

Caroline “ Lina” (Warholm) Peterson

Submitted by: Margaret Peterson

Lina was born in Willmar, Minnesota to Peter and Kristina Warholm in 1879.

Caroline (Lina) and Gustave (Gust) Peterson and two children homesteaded in the municipality of Griffin on SE of 6-8-11 in 1906. Originally, Gust had immigrated to Minnesota in the United States from Matlangen, Lundsberg, Sweden. They were married in Wheaton, Minnesota on June 28, 1899 and had two children there.

About 1914, they relocated to SE of 4-7-11, very near the correction line between the municipality of Griffin and the municipality of Cymri. Here they built a large seven bedroom home in 1916. They were located almost an equal distance from Griffin, Halbrite, Huntoon and Midale, (roughly ten miles from each). Because of this location, coupled with Mrs. Peterson's outgoing nature and the space the house provided, their home became a meeting point for many family and community events. Lina and Gust were a well-matched pair; she loved people and caring for them, and he was proud of her for doing it.



Originally, one of the downstairs bedrooms was to be for Lina's father. The plan was that he would move from Wheaton, Minnesota, and Lina and Gust would care for him in his senior years. This never came to be as Lina's father passed away suddenly before he could come. However, this same room would become a "hospital" room as Lina acted as nurse and midwife in the area assisting Dr. William Mainprize. At least six of the Peterson grandchildren were born in that room as well as several other babies, and friends recovered there while Lina cared for them.

One granddaughter writes, "She was always helping the sick and less fortunate and she never went to visit someone without taking baking or produce. She would hitch up a team of horses, get dressed up, always wearing a hat, and be off. I don't think she ever said, 'I don't have time.'"

After the house was completed and furnished, with Lina's handwork to grace it, social events were common in their home. Besides the family events, some worship services were held there as well as Ladies' Aid meetings. There were bridal showers, three family weddings and even several fowl suppers held there.

Crocheting was Lina's specialty, but like most women in those days she did other handwork too. She had a loom set up in a room over the kitchen where she made mats out of strips of cloth. The loom had to be threaded with very long, strong cords, sometimes in a color pattern. Way out in the yard, she wound all these cord around the reels of a binder. Then they were taken in through the window and fastened in order on the loom and wound onto a large roller by a hand crank. "She must have

made dozens of trips up and down the back steps and out to the binder to set this up to be ready to use," writes her daughter-in-law.

The Petersons enjoyed their coffee. During the Depression she made "imitation coffee" from kernels of wheat. The wheat kernels would be picked over to clean them of hulls and weeds and then she would wash the wheat and spread it to dry. A cleaned-out feed grinder would be used to grind it. To this broken-up wheat she would mix in some brand of molasses, chicory and other things. The mixture was spread on a cookie sheet and baked in the oven for a very long time. It would then be a hard, thin cake. When it was cooled, she broke it into pieces and put it through the meat grinder. Then it was ready to use like regular coffee. "It was surprisingly good!" writes her daughter-in-law.

"During the war, when sugar was scarce, Lina started tapping the twenty maple trees south of the house. The sap was boiled in a big copper boiler down to a syrup. This syrup was put in sealers and stored in the basement. The syrup was used for baking and cooking, freeing the rationed white sugar for coffee and desserts," writes a grandson.

"Mom had an incubator in the basement in the cold storage room. I was always allowed to help her turn the eggs and watch the lamp. I was always so excited when the chicks started hatching," writes her daughter Helen.

During WWII there was an airbase in Weyburn. Several airmen were invited for the weekend to enjoy a family setting and home-cooked meals at the Peterson house.

Mrs. Peterson was affectionately known as Mor by her grandchildren. This was shortened from Mor-Mor which is Swedish for grandmother and Mr. Peterson was called Papa, Swedish for grandfather. They stayed on the farm till Gust was in his 80's and then moved to Midale where they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in June of 1959.

Although many dates and events have been forgotten, the fortitude, stamina and generosity of these pioneers is still remembered. The amount of physical work together with long hours involved in cooking, cleaning, and baking seems overwhelming to those of us who have modern conveniences.

They lived simple, honorable, productive lives, and we salute them.

Memories in quotes are taken from the booklet "Memories of the Peterson House"