CHAPTER 6
Gaylord Martinson Moves into the 1940s with His Bride Shirley

Gaylord Martinson met the love of his life, Shirley, a cute little gal from Klevenville in 1943. It all began, Shirley recalls, when they both socialized with the same friends and did fun things together as a group – they went roller skating and dancing, bowled, and played ball.

After the courtship, a wedding date was set. On February 18, 1944, the day after Gaylord turned 27, he and Shirley, age 20, were married. The following newspaper account described it well...

Miss Marty Takes Vows
Springdale Lutheran church was the scene February 18 at 8 p.m. of the wedding of Miss Shirley Marie Marty, daughter of Mrs. Perdella Marty, Klevenville and Gaylord Eugene Martinson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Martinson, Route 1 Mt. Horeb.

The Church was elaborately decorated with tall white candles in the windows and on the altar. White satin bows marked each pew on the center aisle. The Reverend Hector Gunderson performed the double ring ceremony. The bride’s white brocaded satin gown was designed with a sweetheart neckline, long pointed sleeves, a full skirt, and a court train. Tiny buttons closed the bodice at the back. A tiara of seed pearls held her fingertip veil of silk illusion. Her bouquet of white roses and sweet peas was tied with white satin streamers caught with tiny bows and sweet peas. Miss Marty was given in marriage by her uncle, Joseph Gessler of Madison.

As her sister’s maid of honor, Miss Wanda Marty wore a long pale blue marquisette gown over matching taffeta. A headdress of feathers and net held her shoulder-length blue veil. A similar ensemble in pink was worn by the bridesmaid, Miss Anita Gessler of Madison. Both attendants carried arm bouquets of pink carnations tied with large bows to match their frocks.

Harland Martinson was his brother’s best man. Ushers were Jerome Skindrud, brother-in-law of the bridegroom, and Marvin Bakken.

Mrs. Marty, mother of the bride, wore a black dress and a corsage of pink roses. Mrs. Martinson wore a similar corsage with her navy blue gown.

A reception was held in the church parlors for more than 100 guests. Assisting were Mrs. Arthur Swiggum, Mrs. Kate Connors, Miss Rosella Connors, Miss Eunice Field, Miss
Shirley recalls that their wedding took place on an extremely cold Friday night. They didn’t go on a honeymoon, but stayed overnight with close friends in Rio, Wisconsin.

In 1944 Gaylord and Shirley took over the hilltop farm along Highway 92, formerly owned by his parents, Clara and Martin Martinson. It was here that Gaylord had grown up with eight brothers and sisters in the 1920s-30s. Gaylord’s parents, Martin and Clara, moved to a house on Second Street in Mt. Horeb in 1944. Martin continued to return to the farm to help until he died from colon cancer two years later in 1946.

Between 1944 and 1954, five children were born to Shirley and Gaylord. All were given names beginning with “J” and middle names beginning with “D” -- resulting in all of them having “JDM” for initials. As their cousin, I thought that was so “cool.”

Judith Diane arrived first, in 1944, Joan Darnell was born in 1947, and son Jerrold Dennis in 1950. Then the big finale and surprise – twins! Joy Darla and Jan Darcy were born in the summer heat of 1954. My sister Rosann, who had just graduated from Mt. Horeb High School and turned 18, lived with Shirley and Gaylord that summer and fall to assist with the busy Martinson household. Shirley said Jerry, who was four at the time, claimed baby Jan as his. “He’d always say: “She’s mine!”

In 1982, Shirley and Gaylord retired and sold all but 22 acres of the Martinson farm to O.J. and Jane Ginther. They used the remaining 22 acres as a scenic valley setting for their retirement home, where they continue to live today in their 80s.

Pictured below is the retirement home Shirley and Gaylord built and moved into in 1982. It is nestled in the valley below the Martinson farm.
Dorothy Schwarz Bliskey recalls Martinson farm visits

As a first cousin to Judy, Joan, Jerry, Jan and Joy, many of my fondest childhood memories stem from being with them. For starters, I spent grade school days with Judy, Joey and Jerry who were all closer to my age — first at our one-room Malone School and later at Mt. Horeb High School. Living on separate farms just a little over two miles apart made it a snap to get together, both for work and play. Farm tasks became family projects, at times, between the Martinson and Schwarz farms. Family picnics and parties seemed to pop up “spur of the moment,” making it a fun time for all.

My dad, Walter Schwarz, and Uncle Gaylord shared some of their machinery and farm work. Often my dad, Gaylord, and our good friend and neighbor Bill Steinhauer, whose farm was in between ours, worked together to get certain farm tasks done faster. The sense of humor exhibited by these three men made work, break time, and meals together fun. There was definitely a sense of camaraderie. My dad was known for his sense of humor and usually had everyone laughing over something he said or did. As hard as they all worked, these men knew how to mix business with pleasure!

Building a corn crib on the Schwarz farm are (l-r) Walter Schwarz, Gaylord Martinson, and Don Schwarz. (1950)

Meanwhile, not one of the wives needed to apologize for lack of cooking skills. On the contrary, Bill Steinhauer’s wife Orpha, my mom Benunic, and my aunt Shirley Martinson were seasoned cooks and excellent bakers. My mouth waters at just the thought of some of their goodies. Looking back, I often wonder how they planned their shopping lists and menus for such a group, especially with all of us kids underfoot.

At right, Orpha and Bill Steinhauer (now deceased) were neighbors and good friends with the Gaylord Martinson and Walter Schwarz families. They socialized and worked together. They became Judy Martinson’s in-laws when she married their son, Irv Steinhauer.
During summer planting and harvesting seasons, we often had a dozen or more mouths to feed when working on a group effort field task. Yet our mothers pulled off a meal that could put today’s cooking shows to shame.

Play time was always much more fun when my younger brother Russ and I got together with the Martinson cousins. One time, however, Russ got in a little trouble with Uncle Gaylord when Jerry was found locked in our corn crib. Needless to say, Russ fessed up to the prank. After a few tense minutes, Russ realized that Uncle Gaylord probably wasn’t going to grant him the “favorite nephew of the year” award.

I also had a frightening experience with my cousin Jerry. He was visiting our house and had gone bike riding down a steep hill on Malone Road, just off our farm driveway. A terrible bike accident sent him flying, knocked him unconscious, and tore him up pretty badly. As his older cousin, I took over. An instant “adrenaline rush” helped me carry him all the way up the hill and over the quarter-mile long driveway to our farm. He was bleeding all the way. (I wonder if this is why, later in life, I always went into panic mode when one of my own kids got hurt?)

The Martinson twins, Joy and Jan, were born in 1954 – a nice surprise and addition to the family. There was no such thing as an ultrasound back then. Twins were not on the “radar screen,” and they went undetected until they appeared that hot summer of ’54. What excitement their births caused as word spread throughout the Martinson family network! My older sister, Rosann, who graduated from high school that year, was there to help Shirley that summer.

Grade school memories with my cousins Judy and Joan (Joey) included Christmas programs with skits, poetry and music recitals on our portable stage. Judy and I sang a duet when we were in the younger grades. We cradled our baby dolls in our arms as we sang. In high school, Judy, Joey and I continued to sing together in Glee Club, 4-H groups, solo and ensemble competition, and even “hootenanny” quartettes.
As the years have flown by, our farm lives in Springdale Township have ceased to exist. School years passed quickly. We have all moved on to careers, raising families, and taking up separate causes and interests. Yet, family always draws us back. Those who remain there, like Aunt Shirley and Uncle Gaylord, are a nucleus that holds us together.

In the remainder of this chapter, enjoy the memories of Shirley and Gaylord's children...

Memories of Grandma Martinson

Judy:
Grandma Martinson was always ready to help. She was a quiet and somewhat serious person who led a modest lifestyle. She had an aura of strength and wisdom about her. I remember sitting with in her living room on 2nd Street and seeing the wall behind the couch decorated with her crocheted version of the Lord's Supper.

Grandma knew everyone walking by. She knew everything going on in Mt Horeb. She loved picking raspberries. I recall her making headcheese. I made it with her on more than one occasion, but I will never be able to duplicate it. Recipe directions were "quite a bit of one ingredient, light on another," etc. There were no measurements.

I recall discussing the recent death of an elderly person with Grandma. I commented on how sad it was. She told me that when someone lives a long life, there is no reason to be sad about their death. You should celebrate that person's life. I had thought that being sad was the only appropriate response to someone's passing.

Sunday afternoon we took her on rides. It was an amazing four-hour local history lesson. We took back roads, visited cemeteries, etc. She knew so much about people and places.

Grandpa Martin Martinson passed away and was buried on my second birthday on October 16, 1946.

Joan:
Grandma Martinson was very consistent. She was always there. Calm. Quiet. Very stoic. Strong. She was extremely talented and could make anything. Her handiwork — knitting, crocheting, painting, weaving rugs, tatting, crafts galore — the list goes on. She was amazing. Recently I learned from another cousin that Grandma also did woodworking, but if I knew it I had forgotten.

Was there anything more consistent than Grandma’s birthday card with a dollar bill coming exactly on the day of one’s birthday? She never missed!
One memory that flashes back to me whenever I drive down 2nd Street in Mt. Horeb is Grandma sitting on the front porch swing, waiting for us. Often Lizzie Henderson, who lived upstairs, was with her. To this day, I can visualize Grandma sitting in her chair by the radio, doing her needlework. I can also see her walking down that long hallway to the door with a sweet smile on her face whenever we came to visit.

Grandma’s skill in the kitchen was unbelievable. Everything she made was delicious. What I miss most is her headcheese. We have her recipe and are tempted to try making it, but haven’t yet. I fear we wouldn’t be able to come close to hers. Whenever a pig was butchereed, she would make this delectable treat. Grandma’s headcheese on buttered toast with mustard was my all-time favorite meal, even to this day!

Grandma Martinson’s house in Mt. Horeb (side view)

When the twins were born, Mom was very sick. Because I was just seven years old, I didn’t grasp that this was a pretty serious time. I just knew that we had two real baby dolls to hold and play with -- and that we had a lot of company. Cousin Rosann, who had just graduated from high school, moved in to help us. Grandma Martinson and Grandma Marty both came to stay for long periods of time. And the aunts also rotated through the house. All this was very exciting for a seven-year old!

**Favorite holiday**

**Judy:**
Christmas was my favorite holiday because it was a time of family togetherness and the one time everyone made it a point to be home. The decorations always gave the house a warm, cozy feeling. On Christmas morning we had to wait for dad to finish chores before we could open gifts. It seemed like a very long wait. Christmas programs at church were always special.

**Joan:**
Christmas was so nice because we were such a large family and we would all get together. We dressed up in our Sunday best. We drew names and exchanged gifts and ate the most wonderful food – many Norwegian specialties such as lefse, meatballs, and glorified rice being my favorites. It was truly an exciting time for a kid.

**Grade school memories**

**Judy:**
Our one-room Malone School, located on Highway 92 south of Mt Horeb, brings up fond memories. It was the greatest group of kids. I recall having to use the outdoor toilets,
having to take goiter pills, making hot lunch in the basement, playing ball games with
other one-room schools, participating in the Christmas programs; enjoying picnics on the
last day of school, and the long walk home. There are just lots of good memories.

**Joan:**
Malone School memories that stand out include --softball
games, sledding on Grinde’s
field, the wonderful Christmas
programs that included songs,
plays and reciting poems.
Taking goiter pills routinely.
Saying the Pledge of
Allegiance. Raising and
lowering the flag each day.
Traveling to other country
schools for competitive softball
games. End of the year picnics
and “plays days” are all great
memories!

Joan and Judy clown around with Doug Thomson and
others after a Malone Christmas program in the 1950s.

Field trips were memorable. I recall we once took a train trip to Chicago, and the
buttered noodles we had for lunch on the train were the best I ever had eaten. We also
got to Delma Woodburn’s beautiful home in Madison, and that has come back to me in
my dreams. I believe it was there that we saw a wonderful organ. (NOTE: Delma had
attended Malone School, which was built on land owned by her ancestors.)

I can still smell the hot lunches that were put together in the basement kitchen at Malone
School. No matter what was prepared, it was good. Hot soup on cold winter days,
especially after being outside playing, was the best. To this day, I become nostalgic over
a can of chicken noodle soup.

**Typical summer day**

**Judy:**
Living on a farm, I just remember always working. There were chores like getting cows
to the barn for the morning milking, feeding calves, going to the cheese factory, mowing,
baling, sacking itchy oats, going to the mill, driving the John Deere-60 tractor to pick up
bales. The day always ended with a big meal. We still have that habit, but we don’t work
up the appetites we used to. Watching the sunrises and sunsets was the best memory of
all. They were awesome from the Martinson farm on the hill!
High school memories

Judy:
As a member of the Mt Horeb High School Class of 1962, I was in the first class to graduate from the new high school. We moved from the old school on Academy Street during Christmas break. It was quite an undertaking. My favorite class was Home Economics with Mrs. Kilian. She was a new teacher who was enthused and gave us a wealth of information on many subjects.

Mt. Horeb High School memories include Mr. Schwierske’s history class, taking the student bus to away sporting events (as far as Prairie du Chien), Junior and Senior Class Plays, Homecoming parades, Junior prom, and many special times with classmates who remain friends to this day.

Joan graduated from Mt. Horeb High School in 1965. Although she didn’t really have a favorite subject, she will admit she disliked math and biology. While in high school, Joan was very active socially. She became a cheerleader, was on Homecoming court, and says she thoroughly enjoyed being in school with so many of her cousins.
Careers and life beyond high school

After one year at UW-Oshkosh, Joan went to University Hospitals School of X-Ray Technology in Madison. For several years she worked as a registered X-Ray Technologist. Joan then worked for an orthopedic surgeon in Neenah as his medical assistant and secretary for years. Joan married Chuck Sholdt, and after their son Cabel was born, she stayed home for several years to be a mom. When he went off to school, Joan went to work at a Middleton elementary school library and has been there ever since. She and her husband Chuck live in Middleton.

Judy attended UW-Madison and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in early childhood education. She worked at University Children's Hospital as a child life specialist for five years. In 1969 she married Irv Steinhauser, who had been a family friend and neighbor throughout her childhood. Judy and Irv live in Mt. Horeb where they have owned and operated Irv’s Feed and Supply since 1972. They have two grown children, Debbie and Todd.

Jerry Martinson, the only son born to Shirley and Gaylord, also graduated from Mt. Horeb High School. He married Karen Cunneen in 1972. They reside in Oregon, Wisconsin where they raised two daughters, Kalee and Stacy. Jerry works for Madison Gas & Electric as an electronic technician.


Fond memories of Dad

Judy:
I started helping in the barn at age nine and spent mornings and evenings doing chores with dad. He was a long time member of the Mt Horeb School Board, and he usually shared his thoughts about issues the board faced. Dad is in tune with the community, school, and politics and shares his thoughts and feelings to this day. I learned a lot during the many hours spent with him in my younger years and respect his knowledge. Dad
would also tell me what Santa would be bringing each of us for Christmas, and Mom would get so mad!

I think my dad's happiest times were when Walter Schwarz, Bennie Grundahl, Jerome Skindrud, and Alvin Dettwiler were alive. They worked together and played together. I can remember the combine harvest -- even threshing. While harvest meant hard work, it was also a social time for families. I can hear them in my memory -- laughing, talking, and telling jokes. Dad is still sly like a fox in a game of Euchre. We try to play often, he always (almost always) wins!

Gaylord chats over coffee with his sister Benunie Schwarz Berge. They often snacked on limburger cheese together at each other’s homes. (1994)

Joan:
The funniest memory of my dad was at our wedding reception on December 5, 1970 when I looked over and saw him dancing cheek-to-cheek with my brand new father-in-law. Maybe they had been celebrating a wee bit too much! Dad was always there. He was always very consistent and didn’t tolerate any “darn foolishness!”

Social life

Judy:
Most social events revolved around Martinson family gatherings -- the reunion every August, confirmations, graduations, 25th wedding anniversaries, and most holidays. Church, school, and 4-H activities rounded out our social life. We didn't have the myriad of school activities in those days that we have today.

Joan:
Social life didn’t happen until chores were done. When farm life allowed, our social life centered around family, neighbors, school, church, and our 4-H club

How things were different back then

Judy:
When it came to food, most everything was made from scratch. The whole day seemed to revolve around meal preparation and cleanup. We ate mostly fresh foods and had all of our own meats. I remember Herman Frye butchering beef and pork animals and cutting them up right on the farm. We had chickens which meant gathering eggs each day. I also remember the process of butchering them, which wasn’t the fondest memory of childhood.
Recipes were not as detailed as today. We had limited staples and seasonings. Most baking was done without using recipes. In the 1950s and 60s, we did not have a large assortment of ready made foods or fast food eateries.

Clothing styles consisted of gathered skirts with lots of crinolines and shoulder pads. We always wore dresses or skirts to high school. I don't remember owning a pair of blue jeans while growing up. We also made most of our own clothes.

Joan:
What was different in the 1950s-60s? Food was nearly all home-grown and homemade. We always ate three meals a day as a family, and they were good meals with meat, potatoes, vegetables and dessert! Still, the best was fried headcheese on toast with mustard. I can't begin to duplicate what we did back then.

As for clothes, I wasn't a fashion plate. We didn't even think in those terms. I sewed rickrack on homemade outfits and thought that was way cool. I remember stretch pants and tight-necked Dr. Kildare blouses with the top neck button left open for breathing space! I don't recall jeans. We must have worn them to do chores, yet I can't envision myself in any kind of blue jeans.

Judy, Jerry and Joan have fun with their farm chickens! (1953)

Life-changing inventions

Judy:
I remember getting an indoor toilet. There was water running out of our faucets! (We had a cistern prior to that). Another fantastic invention was the clothes washer and dryer. We bought a set to replace our old wringer washing machine. The clothes dryer also allowed us to warm up our clothes before we got dressed in the morning. That was like heaven! I also remember the old cast iron cook stove in the kitchen was replaced with a gas stove which was connected to a tank of LP gas outside the house. Along with running water, we got a bathtub. Prior to installation of the tub, we would have a bath on
Saturday nights in a metal wash tub in front of the oil burner in the dining room. Mom heated kettles of water to fill the tub, and we would each take our turn getting a bath.

Prior to the installation of a furnace, the only heat in the upstairs bedrooms came up through ceiling registers from the oil burner below. I can remember waking up in the morning with frost on the blanket by my nose.

**Joan:**
I was very young when a toilet was being put into the house for the first time. Mind you, it wasn’t an entire bathroom – just the toilet. I think I was probably still in diapers as I can see myself watching the whole process from a crib, so it didn’t impact me hugely then. Still, I knew it was a momentous occasion. I recall getting our first TV set as well. That was huge! It was in the parlor and we didn’t get to watch anything until all chores were done. I recall desperately wanting to see the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show, but it was on while we were still in the barn. So we kept running back and forth between the barn and house, trying to see it – all while carrying pails of milk to the cooler.

The best invention was probably the “kick” hay baler that kicked out small bales. We didn’t have to move those huge bales anymore. That was beyond exciting! However, it didn’t happen until after I was out of high school.

![Gaylord and Shirley and (l-r) Jerry, Joan and Judy pose with a new product of the 1950s - a milk pasteurizer, the tall machine on the kitchen counter. (1951)](image)

**Chores**

**Joan:**
Chores were numerous on the farm. I fed all the animals, except the pigs. I also put milking machines together, washed the cows prior to milking, carried milk to the cooler, washed up after milking, washed the cooler, scraped the barn walk, put fresh bedding down for the cows, and threw down silage and feed. I helped with the haying, lawn mowing, house cleaning, dishes, laundry, ironing and more.

**Judy:** As the oldest of five children, I was drafted for outdoor chores at age nine or so. I fed calves, scraped and applied lime to the barn driveway, cleaned the mangers, fed silage and ground feed, carried milk to the cooler, washed the cooler, did milk house cleanup after every milking, and fed the cows hay.
I also mowed hay, drove the tractor to pick up bales, fed chickens, gathered eggs, and helped feed pigs with whey from the Malone Cheese Factory. After we purchased a bulk milk cooler and got on Grade-A quality milk production, we didn’t have to go to the factory anymore. I never really had a chance to help inside the house. After I went away to college, everyone was excited to see me come home for the weekend. I think it may have had something to do with the fact that I would be there to do chores!

At right: Judy in the 1960s

Fond memories of our mother

Judy:
Mom always worked hard. She takes pride in doing things right! Meals are always perfectly prepared and clothes look crisp and clean. She worked tirelessly to take care of our family of five kids. She took us to swimming lessons, 4-H meetings, and school events. I can’t imagine how many trips she made to see that we each participated in any activity of interest to us. Her greatest source of pride has been taking care of the lawn and flowers, and she still finds pleasure and pride in this today.

Gaylord and Shirley (1980)

I remember one winter mom decided it would be neat to have an ice skating rink on the front lawn. She worked so hard flooding quite a large area for us. We did have a great time that winter, being able to skate right at home. However, once the snow and ice melted, we realized that all the grass was dead where the rink had been. We never had another ice skating rink at home.

Malone Mothers Club on a trip are (l-r) Unknown, Sophie Johnson, Clara Martinson, Lucille Zweifel, Orpha Steinhauser, Margie Webber, Unknown (mostly hidden), Benunie Schwarz, Pauline Bollig. (Photographer: Shirley Martinson.) (1950s)
Family means everything to mom. There isn't anything that she wouldn't do or sacrifice for any of us. She especially enjoys keeping up with the grandkids now. It's a standing joke about whether or not to tell grandma about what you are doing or where you are going, because she'll just worry about you until she hears you're safely home.

My mother has been a life long member of the Malone Mothers’ Club. Mothers of students attending our one-room school started meeting monthly more than 50 years ago, and they still do today. Mom enjoys doing so much! We enjoy seeing her so active and interested in many things. She loves ceramics and has made each of us priceless pieces that we will cherish forever. She bowls a mean game and uses a ball I can hardly lift. Mom also enjoys baking and is constantly trying new recipes.

For years Mom attended school concerts, sporting events, etc, Judy continues. In recent years, I decided to go to a high school musical and decided not to call her as I felt she had done her duty going to those events. I sat down in my seat, looked across the aisle and there was Mom, sitting by herself. I guess she really did like those activities!

**Joan:**

When we were kids growing up on the farm, Mom was always there and doing everything! She worked inside, outside and all around the farm. I honestly don’t know how she did it. Five kids going in so many different directions, taking us everywhere, doing so much laundry with a wringer washer, and for many years there was no dryer! She had constant food preparation, and everything tasted so good.

Mom was very patient when I went through a phase of not being able to eat meat. I came to realize that the meat was from my animal friends in the barn. I just couldn’t eat it for a time. She always had peanut butter and bread on the table.

She didn’t make a big deal out of it, but Mom was very good at making things. It was just what she did. She made the veil for my wedding dress. I don’t even remember asking. It was just there – and it was her creation. For each of us, she created very memorable days for our weddings. All the clothes were homemade as were the decorations, and of course, so was the food. One didn’t hire wedding planners or caterers in those days. It was mom who did it all, while doing all her regular chores as well.

Still, at 81, Mom is always there. She is the original “Energizer Bunny” – she just keeps going and going. What an example she sets for all of us. She takes care of everything and everybody. She is always so kind, and you can’t help but want to be around her!

We continue the tradition of playing Euchre with Mom and Dad, a fun activity that started when we were kids. Our kids are now experiencing the same thing we did with our Grandma on my Mom’s side when she’d come and play cards for hours and hours.
A typical day in the life of our mother

Judy:
In the 1950s our mother was swamped with being a mom to five little kids. I was born in 1944, “Jo” (Joan) in 1947, Jerry in 1950, and the twins in 1954. Mom must have been exhausted most of the time. Life revolved around laundry, meal preparation, and more. We also had a hired man living with us during those years. She would take good care of his needs also. We cannot begin to appreciate the support she gave us during those years.

Joan:
Mom was up before all of us and still going strong after we all went to bed. In between, she was making meals, washing clothes, working inside and outside the house getting us where we had to be at the right time, then showing up somehow to watch whatever we were doing. Sometimes she would take over for us so we could do school, 4-H, or Sunday School activities. “Multitasking” is a buzz word of people who I am around today, yet they haven’t a clue what true multitasking is all about. You know how everyone today complains of being tired all the time? Well, I never remember one word of complaint from Mom, yet she had to be exhausted. She just had to be!

Fond memories growing up in our family

Judy:
Years ago when my folks delivered milk to the Pure Milk Association, they would attend meetings in Chicago. During one of these meetings, they attended the musical "The Music Man." Mom enjoyed it so much that she was determined we should have that experience as well. My earliest memory of a theater event was going to The Music Man when it came to Madison. It was an absolutely awesome experience for a couple of farm kids from Mt. Horeb and instilled a love of music in me that continues to this day. Thanks Mom and Dad!
Joan:
Memories I am most fond of include all of the activity, but especially at holiday time. I feel very fortunate to have grown up on a farm in a farming community with family all around. I feel lucky to have attended a one-room school. All of these things seem to be disappearing from our culture today.

Joy’s memories

Twins, Jan and Joy, born in 1954, rounded out Shirley and Gaylord Martinson’s family. On this page and throughout much of the remainder of this chapter, Joy reaches back to bring up happy, comical and exciting times on the farm...

One thing Joy recalls is waking up to hot cocoa every morning. “It was pretty special,” Joy says, noting that meals on the farm consisted of meat, potatoes, vegetables, bread, butter, jam and milk.

A huge treat was when Grandma Martinson made headcheese, Joy continues. Mom sliced it thin and then fried it crispy in a frying pan. It was my favorite sandwich ever! I sure wish somebody would take up Grandma’s tradition. Another awesome treat from Grandma was her fried cakes. They were melt-in-your-mouth yummy. There was nothing better!

Every year when it was sweet corn time, it seemed the corn came in by the pickup truck load. We would spend a day at the fence shucking the corn. We’d throw the husks over the fence. The calves would come and eat the husks out of our hands. This was pretty fun for a little kid. Mom would boil the corn. We’d cut the kernels off and freeze them. It was a yearly tradition.

Mom was an awesome cook. She made wonderful pies, bars, and sweet treats – she really is an expert at it! Back then she was famous for her chocolate cakes, but even more famous for her bars and pies.

Jerry, Joan, Judy, Jan and Joy gather on a hot summer day in the late 1950s.

Evening snacks sometimes included pizza, but most often it was pizza in a box. Popcorn was another night-time treat. Occasionally we had soda too. We always feasted on the
holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. All were yummy, and we ate more than we should have!

**Joy’s favorite holiday**
Christmas was my favorite holiday. We got lots and lots of toys. I always got stuffed up since I was allergic to the tree. One year when we were about 10, my twin sister Jan and I each got a giant stuffed poodle – they were as big as we were! Shortly after Christmas we were looking at pictures our oldest sister Judy had taken in her dorm at UW-Madison prior to Christmas. There in the picture with Judy and her roommate were our pink poodles! We had never taken our poodles to the dorm, so we knew then that Santa Claus was not for real! It wasn’t traumatic in any way. Like most kids, you suspect it for a long time until you finally get proof. That was the proof for me.

I always felt very blessed to have grown up in the family I did. I needed family for certain, but also all the aunts, uncles and cousins were wonderful. In my immediate family we have always come together for special holidays. One year my sister Jo and her husband Chuck lived in Colorado and were preparing to move to Kaukauna, Wisconsin after Christmas. We postponed Christmas and went to their new place for a belated Christmas so we could all be together.

**Twins help with chores, find time to play**
There was a lot of card playing when Jan and I were growing up – Euchre was the main one. Grandma Marty, our other grandma, had pennies in her purse wherever she went and liked to play cards all night long. We also played Rummy Royal and Yahtzee. Jan and I both had Barbie dolls – our most prized toys. There was also a Barbie board game.

Our chores consisted of feeding calves, cleaning up in the milk house, and carrying milk before the pipeline system came in. I don’t know how we managed to carry those huge pails of milk when we were so little, but we did it. Unloading bales of hay from the wagon to the elevator was another job we handled.

We mowed lawn all summer. I swear we never stopped – mow, mow, mow! We had 40 trees in the yard, so there was a lot of raking and picking up of sticks. There was also work in our garden and a few apple trees, but they never produced much.

Sewing was a chore. Each of us girls sewed dresses, skirts, and blouses. Ironing was a process where the clothes had to be sprinkled with water first. We spent hours ironing. Kids don’t know how easy they have it now!

Jan and I had fun times in our little playhouse, which was the retired outhouse. It was no longer used as an outhouse, and it had just the normal floor in it by then. Various grains
and corn and other special ingredients we’d gather up were used to make our mud pies. We had a sandbox and played in it for a long time as well. We used sticks to make fences, farm scenes and buildings in our sandbox. The field next to the house also became a playground. When the grass was long we’d make little houses by pushing down the grass.

Jan and I were very adventurous and liked to play in the various farm buildings and climb on the roofs. The chicken house roof cantilevered over another roof. That was special because as we played on the backside, we were hidden from view. We were covered up because the other roof was higher.

Jan and I would sometimes pretend we were in a swimming pool when we swam in our cow tank. It was filled with ice cold water, but we wanted to swim like everyone else could. It wasn’t too pleasurable, but we did it anyway.

We also played barefoot all summer. We’d walk through the cow pasture. Occasionally we would step on and walk through fresh cow pies. I remember how warm it was when I’d put my feet in the middle of a cow pie. I don’t know why we did it... I guess we just enjoyed the feeling!

Another fun thing we did was swing on a rope when hay was stacked way high up in the loft. We jumped off the hay loft and out the door of the barn on the rope. Jan squealed on me once, when I got cut by a piece of metal after falling off the manger. Inadequate stitches were put in at the time. A nasty scar remains. Sometimes I wonder how we survived our childhood!

**Joy remembers family fun**

For special occasions in summer, dad would dig out the surrey. It was one that had been purchased by our great grandfather Torkel Martinson in 1901. Dad would pull the surrey with the tractor in the field. The highlight of a party would be to go into the field in the surrey. Badminton and croquet was often set up in the yard.

On the July 4th celebration we’d drive out to the field at night to watch the fireworks in Madison, which was nearly 20 miles east of our farm. We’d pile into the car and drive into the field where no buildings or trees blocked our view. It was a great show and a fun time in our young lives.

One winter we flooded the front yard to make an ice skating rink. It was not very much of a success. It was a very bumpy surface, and we killed the grass beneath it. The skating rink was a one-time deal. We never did it again.
The farm driveway at a half-mile long was an adventure in itself, with a good size corner halfway up. We were lucky the school bus would come up to get us. One winter morning the bus didn’t arrive. Dad finally said he’d have to drive us to school. So we piled into the car. Dad turned the corner and stopped. The bottom half of driveway was glare ice. You could see at the very bottom of our hill the ice was all chewed up from chains, evidence that the bus had tried to make it up, but failed.

Snow days were fun as they caused school to close. Huge piles of snow were everywhere for sledding and for building forts and tunnels. There were various places for sledding— one good spot was across Highway 92 where mom and dad’s house is now. Jan and I came in from winter play many times with frostbite. White marks disappeared after we’d curl up in front of heat ducts in the living room.

Piano and swimming lessons were part of Jan and my lives. Jan’s lips turned purple when she’d go swimming in Mt. Horeb. I never did learn how to swim.

**Critters Joy recalls**

A summer memory I envision is June bugs on the porch. They would swarm by the light. We hardly could get in and out of the door. We had one cat that would eat them. It was so gross. We would hear a very loud crunch, crunch, crunch for the longest time every evening.

There were also big green worms— tobacco worms mom called them. One year they were everywhere. It seemed like a plague of big green worms. We had a plum tree. I was barefoot. I thought I had stepped on a plum because it squeezed through my toes. It was a green worm. It is my worst childhood memory!

Crickets invaded. The house was full of them. We’d vacuum and vacuum and mom would put a rag in the end of the hose. I also recall that our windows were full of flies, and an occasional mouse hid between our walls. Although the mice crawled up the walls and ran above the ceiling, we rarely saw them in the living area.

There was a freezer in the cellar. Steps led to it from outside. Mom made lots of trips up and down with food. A little frog or toad “friend” sat outside the house by the steps, and I think Mom called this critter “George.” He would always sit in the same spot, on the bottom step. They would greet each other whenever she went up and down. George never moved. Finally, I realized he was dead. He didn’t look any differently than when he was alive. It’d be fun to ask mom, ‘What ever happened to George?’
Hilltop storms and cellar stories Joy recalls

Storm memories are vivid due to living high on a hill. We always had spectacular views – it was like having a front row seat. We could see the thunderclouds coming from miles and miles away. The lightening was bad. Mom was always so fearful that the barn would be struck. Terrific lightning storms would blow the transformer, and a tree was struck one year. The inside of the trunk of the tree looked like charcoal and it continued to burn and glow for many days. Dad sawed it down eventually.

One of the worst storms I remember is a hailstorm when I was quite young in the late 1950s or early 1960s. It happened during a family gathering on the Marty side -- my mom’s relatives.

When the storm hit, everyone ran for cover. We were in the house and the windows started breaking. Hail was coming through the windows! I recall running through the house to get to the cellar stairs for safety, as glass flew from the shattered windows. There I sat in the basement, terrified because I thought I could hear people walking upstairs. I remember saying “We’ve got to get them down here!” But it wasn’t people upstairs I was hearing. It was actually the sound of hail pounding on the metal roof.

The hail destroyed my uncle’s car. The roof of his Lincoln was sunk down on the seat and filled with hail. In the house, 15 windows were broken. Two were shattered in the barn. Trees were shredded. It was a terrible storm and a horrible mess. We had a second party the next day to clean up. Relatives came back to help, Joy concludes.

Joy’s sister Joan recalls same hailstorm

What Joan remembers about this same hailstorm is that my dad, Walter Schwarz, seemed to magically appear out of nowhere right after the storm passed. Here is her recollection of that moment in time... “After coming up out of our basement, there was Walter in the middle of our driveway by the garage workshop, spinning around quickly in circular fashion and pointing methodically to address everyone as he turned. He was shouting, ‘I need boards, I need nails, I need hammers, I need... ’” It was a moment I will never forget about Uncle Walter. It amazed me that he knew to come and assist -- and how quickly he got to our place after that storm had passed.”

It seemed we were always running to the cellar because of storms, Joy continues. It was a cellar not a basement -- very primitive with all kinds of spiders, etc. It was not a place you wanted to be for any length of time. To enter, there was a trap door under the floor of our parents’ closet. We had to move all their shoes and stuff to get to the cellar by way of a unique spiral staircase – it was quite an ordeal. We grabbed couch cushions to take into the basement with us. During some storms dad would have the outside cellar door open, watching the storm. Meanwhile, Jan and I were in the cellar crying, thinking a tree would fall on him.

Twins’ school and social life

Jan and I were involved in quite a lot of activities -- not like kids today, but a lot of hobbies and things. What comes to mind is 4-H. Projects like photography, knitting,
sewing, wild flowers, and home furnishings were fun. From my recollection, Jerry was the only one of us five kids who exhibited animals at the fair.

Olive Thomson, a neighbor about two miles away, was our 4-H teacher for wildflowers. She came to the house and we went walking through the woods looking for wildflowers. We saw jack-in-the-pulpits and all kinds of flowers – a very fond memory. Olive’s daughter Elizabeth came with her.

Mrs. Allen was my photography 4-H leader. I owe a lot to her. Obviously what she taught stuck with me, and I am now reaping the benefits of my photography skills. This weekend, I am photographing a sled dog race. It is wonderful to have the ground work done in early years for anything you do later in life.

During high school in Mt. Horeb, I was a cheerleader. I also worked on the yearbook, and I was involved with the Ecology Club. Of course with cheerleading there were a lot of sports games and away-game adventures. I took part in a lot of activities.

Jan and I attended Malone School in first and second grade. Then the school closed and we went to Mt. Horeb. What a fun one-room school it was! I remember the yard clean up and picnic with a bonfire and wiener roasting fun. I recall a boy breaking through the landing of the stairway when he jumped on it. Baseball games with nearby schools were great. I had a huge crush on a boy while he was batting in a ballgame. I chased him around the bases.

I attribute my two years at Malone School as the reason school came easy for me. I never had to study much. Thinking back, at Malone School you had a lot of time. You observed what other classes were being taught. You learned future lessons by watching the older kids. There was a tiny little library and not too many books. I read books from the older students because that’s what was available. There is no country one-room school prettier than Malone!

One vivid grade school memory is how my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Thronson, cried when President Kennedy was killed in 1963.

When our big sister Judy went off to college, it was like she was moving to another planet. The first years she was at UW-Stout but later she transferred to UW-Madison. It seemed so far away. Jan and I would write letters to her. “Dear Honey Bunny” we’d always start out! We missed her terribly.
Lessons learned
Our folks put the fear of God into us about making a long distance phone call. “Don’t ever dial a long distance number,” they would say. The first time I needed to make a long distance call I was so worried. It cost me a whopping 25 cents. I never was anxious about making a long distance phone call like that again in my life.

I’ll never forget the look on my dad’s face when I walked into the barn once when the inseminator was there. He had his arm up to his elbow in the back end of a cow. I didn’t think anything of it. It was the look on my dad’s face that frightened me! Dad probably thought I’d have questions and was worried how he’d answer them but my questions never came.

A big part of our young lives was our kitties. In winter, if a kitty wandered under a cow, it could be disastrous. In fall, when we raked the yard, we’d often find a kitten’s skeleton in the bushes. “Well, Jan I think this was fluffy,” I’d say, as I stared at the remains. “Or maybe it was Snooky!” There was no sadness. Just curiosity.

We fished in Malone Creek occasionally. One time we caught a fish at least 6 inches long. We put it in a pail of water and carried it home. After putting the fish in the millhouse tank, we got a scolding. Dad said we’d be kicked off the Grade A market if we got caught with fish in our milk tank!

One year there was a terrible drought. It forced us to buy our hay. The sight of watching the big semi hayload come up the hill was very exciting.

A motorcycle endurance race utilized our farm for two years. The racers came up our driveway and across our field. It was a thrill to watch the cycles zoom across our farm!
Comments from Shirley Martinson

Although Gaylord’s dad Martin died shortly after Gaylord and I were married, I got to know his mother Clara Martinson (my mother-in-law) quite well. She was very pleasant and witty.

I appreciated that she was always there to help me with the thrashing and silo-filling crews and the extra helpers who needed to be fed during busy harvest times. I could not have done it without her guidance. I wasn’t raised on a farm, so I needed all her expertise and her babysitting!

The Martinson barn today is no longer used for milking cows.

What I admired most about Gaylord’s mother were her many talents. She made rugs on a loom. She made wonderful fried cakes. Her delicious headcheese was craved by our family – even the kids loved it. Recently Judy made it using Grandma’s recipe. It was a real special treat for all of us.

What really amazed me was Grandma’s patience. How did she do it all back then? We didn’t even have indoor running water or indoor bathroom until the twins were born in 1954. Between all the meals, laundry, and work inside and out, I don’t think our kids got a lot attention, fun-wise. Everything seemed to be fun and humorous most of the time though.

As for the most memorable family occasions, two that come to mind for Shirley are Jan’s outdoor wedding and Joy’s wedding reception on the farm.

Martinson kitchen (l-r) Jan, Gaylord and Judy (1960s)
As for the not-so-nice occasions, Shirley recalls the blizzards of 1959. According to Gaylord, there were three of them in a row—all in February and March.

“We were in Chicago during that first week in March at a farm show and had gone down by bus,” Shirley recalls. “When the blizzard hit, we took the first bus home we could. Others who stayed later didn’t get back to our area for nearly a week! Judy, who was a sophomore in high school, was snowbound in Mt. Horeb at Grandma’s for five days.”

Shirley recently verified through Grandma Martinson’s diary, which they have, that the storm began on March 5, 1959. “Grandma wrote that Judy and Ruth (Shelstad or Dettwiler?) were there overnight until the following Tuesday. The storm began the Thursday before,” Shirley explained.

At right, Grandma Martinson and neighbor Lizzie Henderson (on right) prepare for the Mt. Horeb Centennial parade in 1962. Twins Joy and Jan rode with them in the Martinson surrey that has been in the family since 1901.

Gaylord and Shirley Martinson, now in their 80s, lead active lives and remain in their home in the beautiful Malone valley along Highway 92. With a full head of dark hair, Gaylord looks nowhere near his age. Although somewhat limited physically due to health problems, he still plays a mean game of Euchre. He also enjoys games of solitaire on his computer.

Meanwhile, Shirley’s daily activity level is mind-boggling. “There is no such thing as retirement for me,” Shirley says.

Work inside and outside, as well as helping care for Gaylord, keeps Shirley hopping all day long. She also volunteers at the nursing home, delivers Meals on Wheels, volunteers for church communion duty three months out of the year, assists at the church bazaar and ice cream social, bowls, and creates ceramic keepsakes for herself and others. On top of
that, she is a longtime member of the Malone Mothers’ Club and enjoys outings with the group. “Many of the members are gone now, but there are still a few of us who do things together,” Shirley comments.

Her kids are right—the kitchen is like a magnet, drawing Shirley in. There she creates new as well as no-fail recipes that are requested again and again. Shirley continues to cook and bake up a storm whenever she has company coming—and maybe even when she doesn’t. (Gaylord loves it.) Some of her favorite recipes follow. Enjoy!

The five children of Shirley and Gaylord Martinson are (back l-r) Jerry, Judy and Joan, with their twin sisters Joy and Jan in front. (Late 1950s)
Cherry Berries on a Cloud  (Shirley Martinson)

MERINGUE CRUST:
6 egg whites  ½ teaspoon cream of tarter
¼ teaspoon salt

CREAM CHEESE FILLING:
1 8-ounce cream cheese  1 cup sugar  1 teaspoon vanilla
½ pint whipping cream  2 cups mini marshmallows
Mix cream cheese with sugar. Add vanilla. Whip the cream and fold it into the cream cheese mixture, along with the marshmallows. Pour over meringue.

TOPPING:
1 can cherry pie filling  1 teaspoon lemon juice
2 cups fresh sliced strawberries
Mix all topping ingredients. Pour over the top of the cream cheese filling.

Chocolate Torte  (Shirley Martinson)

Crust:
1 cup flour  ½ cup butter  ½ to 1 cup pecans, chopped fine

Filling:
One 8-ounce cream cheese  1 cup cool whip  1 cup powdered sugar

Top layer:
2 ½ cups cold milk  crushed pecans 2 boxes instant chocolate pudding

Mix crust ingredients together. Press into 9 x 13 cake pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-20 minutes. Let cool.
**Oxford Salad** (Kalee Martinson, granddaughter of Shirley & Gaylord)

1 head romaine lettuce
(cut tops off as they are bitter)
4 ounces shredded Swiss cheese
1 ¼ cup cranberries

**DRESSING:**

1/3 cup lemon juice
2 teaspoons chopped onion
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon poppyseeds

1 cup cashews
1 apple
1 pear

1 teaspoon prepared mustard
½ cup sugar
2/3 cup oil (canola or olive)

Mix all ingredients for dressing. Chill for an hour or more before adding to salad. Toss salad ingredients with dressing.

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**Barbeque Burger** (Shirley Martinson)

*Shirley’s family loves this warm, tasty sandwich!*

1 lbs ground chuck
2 cups celery, sliced
3 Tablespoons vinegar
3 Tablespoons brown sugar
1 cup ketchup

½ large onion, chopped
1 9-ounce can tomato sauce
10 ½-ounce can cream of celery soup
3 Tablespoons prepared mustard

Brown meat. Add onion and celery. Sautee lightly. Add remainder of ingredients. Cook until celery is cooked through and flavors are blended. Add salt and pepper to taste. 12-16 servings. *(I like to make it ahead of time and warm it up again.)*

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**Mixed Nut Bars** (Joan Sholdt)

1 ½ cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 Tablespoons butter

½ cup butter, melted
2 cups mixed nuts
½ cup white syrup

¾ cup brown sugar
1 pkg butterscotch chips
1 Tablespoon water

Mix flour, butter, brown sugar and salt together for crust. Pat into 9 x 13 pan. Bake for 10 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool. Pour mixed nuts over crust ... chop one cup, leave one cup whole. Melt butter, butterscotch chips, syrup, and water over low heat or in microwave. Pour mixture over the nuts. Bake 10 more minutes. Cool. Store in refrigerator.
Chocolate Chip Cheese Ball  (Judy Steinhauer)

8 ounces cream cheese  ½ cup butter  ¼ teaspoon vanilla
¾ cup powdered sugar 2 Tablespoons brown sugar
¾ cup mini chocolate chips Chopped pecans
Graham Crackers

In mixing bowl beat cream cheese, softened butter and vanilla until fluffy. Gradually add powdered sugar and brown sugar. Stir in chocolate chips. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Just before serving, roll cheese ball in pecans. Serve with regular or chocolate graham crackers.

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Italian Beef for Sandwiches  (Judy Steinhauer)

Makes a delicious beef mixture to serve with your favorite buns.

6 pound Round of Beef, rolled and tied
3 large onions
½ teaspoon salt

Marinade:
½ teaspoon salt  ½ teaspoon oregano
½ teaspoon garlic salt  ½ teaspoon onion salt
¾ teaspoon basil  ½ teaspoon Italian Seasoning
Optional:
1 Tablespoon Accent

Place meat, onions and salt in roaster half full of water. Roast until tender, approximately 30 minutes per pound at 250 to 275 degrees. Let stand overnight in broth in refrigerator. Slice roast very fine and arrange in layers in pan. Strain liquid, removing onions and any fat into separate kettle. Add seasonings to liquid, bring to boil, and then pour over layers of meat. Liquid may be thickened with cornstarch to desired consistency. Marinate at least one day. Bake at 275 degrees for about two hours.