

## Casimir Magnin Transcription

### “The Magnin Homestead”

Stories of immigration are often heroic tales of chasing dreams and overcoming tragedy, but really at the root of these stories is the re-establishment of place, the remaking of a home. This is a story about that place, the one that my family has come to call home for 127 years.

In the summer of 1883, in Charrot, Switzerland, Casimir Magnin, at the age of 17, made the decision to come to America, encouraged by his uncle who was also making the trip. Upon his arrival he wrote back to summon his family to the new prosperous land. Once in America, the family of 5, including an infant, lived in a small estate with relatives in Manitowoc, WI, for a month before purchasing 80 acres of land in the township of Gibson. The time spent in Gibson was difficult because of the harsh winds and the rocky soils, so, four years later, the family traded the land for three 40-acre parcels of wilderness in the township of Stiles, paying \$100. This new land was formerly a lumber camp that has been described as a harsh wilderness with its rolling hills and untamed plains and forests, but it boasted fertile soils and a small pond for cheap. This was where the Magnin family would establish their homestead and find a home within this new country. Originally making the move to this wilderness just before winter in 1888, the Magnins were forced to live in the existing shanty that was already on the property. That following spring, Casimir's father died and Casimir took lead in building the first house on the property, a simple log house that still stands today near the original “Magnin farmhouse” today. Casimir then took to cultivating some, but not all, of the land, leaving some wilderness to house the animals that lived in the area. He even built a child-size log cabin for the children to play in while the adults were working in the fields. Fourteen years later, in 1902, after marrying his wife Elise, the growing family built a second home just 1000 feet down the road, on the same

plot of land. This house came to be called the “Casimir Magnin home”, the house that my mother grew up in. In 1907, they built a one-room brick school house on one acre at the edge of their property to give their children a proper education. Upon gathering of more surrounding land, both homes grew in size with expansions and then grew to include barns, then garages, with the growing wealth of the family. The homes have switched ownership fluidly between generations. The original land was expanded to triple the size that it used to be to build the Magnin family wealth through harvesting the goods of the land. It is on this expanse of land that my grandfather taught me the importance of conserving forests, and how to tell the difference between an ash and a maple tree, like his father did before him. It is here where I learned how to collect sap for maple syrup, drive a stick shift, and how houses went together. I can point to the spot where my mother planted trees when she was a girl, because they are just down the road from the ones that I planted when I was a girl. Nearby there is a hill where my memories of sledding and horse drawn sleighs live. It is in these houses that my family has celebrated Christmas and Easter and birthdays for over a hundred years with German pancakes, a recipe that my grandma knows by heart, and occasionally a side of yodeling. This is the place that my family still calls home, where the migration story of the Casimir Magnin family came to an end, but where his family continues on as Americans.