

History of the Ernest Westerfeld home on Co. Trk. F in Zachow
By Leon Westerfeld

The year was 1948; Ernest, his wife Lorraine, and three children, Jeanette, Leon, and Carol, were living in the rented Zion Lutheran Church Teacherage, one mile north of Zachow. This house had an outdoor privy, a well and a hand pump for drinking water and a cistern, which caught rain water for washing and bathing. The house had a wood cook stove and an oil space heater for heating in the winter.

The Zion church council made the decision to sell the house to the highest bidder. Ernest bid but lost out so a decision had to be made quickly on where to move his family. As a commission driver delivering petroleum products for Socony-Vacuum Oil Co. and with the bulk plant in Zachow the logical choice would be to live in Zachow. However no homes were for sale.

Wm Marquart, who owned a lot between Henry Dirks home and the Albert Radtke Garage, was contacted but refused to sell. Elmer Zernicke, whose farm was just outside town was contacted and agreed to sell a lot next to Herman Dobratz on Co. Trk F. The lot went all the way down to Pensaukee Creek, about 300 ft. deep, with 100 ft. of frontage on the Co. Trk. F. The cost was the tidy sum of approximately \$350, if my memory of the transaction is correct.

It was the fall of the year but house plans were quickly drawn up similar to a house Ernest and Lorraine saw in Gillett. It was a one and one-half story, three bedroom, one and one half bath home, with dimensions of 48' by 28', with an attached one stall garage which was something new in that era.

Curt Grunewald dug the basement and Martin Juedes laid the blocks, with Rupp Bros. and Landwehr, farmer/carpenters from Pittsfield, doing the carpenter work. The house was framed in just after deer hunting, as no one worked during deer season. Henry Dirks, at the Zachow Elev. & Lumber Co. furnished most of the building materials and helped coordinate the supplies, although many of the 2 x 4's were purchased from local sawmills. Moede's did the plumbing, with the electrical work done by Bonnin, and brother-in-laws Maynard Sohn, Si Uelman and others helped with things like flooring, insulation, painting, and hand mixing of the cement work. Lorraine always fixed the noon meal for all the help during the building process.

On March 1, 1949 we used John Westerfeld's 4-wheeled farm wagon with the flat hay rack to move furniture and belongings, including the big upright piano, to the new home. This was really a big deal as this would be the first time we had a home with running water, an inside bathroom, hot water spigot, and a shower in the basement.

We were barely getting settled in our new home when along came "Dennis", Ernest and Lorraine's fourth child and second son, who was born on March 23rd, 1949. The three older children, Jeanette, Leon, and Carol had the upstairs, one bedroom for the girls, one

for the boys, which Leon had all to himself until Dennis was old enough to move upstairs. There was the one-half bath upstairs so we had to shower in the basement, but it sure beat going to the outdoor privy, as we were so accustomed to doing. The one-half story allowed for storage under the eaves, we call them “cubby holes”, and as kids it was a place to play until they became actual storage places for Mom’s and Dad’s things. End of play area.



Earnest Westerfeld Home built in 1949-Typical Wisconsin winter

Now we were one of the “Zachow bunch”, however, most Zachow kids attended the one room LaFollette Grove grade school just east of town. Jeanette and Leon attended St. Pauls Lutheran Elementary School in Bonduel. When Bonduel Community Schools consolidated, we got on the bus with all the Zachow kids, and there were many. We could walk “up-town” to the store, or play with the other kids. Walking home after dark we even had, recently installed, street lights.

A year after the house was built, a three stall garage was added, with the cement floor mixed and laid by hard, hand labor. This housed the two petroleum delivery trucks, one driven by Ernest, the other by Augie Heller, who drove from Cecil, picked up the truck, and went on his route. The extra stall was used for a shop and oil inventory.



New Garage built in 1950-Jeanette & Leon Westerfeld with “Pooch”.

Being that we lived near the hill running down to Pensaukee Creek, our house was the meeting place for tobogganing in the winter, with the recreation room in the basement a good place for hot cocoa after sledding.

Being quite a ravine next to our house, rather than Elmer Zernicke building another house quite close to ours, Ernest purchased another appx. 50 feet, down to the center of the ditch, for more open space next to us. This was used for extra garden space as was the large area behind the three stall garage. This large area was the “pickle patch” and it was overwhelming to a 12 year old kid (Leon), who did not really want to pick pickles, and who would rather play “cops & robbers” with the boys uptown. But Mom and Dad helped pick and we hauled them to the Pickle House, next to Paul & Pauly uptown, so Herman Rattke could sort them. The money for the pickles was used for new school clothing each fall.

Growing up in Zachow is another whole story, which I (Leon) and Dean Proper covered in a couple of quite lengthy articles. The kids had the freedom to roam, build tree houses in Mollys woods, ride ice chunks down the Pensaukee, have bee-bee gun fights in Paul Dobratz’s barn, even go camping overnight to “Snake Hill” one mile south of Zachow. All without adult supervision.

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Back to the Westerfeld residence: It had 8" wooden drop siding, a septic system with oversized septic tank and a 20' x 30' dry well filled with large rocks and covered with tin and dirt. Landscaping was done with a neighbors tractor to level the lawn and trees were transplanted from the woods. Shrubs were purchased from a Rasmussen, who came around each spring. To complete the yard, Dad put up clothes line poles and a swing next to the garage. Mom was into flowers, and we terraced the back hill with rails so she could plant many varieties of flowers, including strawberry beds and a raspberry patch.

It was a couple of years later that the driveway was blacktopped, which then led to a basketball hoop being put up in front of the garage. Although the basement was not finished off we could play downstairs. It had a nice level cement floor and a somewhat high ceiling to dribble a basketball, but not high enough for a hoop. The oil furnace kept it warm, and a work bench to build items and a laundry room with a floor drain rounded out the basement.

The house still stands, with additions, although remodeled a couple of times.

Leon Westerfeld



Jeanette, Leon, and Carol in front of new Ernest Westerfeld house