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Home Sweet Home

Each spring, the Gary Historical Association hosts the Deuel School fifth graders for a tour of the museum. I normally guide the portion of the tour involving the log cabin. Between the students’ questions and my own curiosity, I felt compelled to gather a bit more information about this relic of local history.



One of the first ten Norwegian pioneers to settle along the Lac qui Parle River east of Canby was Christian Anderson Houg who built this log cabin which used to stand on the Roy Rangaard farm. The cabin was dismantled in 1967 and taken to Gary, SD where it would be reconstructed and used as a museum piece.

Houg was born in Hedmarken, Norway on December 6 of 1841. He and Lars Gjovig arrived in

Canada in May of 1867. Houg was a Lutheran parochial teacher and taught in LaCrosse and Spring Valley, Wisconsin before he and the Gjovig family moved to Houston County in Minnesota. In 1872, he homesteaded in Yellow Medicine County and built this cabin and married Beathe Gjovig (sister to Lars Gjovig) on October 24, 1872. The logs for the cabin were brought to the homestead by oxen from south of Canby, a distance of ten miles. Houg taught in area homes for one year in 1875.

A Family of 11 Lived There?

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Houg and his wife had nine children, but diphtheria and scarlet fever caused the death of six of the children, and they are believed to be buried in St. Stephen's Cemetery near Canby. The remaining three sons, Marius, Adolph, and Edward lived with their parents until Marius and Edward contracted rheumatic fever. Dr. Killbride of Canby was able to save Marius, but Edward died at the age of 14 in 1900. A new home was built on the homestead, but Mrs. Houg died in January 1903 before the family could move into the new house. Christian then converted the log cabin into a blacksmith shop. He was quite active in town and school activities. Christian Houg died in 1916 and is buried with his wife, Beathe, in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

The information above was published in the Gary Interstate but originated in the Canby News in 1967 including the picture of the deteriorating structure.



Christian Houg received his Homestead certificate for the north half of the north-west quarter of Section 12 of Norman Township, Yellow Medicine County on May 25, 1885. I haven't been able to locate his original claim information but through on-line research I found out a bit more about his life. He, along with his wife and infant son, Adolf, were listed on the 1880

census living in Norman Township where they had homesteaded. The 1900 census verifies that only 2 of their nine children were living - Adolf and Marius. Adolf married but had no children. He moved to Stevens County, Minnesota where farming was his occupation. Marius Houg remained in the Canby area, marrying Clara Odden. They had two children, Ruth and Lawrence. Ruth married Telmer Thovson and descendants of the Houg/Thovson family remain in the Canby area yet today. Lawrence left the area, later living in northern Minnesota with his family.

Can you imagine a family of 11 living in a cabin measuring 15' x 20'? The original cabin pictured in the Gary Interstate archives appears to have an upstairs sleeping loft which no longer exists. The log cabin was rebuilt in 1976 using as many of the original logs as were sound. Additional logs were acquired and used to assemble a replica of the original cabin. The cabin has been shingled with new cedar shingles at least twice over the years. A ventilator was installed on the roof to control temperature and moisture in 1998. The Wecotah Extension Club helped to furnish the log cabin with furniture and period accessories and the Historical Association continues to add available artifacts to make the cabin period correct.

If only those walls could talk!

-Patti Haas

Fairchild Farmgirl

Wow, what just flew past us? Was it July? I thought so! I was driving our nephew to Hutchinson this morning to meet his mom after a week's stay at the farm and noticed that the corn is starting to turn yellow at the bottom. What in the world?

When I got done with school for the year in mid-May, I thought, wow, this summer is going to go so slow. All the way to mid-June, I thought that, then I wised up. What I wouldn't give to have this lazy summer right back at the beginning! Remember how absolutely perfect June was weather-wise? For right now, we finished doing some school shopping and buying football gear for Tedd, and now we're desperately trying to find a little vacation spot before Levi heads to college.

Ron is back to working full throttle at school and at home since his rotator cuff surgery, and right now, our focus is the gardens. I've wanted to switch our gardens to no-till for a while and yesterday talked more seriously about it. Between ChatGPT, the long road trip we were on, and me using my best sales pitch, I think we finally got Ron on board. Next year, I'd love to try high-intensity planting, be more intentional about succession planting, and make better use of cover crops, mulch, and more. If our plots are working that hard, we could more than quadruple our food production for ourselves and the markets where we sell. I'd also love to have a roadside stand like that farm family near Clarkfield. Tedd is on board with the flowers, because he approves of anything that helps cut down on weeding and watering.

In hopes of getting full-time work in supply chain (shipping/receiving, demand forecasting, or inventory) I've been taking classes and working towards a certificate. Let me tell you, college courses as an older mom like me is not for the weak. But I keep looking at the end goal and think, 'yep, I got this.' This brings me back to our market garden; one of my big class projects was how it can be made more profitable. It's been hard work but mind-blowing at the same time. I can tell you I've done my fair share of cussing my test scores out or my computer (because it's never operator error, correct?). I've learned so much!

So, what's up for the rest of August for the Fairchilds? Getting ready for some more Autumn Felting classes at libraries, gardening like crazy, farmers markets, planting, harvesting, burger feeds, enjoying life before that S word (school) rears its head, Friday night lights, and so many other things to be thankful for. Here's to loving your life as much as I love mine. At times it's not pretty, it gets stressful, and rarely do the paychecks stretch far enough, but gosh. Look at all you have. I've been looking around here and thinking about what we've got, most of all, each other and it's pretty great.

Until next time,
Fairchild Farmgirl

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A Look Back...

150 years ago, August 1901

Editor recovering from serious illness.
Tramp nuisance will be put to work if they don't stay away from Gary.
New dray line - Rogers and Brown managers
New hardware store - Peterson and Robinson
Birth: Girl to Mr. & Mrs. Hartson
Auction: Mrs. Akin

100 years ago, August 1926

Farmers' Picnic held
Leo Helmberger breaks his arm.
Robberies at Peoples Store and Otto Banwarth garage
Members of Gary alumni planning a play
FA Bartels and Wm Eakins involved in car accident
Birth: Boy to Mr. & Mrs. Thomas McLain

75 years ago, August 1951

Ed Dougherty suffers jaw injury while cranking a tractor
Blood bank to start here September 1
Dogs not allowed to run at night
David Winrow loses consciousness when horse he was riding rolled over on him
Secoy barn destroyed in fire
Gus Van Steenburg loses tip of his finger in car door accident
Marriages: Joan Miller & Melvin Simonton
Phyllis Morrow & Clinton Cole
Jeanette Limberg & Harold Kruse
Births: Girls to Mr. & Mrs. Roy Denekamp
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Cornell
Boy to Mr. & Mrs. Orville Skorseth

50 years ago, August 1976

Gary Library opens to public first week of August
Royal Thompson dies in tractor accident
Yard fire at James Thomas farm
Funds approved for 8-plex housing unit
Gary School opens August 26
Deaths: Grant Snyder and Royal Thompson
Auctions: Herman Schmahl -- Fred and Hannah Volk

Homesteading 101

- Go to the Regional Land office and identify land you are interested in settling.
- File an application and pay a filing fee of approximately \$18 for a claim on 160 acres of land.
- Homestead -
 - Build a home 12'x14' or 10' x 12' (local Land Offices dictated the size of dwelling) using sod, logs, or cut lumber - whatever you can afford. Or live in a dugout on the side of a hill or embankment.
 - Cultivate land (ten to twelve acres) and plant crops - this is where the term sodbuster comes from.
 - Live on the land five years through harsh weather, isolation, grasshoppers, and crop failures
- Prove up -
 - After five years, publish a Notice to Make Final Proof.
 - Present two witnesses who would testify that you had fulfilled what was required to receive the title to the land.
 - Pay a small commission fee and everything gets sent to the General Land Office in Washington DC. Months or years later, you receive a Patent (or Deed) to your land signed by the President.
 - Or take a short cut called commutation where, after 14 months, you could purchase your homestead for \$1.25 an acre and receive the title to your land. This practice opened the door to abuse by speculators who had no intention of farming and settling the land. They simply took a gamble that the land values would rise, and they could make money by reselling the land.

Back to School

As the local students are heading back to the classroom, I would like our readers to join Mike Peterson as we take a look around the Gary Public School.

Sometime around the year 2000, I stopped to visit my sister, Linda, who told me the school building had been sold and would be torn down. The doors were left open for people to go in and look around. Even though I was in a hurry, I had no problem deciding to stay a while to take a memory-filled walk through the school. I parked next to the big gymnasium doors and entered the building. I quickly walked through the gym and hurried into the old part of the school, the grand old three-story brick building.

I walked into the third and fourth grade room first. This is where I began my Gary School years. These classrooms were large enough for a lot more kids than we had in any classes in the 1960's. I went across the main aisle where everybody would run through in the mornings to get to class on time. Weekdays at 8:00 AM was such a time of hustle and bustle. Kids going here; kids going there; kids going everywhere! This was, by far, the busiest place in the old schoolhouse. I stood there thinking, remembering how well the janitors, Howard Gordon and Earl Jones, kept the old wood floors polished, and how good these floors and hallways always smelled on the first day of school.

I stopped in the fifth and six grade room and then on to the first and second grade room, and then the principal's office. The principal was no "pal" to me. I spent a lot of time in the Principal's office.

Some bigger kids had taken old hand drill braces with large bits on them and drilled a bunch of holes through the large 12-inch beams that supported the weight of the school over the basement shop

classroom. I had nothing to do with it, but I got the blame. I had trouble with some teachers not named Mrs. Gordon. I never did my homework, but I could quickly read the text and remember all the important points. The geography teacher would ask questions, and I would raise my hand but never get

called on so I started answering all the questions she was asking the other students.



The science room was the newest classroom in the old school. It was built above the old basketball court. I got in trouble by getting a Study Hall slip to go down to the chemistry room and conduct experiments. I opened a bottle of potassium and cut it into small pieces. I dumped some water on a large oak table and put the small potassium pieces into the water. The reaction caused the bits to burst into little flames that raced around the table. Mr. Nelson, the science teacher, caught Don, Roger, and me. I ended up in the Principal's office for two weeks. One day in science class we were watching a film on childbirth. Don fainted and fell to the floor with a loud bang. Sometimes the toughest are the weakest.

I read a lot of books. I was one of the kids who actually studied and read while in study hall. A teacher found a romance novel in a desk in the study hall. Apparently, having a romance novel in the Gary School was equal to a mortal sin. No one 'fessed up' so the crime was considered mine. I had nothing to do with that book but as I was the biggest reader in Study Hall, I was assumed guilty and sentenced to even more time in the Principal's office. The Principal's office wasn't such a bad place; I actually felt important there.



The Library was on the north end of the school, between the first and second floors.

Three-inch iron poles were at the bottom of the stairs on each side, in front of the library. When no one was looking, as I was coming down the stairs, I would make a quick jump, grab one of the poles and swing completely around the pole, landing on the

stairs below. I tried to do that nifty little spin one more time. My worn-out body had to settle for a 180. I stopped long enough to look into the library...no feelings. It was a nice little room full of very ancient books, that no one ever read. I read all the high school sports novels that the Library ever had. None of the other books were interesting enough for me to bother with.

I climbed the stairs to the second floor and went into Mr. Asher's seventh and eighth grade classroom. Weird! The only thing I got out of that room was the memory of misspelling the only word in my grade school experience. We had a substitute teacher in spelling class. "Powled," "the horse powled the wagon". "powled, poled, poled, I thought." "I've never heard of that word!" How could I have never heard of that word? I gave it up and left it blank. After the test, I looked up the spelling words for that week. Pulled! The horse pulled the wagon! The substitute teacher couldn't pronounce 'pulled' because of a speech problem.

Mr. Asher appointed me to be one of the flag bearers. I think Don and I were the two seventh graders assigned to bring the flag out every morning, attach it to the flagpole, and raise it to the top. Ten minutes before school let out, we would go out and lower the flag, fold it correctly and precisely, and bring it back to the cabinet. I always wanted to have an honorable job like that.

I walked past the Homemakers room and into the Science and Geography room. The room was also the General Business room. Mr. Roach, the Principal, conducted this class and everyone knew he kept the answer book for the 60 multiple choice questions in the desk in the typing room next door. He never gave lectures; he simply told us what pages to read and when he would be giving us a test.

Before the third General Business test, all 25 of the juniors and seniors had the answers. A consensus was reached; nobody would give all the right answers. Nobody was going to get all sixty questions correct. We took the test on a cold Friday afternoon. When we all met for class on the following Monday, Mr. Roach was already there and in a bad mood. He mentioned that every single student got a 59 out of 60. Everybody had decided to get one question wrong. Mr. Roach said, "I'm not stupid; I can tell some of you cheated." "I'm going to go down the rows of desks and ask every one of you if you cheated." "Margo, did you cheat?" "Yes, I did." "Ray, did you cheat?" "Yes." "Barb, did you cheat?" "Yes." "Harry, do you cheat?" "Yes." He got to my fellow classmate, Don. "Don, did youwait, I don't even have to ask if you cheated!"

Gary High School had a very large study hall which had an accordion style door that would divide the room into two classrooms. The students sat in desks that faced the central hallway. The doors to the hallway were always open so as to be able to monitor any activity in the hall. I had decent memories of the Study Hall. This is where a young, vibrant Garry Cole was giving the oration of a lifetime. It was the one by H.G. Wells, where the sound of a beating heart from a murder victim gets into the head of the murderer and drives him crazy. Garry was doing a great interpretation and really getting into the role. Everybody in Study Hall was trying their best not to laugh. Gary's zipper on his jeans, was wide open. He had no clue. The nature of the spectacle combined with the deadpan, really-into-it delivery was just awesome. There was a term for that around Gary, South Dakota; it was called 'leaving the barn door open.'

Study Hall was also a good memory because Mrs. Gordon had all her English and Literature classes in there. I liked being in her classes. One day, she was going on about the night before and how she had disgusted her husband. "Well, I took off my wig, then I took off my shoulder brace and my glasses. Finally, I took out my false teeth and Earl said, gee, 'Mary, you don't have anything anymore!' " We had to cover our mouths to prevent ourselves from laughing out loud. This was also the room where Mrs. Gordon would point her finger out and wave it through the air like a magic wand and warn us not to run down the hallways on our way to the pep meeting. Hey, it worked on me! She certainly gained my respect.

To be Continued next month...

Judith Elaine Norton-Pinckney



July 22, 1952
- July 30, 2026

Judy Norton-Pinckney, age 74 of Rosemount, passed away July 30, 2026. Judy was born on July 22, 1952, to Roy and Arlene Norton at the Clear Lake Hospital in South Dakota. She lived on a farm outside of Gary South Dakota until 1962 when they moved to a farm on the West side of Gary. She attended school in Gary where she graduated in 1970. After a short stint in Airline School, she enrolled at SDSU in Brookings South Dakota. She graduated from SDSU in the spring of 1975. After college she accepted her first teaching job in Tyler, MN where she coached ladies' basketball, volleyball and track and taught physical education. In June of 1980 she married Laron Pinckney at a ceremony on the family farm in Gary. In 1982 she reenrolled at SDSU to pursue her Master's Degree. She then restarted her teaching profession back at Tyler.

In 1984 Judy and Laron moved to a small acreage 3 miles East of Tyler. On September 1, 1985, their son Logon joined their family. Then in 1989 she accepted a teaching job at Dakota Hills Middle School in Eagan, MN. In 1991 Judy moved with her family to Rosemount, MN where they lived until her passing.

Judy absolutely loved her teaching profession, often referring her students as "her kids". She also enjoyed watching Logan participate in football, baseball, and softball. Judy also enjoyed playing fast pitch softball, her dogs, and cats, working in her vegetable and flower gardens, photography, and dancing.

In 2012 Judy retired from teaching. She made many friends at Dakota Hills, both staff and students. On July 29, 2026, Judy sustained an accidental fall at home and was transported to Regions Hospital in St. Paul where she passed away on July 30, 2026.

Preceded in death by her parents, Roy and Arlene; brother, Lyle, and niece, Mikayla. Survived by her husband, Laron; son, Logan and his wife Sarah; grandchildren, Weston and Grace; siblings, Albert, Julene, Jim, Don, Jerry, and Jason; sister-in-law, Carol Norton, also by many nieces and nephews.

Judy was a tremendous and loving wife, mother, sister, grandmother, friend, and organ donor. She will be deeply missed. Blessed in her memory.

A memorial gathering of family and friends was held from 5-8 PM Tuesday, August 4, 2026, at White Funeral Home, 20134 Kenwood Tr., Lakeville, MN (952-469-2723).

A gathering also took place in Gary, South Dakota on Saturday August 8, 2026, from 1-4 PM at the Gary Fire Hall.



Until we meet again.



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Nov 21st – Smoked Pork Chops
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Dec 5th – Prime Rib

Dec 19th – Smoked Pork Chops
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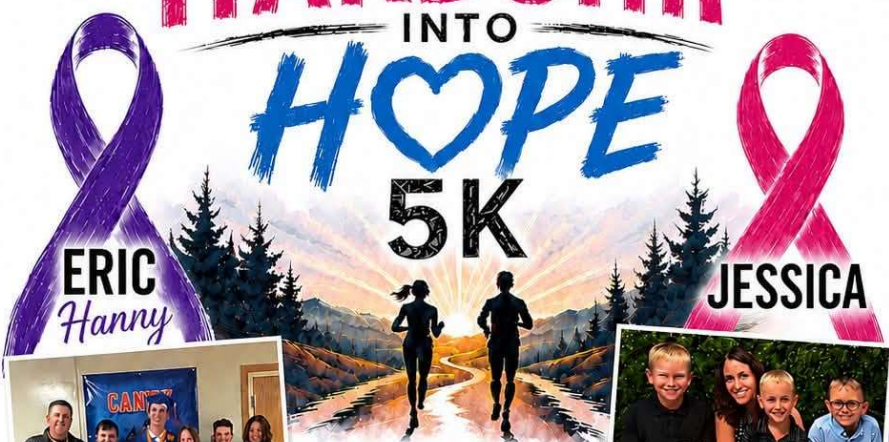


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8:30 AM

**EVENT START**
9:30 AM

**SILENT AUCTION**
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10:30 AM

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the breast.

ERIC HANSEN
who is facing
challenges from
Crohn's Disease,
including complications
from a fistula.

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If you have any story ideas or questions pertaining to the Gary area that could develop into an article, feel free to email them to ghainterstate@gmail.com.