Introduction

I proposed the idea of writing *The Martinsons of Springdale* in August of 2004 at the annual Martinson reunion and completed the book 15 months later. It begins with a look at my great grandparents, Torkel and Barbro Martinson. They began married life in 1883 on their Dane County homestead in Springdale Township, located about 18 miles west of Madison and four miles south of Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin. Their 103-acre property on Sharpes Corner Road, which Barbro had inherited from her family, consisted of a two-room log cabin home with separate log-structured summer kitchen, a dairy barn, tobacco barn, tobacco stripping shed, and other outbuildings on Sharpes Corner Road.

After a first-chapter review of my great grandparents and Norwegian ancestry, the focus turns to the many memorable stories about my grandparents Clara and Martin Martinson, who raised nine children on their family farm south of Mt. Horeb on Highway 92.

Chapter 2 illustrates, through first-hand accounts, just what life was like for the nine Martinson brothers and sisters who grew up on their parents’ farm between 1911-1944. Humor, joy, and sadness fill their collective stories as each takes a look back at their youth. Six of the nine are alive to tell their stories. They range in age from 79-90.

Nine separate chapters – one on each of Martin and Clara’s nine children – comprise the main portion of the book. Throughout the nine chapters, memories of rural and small town life in and around Mt. Horeb are recounted by the Martinson siblings and their children who are now adults -- shopping trips to Hoff’s Store, hot buttered popcorn at Ollie’s Main Street popcorn stand, Mt. Horeb High School fun and excitement, movie hits at the Strand Theater, and lefse that made Grandma Martinson famous!

Nearly 40 first cousins and all six of my remaining Martinson aunts and uncles have contributed greatly to the contents of this book. Memories that were dormant came to the surface in response to the 22 interview questions I asked. The results are proof that we have many excellent writers in the Martinson family. My job as the author was to research, reflect, and write my own memories. I also edited all the submissions and wrote connecting paragraphs and phrases throughout the book, tying everyone’s comments together and adding some of my own. I hope you find the book fun to read.

Thanks

The Martinsons are a proud bunch, with a sense of humor and love of life that is admirable. Without their input, this book would not have been possible. Following is a complete list of the nine sets of Martinson family aunts and uncles and their children who comprise the 38 first cousins I refer to throughout the book. Nearly 100 percent contributed to their individual chapters in the *The Martinsons of Springdale*.

In addition, several of the children of these 38 first cousins, including my own, put their thoughts and memories on paper. This younger generation tells what it’s been like growing up in the Martinson family in recent years.