

MAP OF
TOWNSHIP 152 N., RANGE 44 W
 of the 5th P. M.
 Scale $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches to 1 mile

BLACK RIVER TOWNSHIP

SANDERS										TWP. ROCKSBURY TWP											
TWP.	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	TWP.								
	Peter A. Ekstrom 160	P.G. & R. & G.O. Deible 160	Axelson 90	John 160	D.C. & D.G. 80	John H. Maynard 40	A. Johnson 40	R.A. Cooper 80	C.A. Brink 80												
	Erick Johnson 160	Chas. H. Foy 160	Delbert M. Filzstamm 160	August Nelson 160	Ole Thompson 160	L.A. Carlson 320 School	Moris Swenson 160	Alfred Nelson 120	H.G. Stoll 320												
	Peter A. Ekstrom 160	Helix Albert Anderson 160	Erick Adolfson 160	L.M. Scroggin 640		Arthur Hunter 160	Warner Andrew 160	40 120 Warner Andrew 160	Peter Lundberg 160		C. & M. Martin 160										
	Sarah W. Johnson 160	Chas. Johnson 160	Felix & Albert Anderson 240			Dillew M. Fredrik 160	Neis T. Gistie 160	M.J. Skanndret 160	R.J. McHercher 160		Westerlund & Co. 160										
	Mrs. W.M. Brandt 160	P.J. Anderson 160	Chas. Adolphson 160	Arnold & Gruzsmoch 600		J.C. Kilen 160	Western Land Co. 160	Clara B. Cowell 160	William Morgan 160		D.W. Lebr 160										
	Michael Draeger 160	Claus Adolphson 160	P.J. Anderson 160			W.F. Gledten 160	Peter Johnson 160	R.J. McHercher 320		S.W. Thompson 160		W.H. O'Neill 160									
	George M. Hmerly 160	Michael Draeger 160	John McHarty 160	John Wahlbach 160		Williams Webl 160	First National Bank 160	Walter Peterson 160	Matthew Peterson 160		H.A. Trupperud 160										
	Alice Mallory 160	John A. Duffy 160	A.J. Augustine 160	J.A. Duffy 160		J.A. Duffy 160	Carlson & Subert 80	W.G. Vanderburgh 160	A.S. Welt 120		Richard Carl 160										
	Solna Power 160	George A. Reyl 160	I.M. Rapp 160	A.J. August 160		Louise Schmitz 160	Jos. Glatzel 160	Peter Swanson 160	Mrs. Inga Swanson 160	Philip Lee 160	Thomas Baldwin 160										
	August Moien 240	George M. Emery 160	L.J. Wagoner 160	L.J. Wagoner 160		Edw. Plehan 160	D.S.B. Johnson 160	A.G. Gilbert 160	Peter Swanson 160	Michael Ford 160	Felix & Alst. Grand 160										
	Henry Busse 160	James Ridge 160	Festive Ridge 160			Anna L. Dougherty 160	Emelie Richard 160	Scott Seables 160	Horlex Jos. Ford 160	Edw. Wright 160		E.D.P. McCarty 160									
	George Weissner 160	H.J. Raleigh 160			Elizabeth Borg 160	Gertrude Arndt 160	Gertrude Arndt 160	Van Sant Land Co. 160	John Weissner & A.F. Deck 160		Edw. Ford 160										
POLA CENTRE																					RIVER FALLS
RED LAKE FALLS										TWP.											



Joseph Schmitz family "Going to Church"

BROWNS CREEK TOWNSHIP

Browns Creek Township, twelve sections in area, was once a part of Black River Township in Red Lake County before 1911. With the division of Pennington and Red Lake Counties following the vote of the populace in November 1910, the south one-third became Browns Creek.

As in River and Wylie (Polk Centre) Townships, there was the division of assets and equipment with two-thirds going to Black River in Pennington, and the one-third portion to Browns Creek.

The first township officers were Joseph Schmitz, Sr., Andrew Lehrer and Ed Enright, supervisors; C. O. Swanson, clerk, and Festy Ridge, treasurer.

Two schools were located in Browns Creek, The Little Red Schoolhouse, District 43 in the west, and District 108 on the east portion. The latter was closed in the 1950's and has since been used as the town hall.

Three treasurers have served on the board since its beginning, Festy Ridge, Fred Weiss, and presently Ruben Lehrer. Browns Creek has had two clerks, C. O. Swanson who served on the board for forty years and was succeeded by his son, Charles in 1950. Township records were destroyed by fire in 1972 at the home of clerk, Charles Swanson.

Present officers are Sylvester Johanneck, Paul Grandbois and Vernon Wavra, supervisors; Charles Swanson, clerk; and Ruben Lehrer, treasurer.

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL OF BROWNS CREEK TOWNSHIP

A little red school house occupied a small corner of section 29 in Browns Creek township for almost fifty years.

Built around 1885, it was a small structure, measuring 18 x 30 feet and was

aply named for its coat of bright red paint. The only highways leading to the school were the trails made by the children who walked to school from every direction, Indian style.

In the winter when the weather was bad we children were brought to school by team and sleigh. The old Waterbury stove was usually red hot when we arrived at school in the morning, however for the first period it remained so cold that had water been spilled on the floor it would have frozen.

The school day began at 9:00 a.m. with a song, a prayer and some physical exercise. Arithmetic, grammar, history, geography, spelling, physiology and penmanship were the subjects taught. Our personal school supplies were a slate, a penny pencil and a five cent (Jumbo) tablet. Of course, almost the entire inside school wall was covered with black boards which saw a lot of use.

One teacher taught all of the classes in grades one through eight. In retrospect, there perhaps was an advantage in this system for pupils with ambition as there was an opportunity to learn from the other classes.

Weather permitting, the teacher and all the pupils would go outdoors for recess. For recreation we had ball games and played such games as Anti-I-Over, Drop the Handkerchief, Tug of War and London Bridge. Indoors we played Hide the Thimble, What Color is My Bird and other games.

We knew for certain that we had to walk to school if our older brothers or the neighbors had spotted coyotes in the area. Some times this would cause a great deal of commotion around the school when many men on horseback were chasing a wolf. The teacher would then call a recess so we pupils could watch the cunning wolf outwit the hunters.

Besides weekends and vacation time,

we students looked forward to the last period on Friday afternoons when we had painting and drawing or learned a new song. It seems that the teachers made a special effort to teach us many songs and even now as I am in my seventies I recall with fond memories those beautiful songs with their meaningful words. It seems that we had a song for every season and every occasion which put us in the spirit of the times and events. Of course, before Christmas we always prepared a special program with music, poems and dialogues which we presented to our friends and neighbors who packed the school for this event.

There were some not so nice things, too, as I recall. Often in the late fall, skunks would stake claim to the space beneath the school house and because skunk fur had some value, the trappers were often after them. This created an odor that lasted longer than the paint on the building.

1911 was my first year in school and I was the eighth child in my family to attend classes in the Little Red School, District 43. Those of my family who were also my classmates that year were Cris, Mary, Ben, Agnes and Josephine. Other students at that time included: John, Albert, Sophie, Freida, George and Alma Busse; Mary, Patrick, Delia and James Ridge; Femly and Anna Dobson; Albin and Clara Ruud; Willie Wahlbeck; John and George Whalen; Emil, Dena and Albert Harbott; Alice, Helen and Buddy Ford.

My first teacher was Marie Crompt; and others that I recall were Lydia Gerlach, Josephine and Frances Keifenheim, Aneta Audler, Gladys Johnson and Elsie Randorf. Superintendents of Schools that I remember were Alban E. Deforge and Erba Pouliot. Speaking for myself, I was very nervous the day the Superintendent would visit our school.

In order to graduate from the eighth grade and receive a diploma, it was neces-

sary to pass a state examination.

The Little Red School House has been gone from that site for many years, but it still occupies a special place in the hearts of those people who were students there.

Edward J. Schmitz

"SCHMITZ" THE CREW THAT GREW IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST!

At the heart of the history of Red Lake County is the story of the immigrants. They came in droves; from Germany, Scandinavia, England and eastern Europe, lending their hearts and hands freely in exchange for a new life.

Their dreams were not in vain.

The story of John Schmitz, a German immigrant who followed several sons to Red Lake County (Brown's Creek township) is a beautiful tale of family devotion and hardiness.

By sheer numbers, the impact of the Schmitz family is prodigious. The father of nine children, John became the grandfather to his son Joseph's equally prolific brood of 13. All 213 Schmitz descendants living in Red Lake County today are descendants of Joseph.

In all, Joseph Schmitz's descendants number 531. So appropriately titled is the following account, "Schmitz — The Crew that grew with the great Northwest."

John Schmitz was born in 1831 in Kiln, Germany and following his marriage to Anna Ott, came to America, settling near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he worked as a butcher. Nine children were born to John and Anna: Agnes (Neibert), Theodore, Adam, Joseph, (the father of all the Schmitzes in the Red Lake Falls area), John, Henry, Ann (Lehr), Herman, and Elizabeth (Nimersgern). Several of John's sons preceded their parents here in 1885 coming to Minnesota by train, seeking good wheat land. John, Anna, and the rest of the children came a short time later to settle in Red Lake Falls (then Polk County) on the North Side, where the late John E. Schmitz, a grandson, was to eventually live and raise his family. This was about two blocks west of the present Co-op Store. John continued his trade as a butcher in this locality, traveling from farm to farm processing animals and making his delicious "home made sausage". He also had an important hobby, making furniture — a little crude, but very functional. John died following a brief illness on July 11, 1918, at the age of 87. Although John had lived in Red Lake Falls less than thirty years, he had carved for himself a little niche in our society, much of which would be recognized many years later.

Several of John's sons were to have their direct impact on Red Lake Falls. Adam started and operated a harness shop here before moving to Grand Forks to continue this profession. John Jr. first farmed north of Joseph's farm, then started a brick yard in Red Lake Falls. He made two kinds of brick — soft and hard. In order to fire the bricks, he spent his winters cutting wood which was then used to fire the kiln to make the hard brick. A major catastrophe (the roof of the brick factory caved in due to the weight of the snow after a severe storm) and competition eventually forced him out of business. Henry and Herman, having become infected by the gold-

mining fever, left our locality for Montana.

Joseph, the fourth child of John and Anna, was the one Schmitz to have the greatest impact on Red Lake County. At twenty-one years of age, he boarded the train from Milwaukee. This trip was made more eventful when Matt Younger, one of Jesse James' gang, also rode the same train. Joseph's first job was to donate his help toward the completion of St. Mary's Church which was being built just west of his parents' home. Previously, when a priest was available, Sunday Mass had been held in their home. Even after its completion, St. Mary's Church was not to have a resident priest for several years.

Joseph's wife, the former Louisa Schnirch, came to America from Austria with a sister, Mary (Kilburg). Frank, a brother, had already established residency near Wylie. Though neither of the girls could speak English, they were able to make the necessary arrangements, not only to work off their passage on ship by washing dishes, but also to finally reach their destination, Red Lake Falls. Louisa's work prior to her marriage to Joseph, consisted of house maid duties.

In 1891, Joseph Schmitz and Louisa Schnirch were married, not in St. Mary's Church, but in St. Joseph's Rectory, since St. Joseph's Church had burned down (a twice-repeated fact in this church's history). In 1885, the desire for land — good wheat land — was realized when Joseph bought a quarter of land in Brown's Creek Township from Edmund and Edna Walsh. He paid \$4,500, not cheap by that era's standards. He later bought another adjoining quarter and rented a half-section more land, bringing the total land farmed to a section — all farmed with horses and the help of thirteen children, (5 boys and 8 girls). The farmstead has been owned by the family for eighty years. Until November,

1975, Martha Omann, Joseph's youngest daughter, owned it. She sold the property then to Sylvester Schmitz, a nephew.

Of Joseph and Louisa's thirteen children, only two, Agnes (Mrs. Gust Knott) and Gertrude (Mrs. Charles Knott) have not been life-long residents of Red Lake County. The children are: John (deceased 1955); Elizabeth (Mrs. Art Wichterman) (deceased 1951); Crispin "Christ"; Mary (Mrs. John Schindler); Bernard "Ben"; Agnes; Josephine (deceased at age 14 of spinal meningitis); Edward; Gertrude; Theodore "Ted" (deceased 1972); Cecilia (Mrs. Mike Majeres); Clara (Mrs. Morris Hahner) (deceased 1944); and Martha (Mrs. Louis Omann).

Interesting notes —

School was in session seven and one-half months of the year. The Schmitz children attended school to be introduced to the English language, as well as the three R's. School lunch for them very often consisted of homemade bread, or bread garnished with lard spread.

To help pay for the groceries, Louise sold eggs and made good quality sour cream butter (a very sought-after product). Credit was often extended to the Schmitzes by Matt Skala. He would further extend this generosity by always giving a bag of candy with each order of groceries. Food complemented with roasted barley coffee, was always plentiful in this household even in hard times. The domestic diet was often varied by wild rabbit, deer, and other wild fowl. Hunting was a necessary and important part of their way of life, and it continues today on a recreational basis. Many of today's Red Lake County hunters still have the Schmitz name on their licenses.

Music was an integral part of the Schmitz family whether they were raising their



Joseph Schmitz children 1976: Crispin, Ed, Martha, Ben, Cecilia, Mary, and Agnes and Gertrude in inset.



Joseph Schmitz Family: Back Row: Josephine, Mary, Crispin, Bernard, John, Elizabeth, Agnes. Middle Row: Theodore, Clara, Cecelia, Gertrude and Martha with father and mother.

voices during a four-part hymn in the St. Mary's Church choir or playing an instrument for a party or dance. Even today, the St. Joseph Church choir has representatives from several generations of Schmitzes. No wedding within the Schmitz relationship is ever complete without seeing "Uncle Ben" or "Uncle Ed" dragging out their musical instruments and becoming the center and the impetus of the party. Those Schmitzes who couldn't play instruments, did their part by singing and dancing to their heart's content, whether it be to a graceful waltz or a bouncy polka.

Many of the medical problems were treated by home remedies, the help of the midwife or, when possible, by the local doctor. Home remedies: Goose or skunk lard mixed with turpentine was used as a rub-down for sore muscles, throats and chest colds. The juice and pulp from onion-plant leaves was used for soothing burns, and to draw out infection from boils and the like. "Foamentation" was a treatment designed to cure the flu (1918). A woolen blanket would be soaked in boiling water, wrung out, and then wrapped around the patient clothed in a flannel blanket. This sweat bath amounted to an old fashioned sauna. Prayer and love always accompanied home care and at times it was hard to distinguish which had the greater healing power. Someone recalled when a strapping young man of eighteen, suffering from a usually fatal appendicitis attack, was sent by Great Northern Railway to the nearest hospital which was in Grand Forks. After a long, painful trip, with an ice pack as the only pain killer, he did manage to survive the trip, the operation, and the two to three-week hospital stay.

Despite many hardships, the Schmitz family was destined to grow, and grow to dimensions that the first John Schmitz could scarcely have envisioned. John, besides becoming the father of nine children and the grandfather of Joseph's thirteen children, was to become, through his son Joseph alone, the present-day great grandfather of 88 children, great-great grandfather of 350 children, and great-great-great-grandfather of 71 children. The total number of blood relatives swelled to an impressive 531 descendants. These descendants would own and farm approximately 7,400 acres of Red Lake County's good farm land. Hardiness was a definite innate characteristic, for of the 531 descendants, 506 are still living. Of this number, 213 reside in Red Lake County, 153 on farms.



John Schmitz and Anna Ott Schmitz