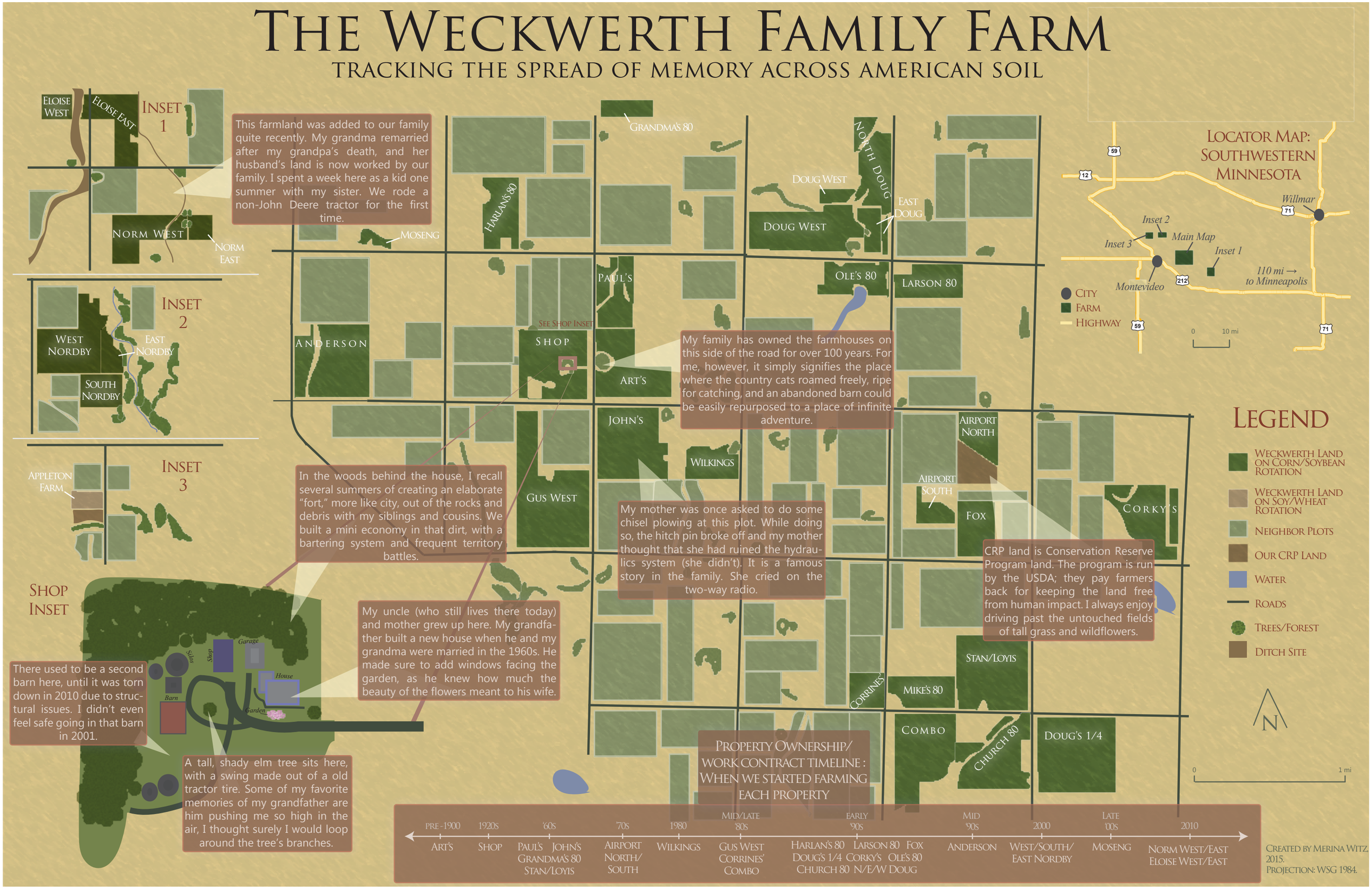
The Weckwerth Family Farm

Tracking the Spread of Memory Across American Soil



This farmland was added to our family quite recently. My grandma remarried after my grandpa's death, and her husband's land is now worked by our family. I spent a week here as a kid one summer with my sister. We rode a non-John Deere tractor for the first time.

My family has owned the farmhouses on this side of the road for over 100 years. For me, however, it simply signifies the place where the country cats roamed freely, ripe for catching, and an abandoned barn could be easily repurposed to a place of infinite adventure.

In the woods behind the house, I recall several summers of creating an elaborate "fort," more like city, out of the rocks and debris with my siblings and cousins. We built a mini economy in that dirt, with a bartering system and frequent territory battles.

My mother was once asked to do some chisel plowing at this plot. While doing so, the hitch pin broke off and my mother thought that she had ruined the hydraulics system (she didn't). It is a famous story in the family. She cried on the two-way radio.

CRP land is Conservation Reserve Program land. The program is run by the USDA; they pay farmers back for keeping the land free from human impact. I always enjoy driving past the untouched fields of tall grass and wildflowers.

My uncle (who still lives there today) and mother grew up here. My grandfather built a new house when he and my grandma were married in the 1960s. He made sure to add windows facing the garden, as he knew how much the beauty of the flowers meant to his wife.

There used to be a second barn here, until it was torn down in 2010 due to structural issues. I didn't even feel safe going in that barn in 2001.

A tall, shady elm tree sits here, with a swing made out of a old tractor tire. Some of my favorite memories of my grandfather are him pushing me so high in the air, I thought surely I would loop around the tree's branches.

Property Ownership/ Work Contract Timeline: When we started farming each property

Created by Merina Witz, 2015.

Projection: WSG 1984.