



October 26 to November 1

WEEKLY

SECOND SECTION

PINE CITY PIONEER, October 25, 1978 - 17

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Jason Roberts, one of the stars of 'The Melodeon', a CBS television movie filmed recently southeast of Pine City.



Stringing popcorn for the Christmas tree on the steps of the Royalton Church are, Mrs. Millie Dahlin, Cambridge, Mildred Wendt, Rush City, Lilian Hjeln, Rush City[back] and Olesley Cole, assistant set director. Watching them is Arvid Carlson.

'Melodeon' captures rural flavor

Area residents play intricate role in film production

Stories, photos inside



Dressed in their costumes for the movie, Mrs. Ida Heinrich's grandchildren, Steve, Tami and Mike, who play neighbor children in the movie, took advantage of a break in filming to play with the publicity director's dog.

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Hollywood on the plains

Once in a lifetime experience for many

by Jackie A. Anderson

Many people from this area owe Tom Krebsbach of Midway Chevrolet in St. Paul a thank you.

It was Krebsbach who persuaded his friend George Englund, a Hollywood producer, to film an upcoming CBS Christmas show "The Melodeon" in the beautiful countryside of Minnesota. The show stars Jason Robards, Eva Marie Saint and George Parry with a cameo appearance by Joanne Woodward.

It was CBS who picked the time however. According to reports, Englund Enterprises was scheduled to film the show early in 1979, while Minnesota winter was in full swing, for television airing at Christmas 1979. CBS changed its corporate mind however and wanted the show for this Christmas.

Englund and his crew of technicians, production assistants, cameramen and stars, can thank their lucky stars CBS changed its mind about when the filming would take place.

The Southern Californians had a hard enough time adjusting to the cool, autumn weather - what few cool days we've had during this beautiful Indian Summer - coming down with bronchitis, colds, fevers and the general blahs that come with adjusting to temperature changes. Dr. Norman Lee and Dr. Luther Nelson, both of Rush City, acted as the on-call medical staff for the Hollywood company while it was filming on the Fred Heinrich farm, about six miles northeast of Rush City.

According to Dr. Lee there have been no serious cases that have required more than a shot of antibiotic or similar routine treatment.

The majority of the film company are from California, some like costume designer Sue Hlem and George Parry are from New York.

While things at the Heinrich farm, where most of the filming took place, the Loring Nelson farm, where part of the movie was shot, and the old Royalton Church, where the end of the filming took place, were buzzing with activity, the excitement just didn't seem to equal that of the people from the Pine City area who in some way have had a part in the production of this movie. (According to reports people in Rush City have been buzzing too.)

The filming of "The Melodeon", a depression-era family movie, in this area has given local residents something more to discuss at the coffee shops and businesses than the weather.

The "stars" of the conversations are those local people who have been associated with the movie company in some way.

There's Nova Peterson, who, as owner of Pine City Launderers and Cleaners, has done the laundry for the movie company; and Jim Berglund and Dennis Thorne of Sta-Brite Signs who made the license plates for the vintage cars in the movie; Ruth Gillespie, Jo Lavigne, and Jan Fooraker, who as owners of "The Rose" in Pine City supplied many of the vintage household props needed; Richard and Elaine

Schneider of Rush City who supplied the vintage cars; Paul Kusel of Kuzel Electric who helped repair some electrical equipment for the company; and the Arvid Carlsons of rural Braham in Royalton Township who landed speaking roles in the movie.

Then of course there are Mrs. Ida (Fred) Heinrich, Loring Nelson and the Royalton Church Board who allowed the movie company to use their property for the on location shooting.

A handful of local people were also hired to help prepare the sets for the production, among them Mrs. Mary (Gita) Jacobson and Mrs. Bernard Pangerl who helped prepare the Nelson farm house for filming by painting walls, wallpapering and hanging curtains. They will also help Mrs. Heinrich's home back in order when the filming is all through.

Working on the special effects crew during the four weeks of filming were Jeff Pangerl, James and Pat Youngbauer and Jeff Marschinke, all of Pine City. Their jobs involved helping create the illusion of winter with plastic snow and large propeller fans, rigging a tree branch that will fall, or appealing to Jason Robards in the film, supplying gas to fireplaces from concealed lines, so that no valuable time was lost trying to start fires in the wood stoves and fireplaces.

The local special effects men have put in long days, sometimes 18 hours, six days a week during their four weeks with Englund Enterprises. The four were originally going to work on an on-call basis, but soon became regular members of the crew.

"There's a lot of waiting, sometimes for hours," Marschinke said. A 1973 graduate of Pine City High School, Marschinke took a leave of absence from his regular job as a painter with Wes Gilbey of Pine City. Pat Youngbauer, also a graduate of PCHS, had just returned home from a one year stay in Memphis, Tennessee before he landed the job with the special effects crew.

Before the semi-trailers loaded with the camera and special effects equipment arrived in Minnesota with the crews, technicians and stars close behind, an advance team was sent to Minnesota to locate a 1920's style farm house that would serve as the central background for the film.

The key figure in locating the farm was Ted Norelius of Lindstrom, former editor and publisher of the Chisago County Press. Norelius received a call one day in September from Alex Mayer, art director with Englund Enterprises.

Mayer gave the requirements; a 1920's farm house with three bedrooms, a good sized kitchen, dining room and parlour. The farm also had to have an old-fashioned barn, no modern silos, in general a 1920's farm that hadn't changed much over the years.

The search for the right place involved looking at nearly 400 farms in the area. A site in Redwood County had been selected, but the production company wanted someplace closer

to the cities if possible. During the search, he and Mayer visited about 90 farms.

At the end of the fruitless search, Norelius remembered a farm he and his wife admired years ago and with the help of the Chisago County Assessor, Dave Johnson, was able to pin the farm down as the Fred Heinrich property in rural Rush City.

"I was sitting on the porch," Mrs. Heinrich, a widow, recalled recently in an interview with the Pioneer. It was Sept. 6. "Ted Norelius and Dave Johnson just dropped in and wanted to look at my house. They said it was for a movie that was going to be made in the area."

Taken completely by surprise, Mrs. Heinrich, a sprightly woman nearing 70, said "No sir" initially. "I'm too old for that kind of stuff."

During the next two weeks, Mrs. Heinrich was visited by different members of Englund Enterprises who would try to talk her into allowing them to use her farm.

Mrs. Heinrich finally agreed after a personal visit with George Englund and Tom Krebsbach. Englund offered to provide lodging and meals in one of the motels in the area while the filming took place, but Mrs. Heinrich had no intention of leaving her home of 50 years to complete strangers. Krebsbach then provided her with a modern motor-home that was parked near the old chicken coop in the farm yard.

Rumors were flying around the area that the company had offered to send Mrs. Heinrich on a paid vacation to Germany. Mrs. Heinrich has heard those rumors

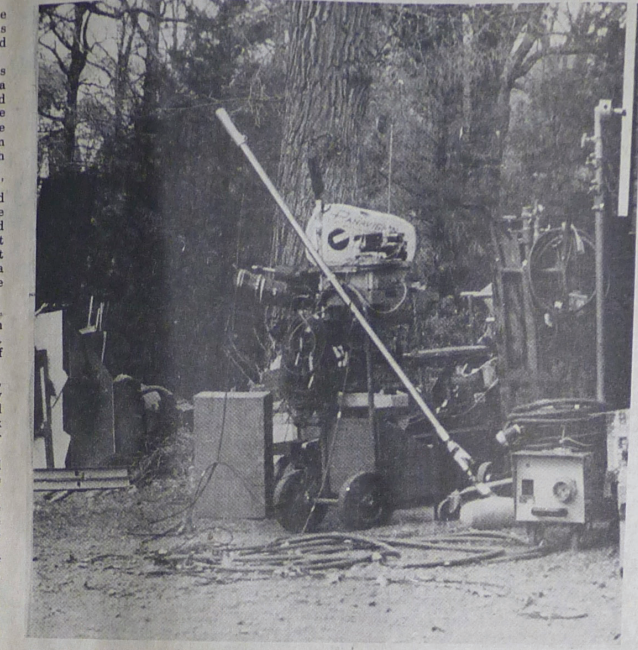
too, but as far as she knows hasn't been asked by anyone connected with the movie company. "I'm still waiting," she said.

Mrs. Heinrich was paid for the use of her house, although she won't disclose the amount. Despite some inconveniences, "it was the most wonderful experience in the world," she said. "I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

Although the Heinrich farm was what the movie company was looking for, there were still changes which had to be made to lend authenticity to the set. JoAnn McDougall, set director, was in charge of preparing the Heinrich house for the cameras. Inside, the house had to be completely redecorated in 1930's style living; outside, the red barn had to be painted a duller red, a pig pen had to be built, an outhouse added and a wooden fence erected to camouflage the modern wire fence and metal fence posts.

Most of the furniture and household props were gathered from antique shops in the area, including the D-R Bargain Spot and Wooden Barrel in Hinckley. And "The Store" in Pine City. Many other items were donated by local residents. The Melodeon, the centerpiece of the film, was found at the Wooden Barrel also.

Driving through the St. Croix River Valley to the Fred Heinrich farm, it is easy to understand why the farm was selected. There are rolling hills, beautiful trees in fall



The Panavision camera, sound equipment and yards of electrical cord were positioned in front of the barn at the Heinrich farm. The crew had taken a break for lunch.

colors and dirt roads leading to the secluded farm house.

"What's it like watching your house completely redecorated to an earlier era, with stoves, fluorescent lights, carpeting and furniture removed or disguised? 'It's chaos,' Mrs. Heinrich said. "No one can imagine what it's like, but wonderful chaos."

Mrs. Heinrich was impressed with the hard work involved in producing a movie and with the niceness of the cast and crew. "They were very nice to me," she said.

Mrs. Heinrich took an active role while the movie company was in the area, recruiting locals for crowd scenes and helping with the collection of props for the sets. Her two sons and grandchildren also got involved as production assistants and as extras in the film. Her grandchildren were cast as neighbor children in the film.

Filming at the Heinrich farm ended last week. There were two days of filming at the Loring Nelson farm south of Rush City and at the Burlington Northern Depot in Rush City. Then the company moved to the Royalton Church last Saturday for two days of shooting. The final day of filming will be today, Wednesday, at the Drexel Apartments in Minneapolis. It is here that JoAnn Woodward will make her cameo appearance.

Bonnie Graves, publicity director for the Melodeon, said the crew has enjoyed their stay in East Central Minnesota. "The

people have been very cooperative and wonderful."

"Usually on location, you get a lot of people interested in movie careers, but around here people are more curious," Graves said. She did say they had one fellow coming around who was "quite persistent," however!

Several actors and actresses from Minneapolis-St. Paul were hired as extras for the film, as well as a Minneapolis teacher who served as tutor for George Parry and the other children involved in the production.

Lowell Anderson, a retired minister from Stanchfield, was hired as the minister in the church scene. And Arvid and Mildred Carlson, a Royalton Township couple, were hired to play the neighbors of Robards and Miss Saint in the film.

Mike Johnson, Danny Cabak and Jay Jindra, all from Hinckley, were hired as drivers and production assistants and have worked with the movie company since they started filming Oct. 2.

Jindra was busy last Saturday at the Royalton Church building a manger and helping get props ready for the interior of the church. The old wooden pews with the folding seats had to be moved closer to the center of the church because the aisle was too wide.

JoAnn McDougall was inside decorating the tree and creating a Christmas atmosphere. She had looked for tinsel to hang on the tree but couldn't find any in the local stores. Luckily, Mrs.

Arvid Carlson who admits to "never throwing anything away" had some tinsel at home and brought it to the church for McDougall to use.

"I always like to hire local people whenever possible," McDougall said. "They always know other people who can help and usually know where to find things."

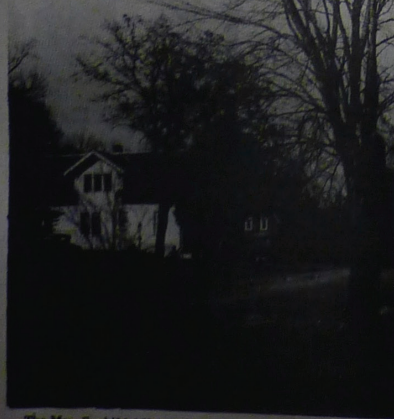
McDougall sang high praise for Carol Norelius who helped find the locations and lent her piano bench with a needlepoint cover to use with the Melodeon.

Several hours before the cast and most of the crew were to arrive at the Royalton Church for a night of filming that would start at about 8 p.m. and end somewhere in the pre-dawn hours, many curious people who stopped to get a closer look at the Christmas scene being created in the church, took a few minutes to help string popcorn for the tree. McDougall was working on inside.

Cars were kept moving outside by members of the Pine County Mounted Patrol, who like their counterparts in Chisago County, were hired by Englund Enterprises to keep local traffic moving and away from the spot where filming was taking place.

The pine trees on metal bases that were used in the snow scenes at the Heinrich farm were soon brought to the church, about an hour before the arrival of the semi-trucks with the other

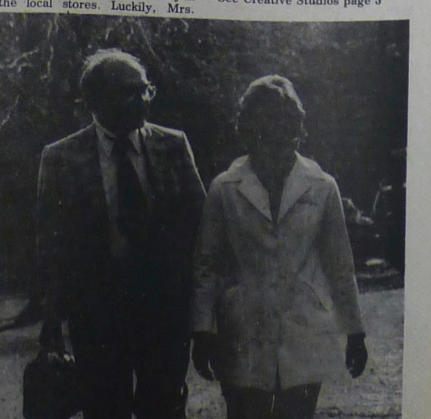
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The Mrs. Fred (Ida) Heinrich farm where the major part of the movie was filmed.



Mrs. Heinrich, right, talks to one of the crew members near the back steps of her house.



Dr. Norman Lee, Rush City, and his nurse Vera Lindstrom, arrived at the Heinrich farm to treat members of the crew suffering from minor cold and flu symptoms.

Braham couple star in CBS Christmas movie

by Jackie A. Anderson

Being in the right place at the right time is no longer just a slogan to Arvid and Mildred Carlson, a Royalton Township couple.

The two will play the neighbors of Jason Robards and Eva Marie Saint in a CBS television movie "The Melodeon" to be shown December 20. Both have considerable speaking roles as Ralph and Beulah Youngquist, neighbors to Emma and Daniel Larson (Robards and Saint) in the film.

Arvid had the key to the Royalton Township Church where part of the action in the film takes place.

"I've always had the key to the chapel," Carlson said. He is a past president of the Royalton Church Cemetery board. Church services in the old Methodist Church haven't been conducted since the 1940's. The church now serves as a memorial chapel.

"They (the movie people) came to our house several mornings to get the key. I couldn't believe they were making a movie," he continued. "I felt that it could never happen here."

Just to make sure he wasn't dreaming, Carlson drove over to the church, about five miles from his house, where he was born and raised and has lived all of his 70-some years.

"I met about 14 of the crew including Mr. Englund (the producer). I told them I was born and raised here and had farmed all my life near the church. They looked me over and said I was what they were looking for."

The Carlsons still didn't believe what was happening. But one day they received a telephone call asking them to be at Cassidy's in Hinckley at 8 a.m. the next day to audition for the part of the Youngquists.

They auditioned three different times and each time they went. There were different couples trying for the same part. "Some of them were so dramatic and good, I just kept asking myself, 'What am I doing here,'" Mildred Carlson said.

The Carlsons, a happy, down-to-earth couple, won the audition and for two days that they "will never forget" they entered the world of Hollywood and became Ralph and Beulah Youngquist.

"When we drove to the Heinrich farm the first day, they stopped me and said no one could go in," Arvid said.

After he explained that he was in the film, the patrol person parked their car and gave them a ride to the farm, about a half-mile down the road from the parking area.

"They treated us so graciously, we felt like a real king and queen," Mildred said.

The Carlsons spent two days at the Heinrich farm filming. The days were long, starting at 8 a.m. and finishing as late as 9 p.m. The days went quickly though as the Carlsons soaked in the experience of a lifetime that many others in the area were probably dreaming about.

Did they have trouble memorizing their lines? Not really, the Carlsons said. They received their scripts the day before and would practice in the morning before leaving for the location.

Arvid did admit being nervous and having some trouble adjusting to the camera. "I was so nervous the first day, I kept worrying about forgetting my lines, but the professionals missed some too, so then I thought, why should I worry?"

Adjusting to the camera took a little longer though.

"After I would say my lines to Jason Robards I would look over to Mr. Englund," Arvid said. "Finally he (Englund) said, 'Arvid, if you don't stop that I'll throw the camera at you!'"

All of Arvid's dialogue is with Robards and is about the effects of the depression on the farmers. A subject which caused some *deja vu* as Arvid lived through the depression and recalls similar conversations with neighbors of his.



Mildred and Arvid Carlson reviewed some of the press clippings about "The Melodeon" at their kitchen table in rural Braham. The couple will appear in the film as Buella and Ralph

Youngquist, neighbors of the movie's stars, Jason Robards and Eva Marie Saint.

Photos by Jackie Anderson and Wade Weber.

Mildred will appear in scenes with Eva Marie Saint in the Heinrich house.

Both of the Carlsons were impressed with the discipline and manners of the cast and crew from Hollywood.

"When we grew up we were told that movie people were different," Mildred said. "They're not, they're just as nice as can be."

"They're outside all day," she said, "and work long hours."

The stand-in for Miss Saint was so tired one of the days the Carlsons were filming "that she almost fell asleep standing up," Mildred said.

Will fame spoil the Carlsons? One gets the impression talking to them that it has not.

"The only thing is when we go to town, we can't get away," Mildred said with a laugh. "Our friends approach us and jokingly ask for autographs and want to know what it was like."

"It's an experience you never dreamed of," Arvid adds.

The Carlsons will be viewing themselves on the screen for the first time along with the rest of the nation in December. They were invited to watch the film from their two days of shooting, but the

dailies, as they are called, weren't gone over until late in the evening, so the Carlsons didn't go to the production headquarters in Hinckley.

The Carlsons were paid union wages for their acting roles and although they won't say how much they were paid, admit that they haven't made that kind of money in such a short time in all their years of farming.

Arvid was born and raised in Royalton Township. Mildred was born in St. Paul and lived in Rock Creek before marrying her husband 46 years ago.

She taught school for many years in West Rock and Stanchfield and still substitutes in Braham. The Carlsons have two children, Marvin, who took over the family farm, and Marilyn (Mrs. Wendell) of Elk River.

Although the filming is done, the Carlsons still convey the excitement of being in the movies. "I just couldn't believe I was there," Mildred said of the two days of filming.

Arvid (good naturedly) admitted that he was caught a couple of times in the middle of the night reciting his lines in his sleep.



continued from page 2

equipment. In the yard next to the church sat the vintage John Deere tractor with a small wooden trailer and a "fake" Melodeon. The real Melodeon was already inside the church. In the movie, Robards and Parry will use the tractor to transport the Melodeon from their farm home to the church.

As the trucks, vans and cars arrived, driven by local drivers and carrying the production assistants, directors and cast, the quiet afternoon at the church turned into a scene of hurried activity as the various crew leaders chased away local onlookers and got the equipment in place ready for the evening's shooting. That day, filming was to begin at 8 p.m. and continue into morning. The scene will be at night during a snow storm as Robards and Parry make their way to the church.

"The Melodeon" a book by Glendon Swarthout deals with a man's recollections of his boyhood on his grandparent's farm during the depression era. A Guthrie actor was hired to play the part of the man in the opening day's filming of a tractor demonstration on the Tom Belland farm in Royalton Township. The tractor used in the opening scene was supplied by Niedorf Farm Supply in Hinckley.

Many local people were used in the crowd scenes on the Belland farm, including Neva Peterson and Geney Witz of Pine City.

"We worked all day for what I understand will be about five minutes in the film," Mrs. Peterson said.

Although the extras that day weren't paid for their work, Mrs. Peterson said she was glad she

had the opportunity. "I'll never be that close to the movies again."

By the time this article appears in print, George Englund Enterprises will be done filming in the area and will be setting up on location in Minneapolis. The cost of shooting a movie on location is astronomical, an estimated \$25,000 a day. The filming took 21 days.

Local businesses have enjoyed the onslaught of so many long-term transients. The entire production crew and cast were housed at Cassidy's Motor Inn in Hinckley, and while in the area, have purchased warm clothing at stores in Hinckley, Pine City and Rush City. Many of the crew also have been seen at several restaurants in the area, including Tobias's, and Cassidy's in Hinckley, Lovro's Resort, and Naomi's Eat Shop in Pine City.

Food for the movie crew was catered by the Patie Deli in North Branch and D.L. Lindstrom's Eating Emporium in Lindstrom. Many compliments were heard on the food from both members of the crew and the local people who because of their involvement ate with the movie crew. Each day the caterers had to provide two hot entrees, a cheese and cracker tray, relish tray, bread tray, four salads, beverage and dessert. Snacks were also provided for the crew. The food had to be transported to the various locations by van.

The local excitement about the movie will no doubt continue into December assuring CBS' high Nielsen ratings in East Central Minnesota for their Christmas offering of "The Melodeon."

'Local' Holsteins discovered by Hollywood film company

by Jackie A. Anderson

The "locals" with the most intimate contact with the stars of the CBS television production "The Melodeon" will never be able to tell anyone about it. Unless you understand the low, throaty sounds of milk cows.

The story of how eight prize winning Holstein cows and a calf from the Arnold Danson farm in Rush City were cast as "extras" in the television movie is utterly fantastic.

The Danson's received a call from Mary Galloway, who identified herself as location manager of George Englund Enterprises, a Hollywood, California firm shooting a depression-era movie in the area.

What Ms. Galloway needed was a small herd of milk cows that could be taught to walk down a path and that could be hand-milked by Jason Robards and George Parry.

They would also need someone to teach Robards and Parry how to milk a cow. Ms. Galloway said they would pay wages to the person teaching the milking and working with the cows. The Danson's had no idea who recommended their herd for the job.

Danson and his daughter LuCele, who will be 19 this Saturday, didn't commit themselves right away. "We took a day to think about it and then said yes," LuCele, a 1978 graduate of Rush City High School, said. "With some changes however."

"Our cows are our livelihood so we asked for rental fees for the herd too," LuCele said.

Because her father had other duties on the farm to worry about, LuCele became the agent for the herd rented to the movie company.

"I was thinking about quitting my job at the time to look for a secretarial job, so when this came along I just quit my job a little earlier," LuCele said.

Three days after reaching an agreement, LuCele and her father brought the eight cows and a calf to the Heinrich farm.

The arrival of the "star" cows upset the herd that usually calls Mrs. Heinrich's pasture home. It took a while to chase the cows that had

jumped the fence and get them calmed down, but after smoothing their bruised egos, LuCele started immediately walking her cows up and down a lane that was built in the pasture to get them used to their new "home."

It took the cows about five days to get used to their new surroundings and during that time their milk production went down a little, but once they became accustomed to the old barn and narrower stalls, the milk production returned to normal.

LuCele was the first to arrive at the Heinrich farm each morning. She came at 6 a.m. each day to milk the cows using modern automatic milking machinery brought in especially for the milking.

The star of the herd was selected as the one to be featured in the film as the one Robards teaches young George Parry the fine art of hand milking. Before he could do that however, Robards himself had to have a few lessons.

"He caught on good," LuCele said of Robards. "George Parry loved it. He even got milker's cramp from practicing so much."

The cow the stars milked is no stranger to fame herself, having won second in production honors at the Minnesota State Fair, Grand Champion honors at the 1978 Chisago County Fair and Reserve Champion at the 1978 Black and White Show in Cambridge.

The Danson cows after two weeks at the Heinrich farm, are now back at home in their comfortable, modern dairy barn. Their young trainer, LuCele, however, has moved to Cassidy's in Hinckley, at least temporarily. She was hired as a driver, and chauffeurs crew members and star Eva Marie Saint from location to location at various times of the day or night.

LuCele isn't sure what will happen when the movie production is over. She has been invited to California to visit members of the crew she has come to know over the past four weeks. If she doesn't do that, she will look for that secretarial job.



LuCele Danson, a 1978 graduate of Rush City High School, was hired as a driver when the filming involving her Holstein cows was through. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Danson, R.R. 1, Rush City.

More stories and photos in next week's Pioneer