LARSON



Theodore Roosevelt National Park: View from I-94 Painted Canyon overlook Rest Area—exit 32

If you are seeking a road trip adventure that doesn't require a long-distance drive, consider visiting our neighboring state—North Dakota! There are many great parks and historic sites to explore. One pleasant park is Fort Ransom State Park in the southeast part of the state.



Fort Ransom State Park gets its name from an 1860s military fort, located on the top of Grizzly Bear Hill. The post, named after Civil War veteran Major General Thomas E. G. Ransom, was built to protect area settlers and the railroad workers constructing the Fargo to Bismarck section of the Northern Pacific Railroad. When it was determined in 1872 that it was more important to protect the railroad crew at the James River crossing at Jamestown, the fort was dismantled and the materials used to build Fort Seward. The Fort Ransom land was surveyed and sold to homesteaders in 1880. The original site of the fort is



located southwest of the town of Fort Ransom and three miles south of Fort Ransom State Park.

The park is a public recreation area located in the midst of the wooded Sheyenne River Valley, two miles north of the town of Fort Ransom. The river provides ample opportunities for canoeing, fishing and bird watching. Within

the park there is a short segment of the *North Country National Scenic Trail*, plus additional hiking trails. The park sits along the *Sheyenne Valley National Scenic Byway*, the first route in North Dakota to be given this designation.

The park has over 20 miles of multi-use trails for hikers, bikers, skiers, snowshoers and horseback riders. One can spend time searching for birds, wildflowers, mammals and scenic vistas. There is a

great playground for kids near the Visitors' Center. A *Junior Naturalist* program provides a booklet for kids to complete for a fun reward—our grandkids got a nice water bottle and sunglasses.



Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly



10-petaled blazing star plant



Curious fawn



above & left: Sheyenne River Valley views



Prairie Coneflower



Sunne Farm Sodbuster Days

The *Andrew Sunne farmstead* within the park is the setting for the annual *Sodbuster Days* celebrations, mid-July and Mid-September, with horse-powered farming demonstrations and exhibits of homesteading life. Teams of draft horses and mules provide power for field work, haying, threshing, and “putting hay in the barn.” Blacksmiths and woodworkers using pedal-powered tools show the skill of the early pioneers in working to make what was needed on the farm. Homemaking skills of baking, quilting, embroidering and spinning wool are also demonstrated, with tasty samples of baked goods and homemade ice cream.



In addition to a variety of campgrounds, the *Bjone House homestead* with modern amenities, the *Nils Olson cabin*, the *Pederson and Redetzke yurts* and the *Percheron Covered Wagon* are some fun lodging options in the park. The yurts are "luxury" accommodations, including a fully furnished kitchen, a full bath, living area, two bedrooms, loft, pull-out couch and air conditioning. Ma Ingalls would be surprised at the covered wagon with king-sized bed, bunk-beds, table, chairs, microwave, mini-fridge and air conditioning. Drifting off to sleep listening to distant - or not-so-distant - coyotes and waking in the morning with soft light on the canvas roof or walls is a real "pioneer" experience.



On the west side of the state is Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the only American national park named directly after an individual. The park consists of three units totaling 70,445 acres, or about 110 square miles. The *South Unit* bordering I-94 near Medora is the largest. If you don't have much time, you can get a nice overview from the rest area at *Painted Canyon Overlook*, exit 32 (top page 12). The *North Unit* is about 80 miles north of there, and Roosevelt's *Elkhorn Ranch Unit* is located between the other two sections. The Little Missouri River flows through all the units and the *Maah Daah Hey Trail* connects all three parts.

An avid adventurer, Theodore Roosevelt first came to the North Dakota Badlands Territory to hunt bison in 1883. He fell in love with the rugged lifestyle and purchased the *Maltese Cross Ranch* seven miles south of Medora before returning to New York. Roosevelt's *Maltese Cross Cabin* (below) is open for public viewing year-round near the museum at the *South Unit Visitor Center*.



Pederson Yurt



Percheron Covered Wagon



left: Strolling with Grandpa Larry while waiting for sunset



Bison are a common sight in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Scenes along South Unit Park Drive (clockwise): Prickly Pear Cactus, prairie dogs, coyote, wild blue flax & common yarrow.





River Bend Overlook

Following the tragic deaths of his wife and mother on the same day, February 14, 1884, Teddy returned to the solitude of his North Dakota ranch to heal. The following summer, he began his second ranch, the *Elkhorn Ranch*, 35 miles north of Medora. The rugged environment and strenuous life that Roosevelt experienced in western North Dakota was the basis for the development of a conservation policy that we still benefit from today.

The *National Park Service* was created in 1916, three years before Roosevelt's death. Following



Slumps are slanted hills made during a wet period when entire blocks of earth slid down.



An interesting area in the North Unit exhibits gray layers of bentonite clay which was formed by the alteration of volcanic ash particles. The name came from Fort Benton, Montana, where it was first discovered.



A lone feral horse atop a plateau watched us as we hiked

left: Concretions are spheres of mineral matter once surrounded by rock of a different composition. They occur when a cementing material forms around a center such as a twig, shell or tooth. When the softer surrounding materials erode away, the spheres emerge. The old settlers called these Cannonball Concretions because of the shape.

Theodore Roosevelt's death, the *Little Missouri Badlands* were explored to determine possible park sites to honor him and the legacy he left behind. *Civilian Conservation Corps* camps were established in the developing park units from 1934 to 1941, and they built roads and other structures still in use today. Eventually park boundaries were

finalized and in 1978, the park was officially named *Theodore Roosevelt National Park*.

The landscape varies from grasslands to badlands and both main units of the park have scenic drives, approximately 100 miles of foot and horse trails, wildlife viewing, and opportunities for back country hiking and camping. The park is home to a wide variety of Great Plains wildlife, including bison, coyotes, cougars, feral horses, badgers, elk, bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer and mule deer, prairie dogs, and at least 186 species of birds including golden eagles, sharp-tailed grouse, and wild turkeys.

The best-known petrified forest in North Dakota, thought to be the third largest in the United States, is found in the northwest corner of the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. *Petrified wood* is the name given to a special type of

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Outcroppings of petrified wood



right:
Sunset on
South Unit
Park Drive



OTC

Pam Larson is a retired school librarian, who lives in Fergus Falls with her husband Larry. They enjoy visiting area parks, as well as going on road trip adventures to interesting places.



fossilized remains of trees. Petrification is the process by which organic material becomes a fossil through the replacement of the original material with minerals like quartz or chalcedony. In some instances, the original structure of the stem tissue may be partly retained so they appear as logs. Though the trek to the *Petrified Forest* was lengthy and warm, we were rewarded with the sight of some wonderful petrified wood specimens.

The North Unit is a bit off the beaten path, but the ruggedness, beauty, and solitude in this less-visited part of the park are well worth the drive. The first half of the scenic drive traces the bottom of the badlands. At the half-way point, the road crawls up out of the canyon to the North Unit's most iconic view, *River Bend Overlook* (top page 15), where there is a lovely historic shelter constructed by the CCC. Along the way, there are interesting geologic formations—*slumps, cannonball concretions and bentonite clay layers*.

When Roosevelt ranched in Dakota, he saw widespread land use change into misuse and abuse of natural resources and feared unregulated use would deplete those resources forever. During his presidency, nearly 230 million acres were protected in the form of national forests, parks, monuments and reserves. Today there are thousands of protected lands in the U.S. for us to use and enjoy.

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The Lakeside Gourmet

BY SANDRA THIMGAN
PHOTO BY DAN THIMGAN

Bravas Potatoes

with Smoked Salsa Bravas and Garlic Aioli

Bold and generously spiced with red pepper flakes and garlic — enjoy this new, easier take on fries.

Serves 6-8

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 T. garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 2# Yukon Gold or red potatoes,
cut into 1" thick wedges

Preheat oven to 400°. Combine oil, garlic, pepper flakes and salt in a large bowl. Add potatoes and toss to coat. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and spread the potatoes in a single layer. Make sure a cut side of each wedge is in contact with the foil. Cover with foil and roast for 15 minutes to steam. Remove upper foil, turn potatoes, and return to oven, uncovered, for 30 minutes, until tender and brown, turning at 15 minutes. Serve with dipping sauce and garlic aioli.

Smoked Salsa Bravas Dipping Sauce:

- 2 T. olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- 2 Tbsp. flour
- 1 cup chicken broth
- Salt to taste

Saute garlic in the oil briefly until fragrant. Add the paprika, then the flour. Cook one minute, gradually add broth, and cook until thickened, stirring occasionally. Set aside.

Garlic Aioli:

- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 1 tsp. lemon juice

Mix with a whisk and refrigerate.

We've been fierce, ferocious, brave — so bring on the Bravas Potatoes!

A whole new "Spin On Spuds!"

Fried potatoes! How many countries claim their own variation — from the French *lyonnaise* to Swiss *Rosti* or American *hash browns*? Potatoes are always welcome when you grill and/or barbecue, so let's step up your game and enjoy a new, slightly spicy spin on spuds. *Bravas potatoes* — a popular dish native to Spain — is commonly served in *tapas* bars. These are easy to do in the oven, no frying necessary! While they are baking, you can enjoy your time out on the deck or patio. Hopefully, social distancing will have relaxed and we can enjoy mixing friends and family once again!



OTC
The Magazine

"Sharing recipes is part of our culture, enriching each one of us and binding us together."

Sandra Thimgan lives on Silver Lake with her husband/photographer/taster, Daniel.



Mental Health & COVID-19



BY DR. DAN TRAIER
AND MARIA WILLITS, LPN
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE
REGION HEALTHCARE

How can you protect your mental health and cope with stress, anxiety and emotional health right now?

Dealing with uncertainty

One of the things we all need to keep in mind is that this is a period of uncertainty that none of us has ever really dealt with in our lifetime. It is important to acknowledge that uncertainty, and what we may be feeling. Many of us are dealing with fears of the unknown. It is okay to be fearful and to reach out if those fears are overwhelming.

Managing loneliness and isolation

Even though stay-at-home orders have relaxed, social distancing guidelines are still important, and many people still need to be especially careful about avoiding crowds.

- Now is the time to contact loved ones on a more regular basis. It's more important than ever to check in with elderly parents and grandparents or people who may be living alone. Every time you talk with somebody, you're decreasing the loneliness for two people.
- Plan activities as a family, now that teens and

college students are home more; play games, watch favorite movies together, do puzzles.

- Get out in your neighborhood and talk to your neighbors—remembering to stay six feet apart.
- Do something kind for someone else.

Thinking about your health

This is a time when we can feel bored or frustrated. Keeping active can help with that.

- Try reading.
- Practice yoga or meditation.
- Get outdoors and do yard work, walk, bike or just relax in the warm weather.
- Maintain a good sleep schedule.
- Limit drinking and consumption of sugary or processed foods.

Calming your mind

- Feel anxiety washing over you? Sit in a chair and just close your eyes and breathe in and out slowly to calm yourself.
- Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to the news.
- Choose to focus on the positive things in your life.

- Maintain a sense of hope, work to accept changes as they occur and try to keep problems in perspective.

Taking care of children right now

Children have seen incredible changes over the past few months. They're seeing people walking around with masks on; their parents may be working from home; parties, summer camps and activities have been canceled. This is very confusing. You may notice some behavior changes, like:

- Excessive crying or irritation.
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown.
- Being worried and sad.
- Not being able to sleep.
- Acting-out behaviors in teens.
- Difficulty with attention and concentration.
- Headaches or body pain.

You can help your children by:

- Sticking to a schedule or routine.
- Asking what they've heard about the coronavirus and talking openly, calming their fears.
- Validating how hard this is for them.
- Turning to your pediatrician, your family care provider or one of the resources listed in this article if your child's anxiety and depression become too big to manage.



Dr. Dan Traiser



Maria Willits, LPN

Mental health resources

If the outbreak of COVID-19 is triggering any mental health issue you may have or is causing stress, fear and anxiety that is hard to cope with, please reach out to one of the resources listed here. We are here for you right now.

If you're feeling suicidal or thinking of hurting yourself, seek help. Contact your primary care provider or a mental health professional.

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218-736-6987

Lakeland Mental Health Center
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Bridgeway Unit - Inpatient Psychiatry Unit
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Minnesota Warmline
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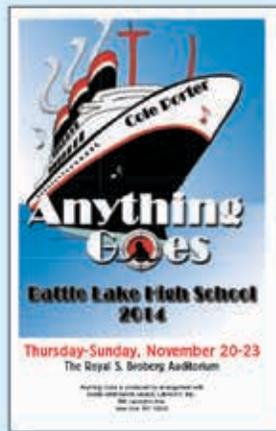
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Local farms share their stories

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in the search for a better life*

STORY BY BECKY TIGHE

FAMILY FARM PHOTOS COURTESY OF NAOMI BARBER,
DAN BUCHOLZ, ROGER HEIDEN, CHRISTINE JACOBSON,
GLORIA & HARVEY RADTKE, KEVIN WALLEVAND AND
HAROLD WEISS

Otter Tail County people cherish their roots. While preparing a magazine story like this one, treasured stories come to light. Sesquicentennial family farm owners Gloria and Harvey Radtke, descendants of the Shirley (Sjolie) homesteaders, shared this picture of the 150-year old original cabin they had restored. Inviting all the descendants, they celebrated the restoration with a family reunion attended by 130 relatives from 9 states. Would have been nice if Gunder and Maren, original homesteaders, could have been there to know that the struggle was, after all, worthwhile.



Descendants of Gunder (Gust) Shirley gather at the restored original log cabin

How Minnesota Sesquicentennial and Century Family Farms are chosen:

Sesquicentennial Family Farms: must have been owned by their families or at least 150 years, be at least 50 acres in size and currently involved in agricultural production. Sesquicentennial Farm Families will be awarded a commemorative certificate signed by the Governor of Minnesota, the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the President of the Minnesota Farm Bureau, along with a commemorative outdoor sign created by the Minnesota Farm Bureau signifying Sesquicentennial Farm recognition.

Century Family Farms: must have been owned by their families for at least 100 years; be at least 50 acres in size and currently involved in agricultural production. Each Century Farm Family will receive a commemorative sign created by the State Fair and presented by the local county fair and/or local Farm Bureau, a certificate signed by the governor of the state of Minnesota, and by the MN State Fair and MN Farm Bureau presidents.

150-Year-Old Family Farms

Radtke (Shirley) Family Sesquicentennial Farm

(Located in Section 23, Trondhjem Twp):

Homesteader: Gunder Olsen-Sjolie (Shirley)

1870-1916 (great-grandfather)

Martin & Emilie Shirley

1916-1954 (grandfather)

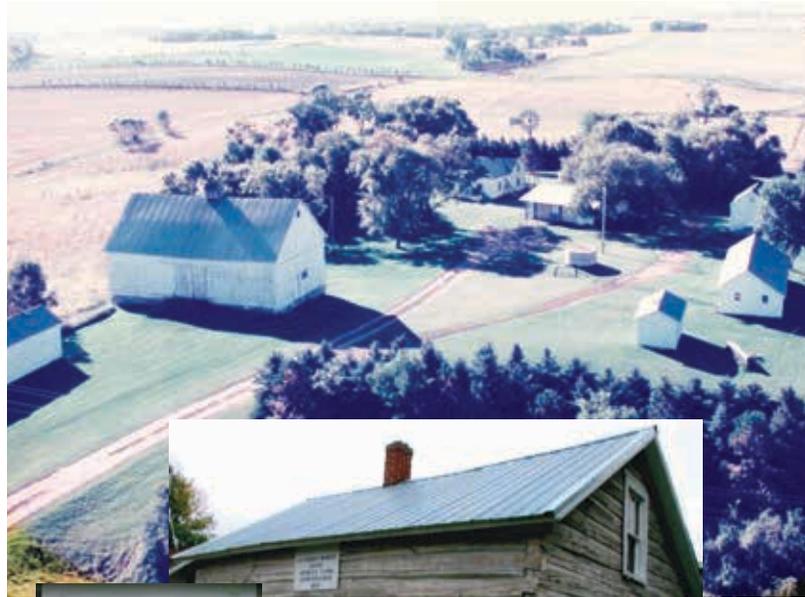
Gilman & Helen Shirley

1954-2008 (father)

Present owners: Gloria & Harvey Radtke

2008-present (daughter & spouse)

Immigrants Gunder and Maren Sjolie of Solar, Norway, came north in 1870 with three other families after spending three years in SE Minnesota and NE Iowa. They and their baby girl lived in a dugout, or "soddy" home until a log cabin was built. On June 27, 1870, Gunder filed a homestead application for 153.05 acres, the same size as the present farm. When Gunder died two months before his 90th birthday, he was the oldest pioneer of Trondhjem Township. In 1987, their family farm achieved Century status, and now in 2020, received Sesquicentennial (150-year) registration. Since 1870, the farm has produced wheat, oats and corn. The restored historic log cabin now stands by a new home.



Jacobson Family Sesquicentennial Farm (Located in Section 30, Leaf Mountain Twp)

Homesteader: John Jacobson

1870-1936 (grandfather; also the son of immigrant/pioneer Jacob Larsen Vali who died in Iowa)

William Jacobson

1936-1975 (father)

Willard & Elizabeth Jacobson

1975-2003 (son & spouse)

Present owner: Elizabeth A. Jacobson

2003-present (Willard's wife)

Jacob Larsen Vali family and his family left Hattfjelldal, Norway, for Quebec, then labored in Decorah, Iowa, to earn supplies. Typhoid fever from the ship took the lives of Jacob and three of the children during their stay in Iowa. Only Jacob's wife, Ragnild, and three surviving sons set out for the Red River Valley. They wintered in Leaf Mountain Township, which had grass for the ox and provisions for the family. Come spring, they decided they had traveled enough. John chose 160 acres in this place they would call home. They and their descendants raised grain and livestock, enlarging the farm to 194 acres.

top: Jacobson homestead in Leaf Mountain - original log house covered with siding

bottom: Barn was built in 1897 and is still standing



Weiss Family Farm: (Located in Section 24, Erhards Grove/Twp 135)

Previous family owners:

1898 Buyers: Julius & Henrietta Weiss (great-grandparents)
Fred & Elsie Weiss (great-uncle & spouse)
August & Mary Weiss (great-uncle & spouse)
William & Tina Weiss (grandparents)
Harold F. & Inez Weiss (parents)

Present owners:

Harold O. & Kimberly Weiss (son & spouse)

The original parcel of 80 acres was bought in 1898 by the Weiss family from Mary & Marcus Maurin and Peter & Anna Maurin (formerly of Moravia, Prussia), for \$600. The Weiss farm presently consists of 79 acres and includes a home built in 1917. Over the years it produced oats, pickles, hay, cattle and milk.



Aune-Wallevand Family Farm: (Located in Sections 4 & 6, Folden Twp)

Previous family owners:

1899 Buyer: Albert P. Aune (great-grandfather)
Peter A. Aune (grandfather)
Carl & Lilly (Aune) Wallevand (father)

Present owner: James Wallevand (son)

The original Aune farm consisted of 80 acres, sold by Ole Gvernsrud of Norway to Albert P. Aune in 1899. Some of its original buildings are still standing, and the present house was built in 1900. The farm has produced oats, wheat and alfalfa and has grown to 100 acres.

Farm today in Folden Township

*right:
Albert Pederson Aune,
father of Peter Aune*



Peter Aune



Family Farms

Steuber Family Farm:
(Located in Sections 21 & 22, Corliss Twp)

Previous family owners:
1920 Buyer: Herman Steuber
(grandfather)

Oscar Steuber (father)

Present owners:
Eric W. & DaVida Steuber (son & spouse)

This homestead farm consisted of 200 acres when it was purchased from Diedrich and Anna Ahrns, formerly of Cook County, Illinois, for \$70 an acre (\$14,000). The present home was built in 1999, and the farm has produced corn, oats, alfalfa and beef cattle. Herman Steuber also raised red clover for seed. Eric writes, "there used to be a shed here that we called the 'holler (huller) shed.' It was where the clover huller was stored. Oscar (Herman's son) was a mechanic. He worked on neighbors' tractors. In 1964, Oscar hooked 2 tractors together (one drive), which I still have today!"



Aerial view of Steuber farm courtesy Google maps



left: Jim Wallevand...his boys Jeff & Kevin. Jeff's wife Karen, daughter Berit & son Erik

below: Peter Aune (son of farm founder Albert Pederson Aune) sitting on far left in Norway before coming to Otter Tail County



Lilly Aune Wallevand and Carl Wallevand

Heiden Family Farm:
**(Located in Sections 28 & 21,
 Compton/Twp 134)**

Previous family owners:

1919 Buyer: Walter E. Heiden
 (grandfather)

Howard, Rosena & Lawrence
 (Walter's children)

Lawrence & Rosena (Walter's children)

Present owners:

Roger (Howard's son) & Pamela Heiden
 (spouse)

M.J. Steltzmler, formerly of Central City, Iowa, sold a 120-acre farm to Walter Heiden in 1919. Its original log house stands on the land to this day, and the present home dates to the 1890s. Over its history, the farm has produced dairy, corn, oats and alfalfa. Of the 80 remaining acres, 65 open acres once contained at least six small fields, which now are one 65-acre field rented out by the Heidens. Present owner, Roger, writes: "Sandy soil, with lots of rocks."



above: Pamela and Roger Heiden (current owners) with the original house in background



left (l-r): Lawrence (Bud) Heiden, Grace Heiden, Rosena Heiden, Walter Heiden and Howard Heiden. Walter and Grace were the original owners in 1919, Lawrence, Rosena and Howard the 2nd owners

Ruud Family Farm:
**(Located in Section 24,
 Pelican Twp)**

Previous family owner:

1919 Buyer: Henry Ruud (father)

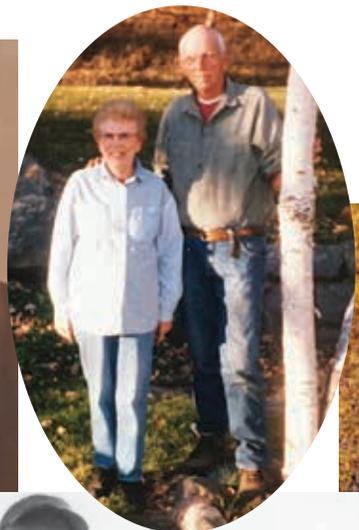
Present owner:

James Ruud (son)

In 1919, Mrs. Strom, a native of Pelican Rapids, sold an 80-acre farm to Henry Ruud for \$75 an acre. He farmed it for 36 years. His son James H. Ruud writes, "I was born here." James and his father were planning for James to buy the farm when Henry died in 1955, and James inherited it. He brought his bride to the farm in 1956, and they lived there together until her passing in January, 2019. The farm grew to 160 acres and produced chickens and Jersey dairy cows.



above: Clara and Henry Ruud purchased the farm in 1919



above right: Anna Mae and James Ruud purchased the farm in 1956



right: James and son, Tim, 1959

**Bucholz Family Farm:
(Located in Section 25, Gorham Twp)**

Previous family owners:

1919 Buyer: Frank Bucholz (grandfather)
James Bucholz (father)
Marton Bucholz (James' wife)
Dan & Jim Bucholz (sons)

Present owners:

Dan & Andrea (Andi) Bucholz (son/spouse)

In 1919, Frank Bucholz purchased 113 acres from John and Luella Yenter, originally immigrants from Germany. In 1921 Frank built a new house, which is still standing. The farm, which has produced dairy for 100 years (plus corn, hay, oats, hogs and chickens), has grown to 240 acres. In 2018 the dairy operation was terminated in favor of raising crops.

front: Mary and Frank Bucholz

back (l-r): Agnes, James, Sylvester, Barbara (1930's)



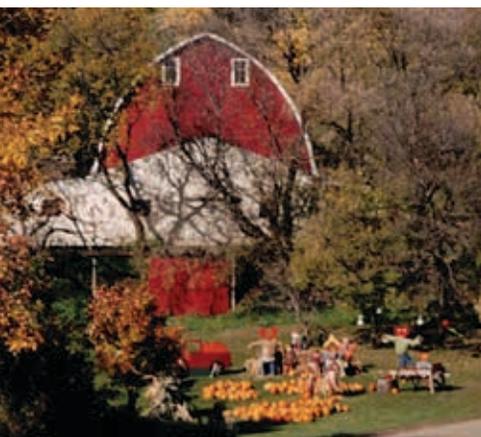
right: Ben, Jackie, Andi and Dan Bucholz (2000)



left: Frank Bucholz and son James in front of the original Farmhouse in the 40's



Bucholz Family Farm, 2019



During retirement the Ruuds grew and sold pumpkins



Ruud Family Farm, 1975

Note: Information for this article has been quoted or paraphrased from owners' applications for Century Family Farm or Sesquicentennial Family Farm recognition, and from conversations with present owners or their family members. Our thanks to the families who shared photos and memories, and to Kristin Harner of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation for her assistance. Our apologies for errors, if any.



Becky Tighe left advertising to volunteer with Christian non-profit ministries in Romania and Austria for 7 years. Returning to Minnesota, she settled in Battle Lake. She likes spending time with her 10 grandkids and living among BL's wonderful people.



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Safely Caring for You

IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

Thank you for allowing us time to put our expertise to work to safely care for you in the way that you feel most comfortable.

IN-PERSON

Yes. It is safe to come in and see us. We have extensive protocols in place in our hospital, ER and clinics.

- Everyone is screened before entering and must wear a mask
- Plexiglass shields protect you and our check-in staff
- Enhanced cleaning practices have been implemented

Find all of our comprehensive COVID-19 safety measures at www.LRHC.org

*Don't delay. Call for an appointment today.
We're ready to see you.*

ONLINE

If you prefer a virtual visit:

- Simply call **218.739.2221** to set up your online appointment.
- Or go to www.LRHC.org/VirtualAppointments and follow the easy steps outlined there.



Lake Region
HEALTHCARE