

The Story of John and Martha Akre

The Story of John Akre, b. 1874
His Wife Martha Særvold, b. 1865
And Their Family

By Larry R. Cowan
1996 and updated from time to time

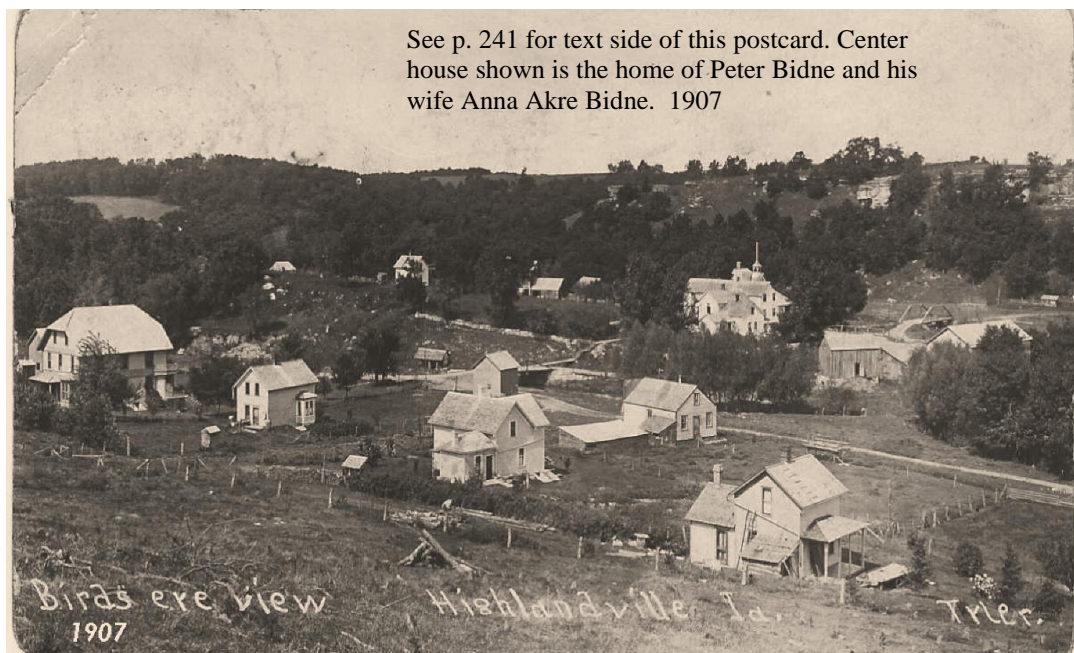
Acknowledgments

I want to thank all of the many persons who have contributed their stories, genealogies, photographs, maps and copies of certificates to make this anthology possible. Stories and genealogies and records have been collected on Robert Cowan and his wife Eliza Guntson, William M. Cowan and his wife Margaret McMichael and later Della Carr, William James "Jim" Cowan and his wife Inga Akre, her parents John Akre and his wife Martha Særvold, my parents Walter Cowan and Esther Siems and the Christiansen family of Esther's adoptive mother Johanna Marie. These people and their families make up the ancestry and history of who we are today and of future generations. Blessed be God.

Above all, I want to thank my dear wife, Nancy Ellen Dornfeld, for being beside me; for your love and patience as I have endeavored over these many years in our family genealogical record. You are my treasure.

The following is a work specifically on the Akre family and the family of my grandmother Inga Akre. It is based on conversations, records, documents, letters and photos from a number of sources. My first resource was the letters and photos that were in the possession of my grandmother Inga who passed away in 1940. Beyond that, I thank Beverly Christiansen of Mercer, North Dakota, and Pat Christiansen Mohrbacher of Denver, Colorado for information about the Akre, Ovre and Christensen families; Sylvia Akre of Decorah, Iowa, Bobbie Akre of Coralville, Iowa and Margaret Akre Pearson of San Leandro, California; my cousin Beverly Cowan Miller for information on the Akre families; and of course my mother, Esther Cowan with whom I've had many conversations; and many others. I have done some personal research but pretty much my job has been that of assembling what has been collected. I hope the record has been assembled in a way that is fairly readable and easy to follow. Please advise me of errors you see and updates. Thanks.

Peace,
Larry Cowan / lncowan@gmail.com



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As I begin I would like to point out differences in early property rights in Norway to that of pioneer America. The right of land possession affected how people who worked the land lived out their lives and the opportunity to create the future.

The U.S. ownership of the Midwest prairies began when the Louisiana Purchase agreement was signed between the French Republic and the United States in the early 1800's. This land was acquired by the United States and, as yet, none of it was owned by the people who occupied it. The few settlers on the land didn't officially own their land and the American natives believed the land to be sacred places where they were and not something that could be owned. Pioneers and homesteaders continued to move across land while Native American peoples were more and more displaced. These were the years we call the Old Wild West - from Dakota and Montana to Oklahoma. The old southwest was still in the hands of Spain. Anyway, the homestead act of 1862 confirmed that farmers and others actually owned the land they occupied, cultivated and herded. From then forward land could officially be sold and bought as something one owned and people could build their fortunes.

In Norway, however, only 3% of the land is useable for farm purposes and the land was valuable. Particularly on the western edge among the fjords, a farm property typically would begin on the water's edge and run up to the frost line of the mountains. Land was held as the property of the family who lived on the land and was protected in perpetuity by ancient law. Land transfers were generally to the eldest son or other next of kin as approved by a district council. Originally farm holdings were occupied by one family but as population increased these were divided between many families into numbered sections within the farm. These sections were often occupied by persons or families called pladsman or cotters and they could use the section of land. People were tied to their piece of land and movement was uncommon. These sections were numbered and often had names. For example, Åakre and Boge are the names of farms 85 and 82, respectively, in Fusa Parish (according to the Stasarkivet i Bergen, Arstadveien 22, 5000 Bergen, Norway archives).



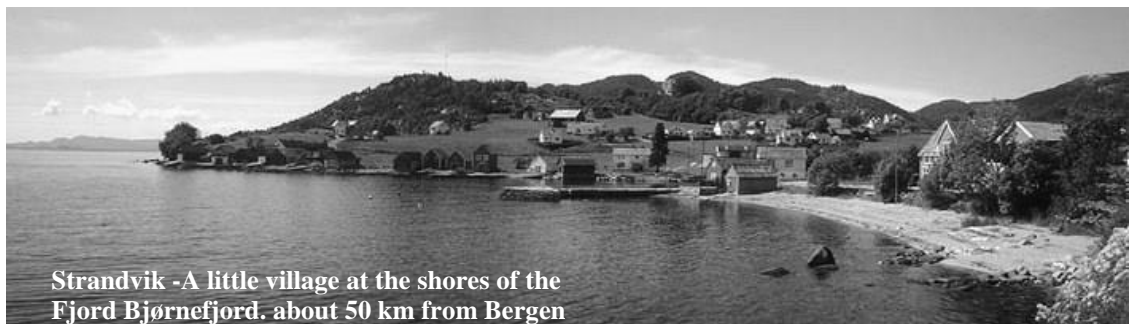
Farm photo Published by Directorate for Cultural Heritage
Environmental Directorates in Norway Date 19.02.2010

When Norwegians came to America in the late 1800s and early 1900s, they brought their customs and language with them. But many also brought their unique old-world farm names to be used as their family's surname. For example Johannes Christoffersen Åakre-Særvold Born 1791 in Tuft Farm, Strandvik, is given the moniker of Åakre-Særvold based on the place of his later residence. When his son John Johanneson came to America and settled in Iowa, he became John Akre.

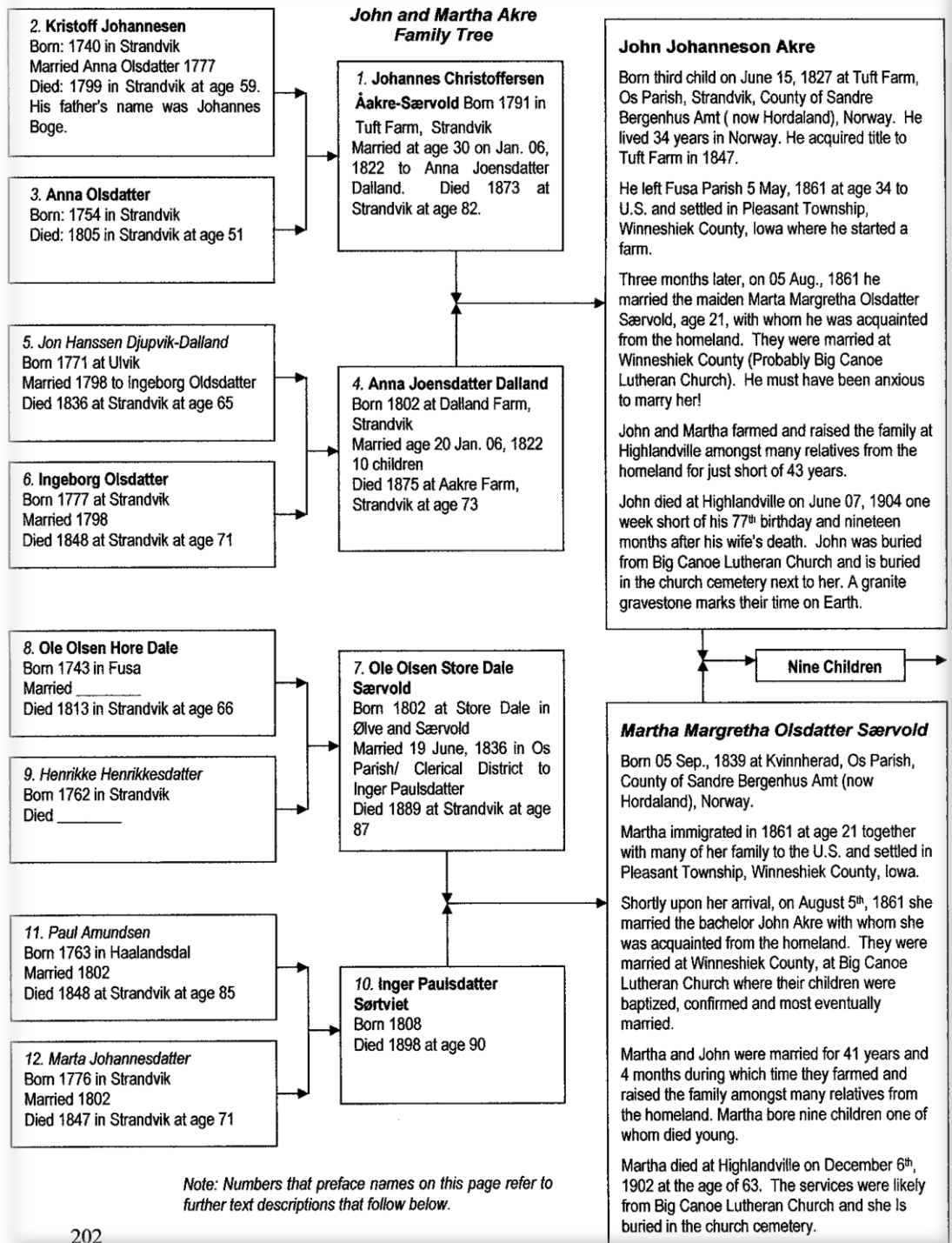
The political divisions of land in Norway were counties, then parishes, municipalities and farms. The map here shows the parishes of the county Hordaland on the western fjords. Our Akre family ancestors come from the parishes of Os and Fusa in county Hordaland. What we call Fusa Parish today was a part of Os Parish until 1856 when it separated from Os. For our purposes, since family ancestors immigrated to America prior to 1856, we refer to Os Parish as homeland even though the part where they lived is now Fusa.

To give you an idea of the populations, the census of 2006 lists the municipality of Os at 140 persons and that of Fusa at 379.

The municipality of Os was named after the farm of Os, where the first church was built. The name is identical with the Old Norse word "óss" which means "mouth of a river"; the river that is referred to is Oselva. The municipality of Strandvik that we refer to in our record was within the part of Os that became Fusa. The population then was less than 1,900. Strandvik lies on a valley between two mountainous hills facing south towards the Bjørnefjord. There is today an elementary school, kindergarten, a church, a pub "handelslaget" and a grocery shop.



Strandvik -A little village at the shores of the Fjord Bjørnefjord. about 50 km from Bergen



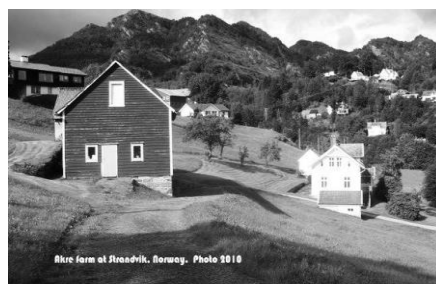
Notes on Family Tree Graphic

The number sequence at the beginning of each of the following paragraphs refer to the above family tree graphic.

Most of the following material is based on research through the Norwegian Genealogy Center, Madison, Wisconsin.

1 and 4.

John Johanneson Akre's father and his father's parents all lived and died at Strandvik except as noted. John's father Johannes Christofferson Aakre-Særvold was born in 1791 at Tuft Farm. He was Christened on Mar 13, 1791 Os Parish, County of Sandre Bergenhus Amt (now Hordaland). He married Anna Joensdatter Dalland born 1802 in Strandvik on January 06, 1822. They were married at Os Parish in Hordaland. Johannes was 30 living at Tuft Farm and Anna was 20 years of age living at Dalland Farm when they married. Johannes and Anna were pladsman at Åakre and at Legland, Tuft and Åakre. They were farmer (owner) at Særvold.



Johannes and Anna had ten children. These are:

- 1822, born 10 Feb and bap. 24 Feb. Christopher, legitimate son of Johannes Christophersen and Anna Joensdatter living at Dalland Farm.
- 1823, born 21 Sep and bap. 28 Sep. Ingeborg, legitimate daughter, as above, living at Legland Farm.
- 1827, born 15 Jun and bap. _____. John, as above, living at Tuft Farm, Os Parish. Immigrated to the U.S. 1861 and married Martha Margretha Olsdatter Særvold born 05 Sept. 1839 three months after departing Norway on 5 Aug. 1861 at Pleasant Township, Winneshiek County, Iowa where they lived the rest of their lives. They had nine children. **Our ancestor.**
- 1829, born 10 Aug. and bap. 16 Aug. Johannes, as above. Husman (one who has tenure and use of the land) at Steglholman. Married 1853 with Kristi Johnsdatter, born 1830 at Aakre. Christie was 22 years old, the daughter of John Hansen. At least four children were born to them: 1) Marta, b. 1853 and married 1876 at age 23 with notable Isak Ellingson Kvaale, 2) Ingeborg Christine, 3) Kristine and 4) Anna. Anna, born 1865, married 1886 with Anders Aoli Sverksøn. Christie died 1885 at age 55 and Johannes died 1918 at age 89 at Tuft Farm
- 1832, born 6 Jan and bap 8 Jan, Anna, as above except now living at Aakre Farm, Os Parish. Unmarried. Died 1875. LDS Family Search lists her name Anna Johansen born at Os Parish.
- 1834, born 2 Apr and bap. 11 May, Annanias, as above. Married 1872 at Bergen.
- 1836, born 31 Jul. and bap. 14 Aug. Hans, as above.
- 1841, born 1 Apr. and bap. 8 Apr. Ole Johannes, as above. Died 1869. Called Johan in county census.

- 1845, born 1 May and bap. 11 May, Hans Kristian, as above. Married 1877. Called Kristian in county census.
- 1849, born 17 Nov. and bap. 25 Nov. Jonas, as above. LDS FamilySearch list his name Jonas Johansen

Johannes died in 1873 at Strandvik and Anna died in 1875 at Aakre or Strandvik. They were married for 53 years and lived their lives at Strandvik. Source: LDS Source Call #0124688 Batch C300013, Dates 1759 - 1815. They had at least ten children.

2 and 3. John's grandfather on his father's side is Kristoffer Johannesen born 1740. He was christened Sept. 11, 1740 at Strandvik, Fusa Parish, County of Sandre Bergenhus Amt (now Hordaland). The baptismal record shows that Kristoffer's father's name was Johannes Boge. The name Johannes Boge suggests that the family lived on the Boge Farm. John's grandmother on his father's side is Anne (Ane) Olsdatter born 1754. They were married in 1777 when Kristoffer was about 37 years of age and Anna was 23. Kristoffer died in 1799 at about 69 years of age and Anna died in 1805. They were married for 22 years. The number of their children isn't recorded here.

5 and 6. John Akre's grandparents on his mother's side also were born, lived and died at Strandvik except as noted. John's mother is Anna Juensdatter Dalland and her parents were Jon Hanssen Djupvik Dalland born 1771 in Ulvik and Ingeborg Olsdatter born 1777. They were married in 1798 when Jon was 27 years of age and Anna was 21. Jon died in 1836 and Ingeborg died twelve years later in 1848. They were married for about 38 years. The number of their children isn't recorded here.

7 and 10. Ole Særvold is Martha's father. He is Ole Olsen Store Dale Særvold born 1802 in Store Dale in Ølve and Særvold. He married Inger Paulsdatter Sortveit on June 19, 1836 at Os Parish. Marriage record source: Os Parish Clerical District. Ole was born 1802 and Inger was born 1808 making Ole about 34 years of age and Inger 28 when they married. According to Jerry Paulsen at the Madison (WI) Genealogy Center (research around 2000), their six children in birth order are Martha, Ole, Paul, Johannes, Berte Henrike and Henrik Olai Kristian. Ole died in 1889 when he was about 87 years of age and Inger was 90 years when she died in 1898. They were married 53 years and likely lived their lives together at Strandvik. The number of their children isn't recorded here.

8 and 9. Martha's grandparents on her father's side (Ole Særvold's parents) are Ole Olsen Hore Dale born in Fusa Parish in 1743 and Henrikke Henriksdatter born 1762 at Strandvik. Ole was 19 years older than his wife Henrikke. Ole died in 1813 at Strandvik. The year of their marriage and the year of death of Henrikke isn't recorded here. The number of their children isn't recorded here.

11 and 12. Martha's grandparents on her mother's side (Inger Paulsdatter's parents) are Paul Amundson born 1763 at Haalandsdal and Marta Johannesdatter born 1776 at Strandvik. Paul and Marta married in 1802 when Paul was 39 years of age and Marta was 26. The number of their children isn't recorded here. Paul died in 1848 at Strandvik and Marta died a year earlier in 1847 at Strandvik. They were married for 45 years. The number of their children isn't recorded here.



The Story of John and Martha Akre

John Johannesen was born June 15th, 1827 on Tuft Farm at Strandvik in Fusa Parish along the fjords and islands of the Atlantic coast near Bergen, in southern Norway. John was baptized a week later on June 22, 1827; Pat Mohrbacher has a copy of the church record. Bergen is directly west of Oslo and near the seacoast. Fusa Parish was a part of neighboring Os Parish until 1855. John's father's name was Johannes Kristofferson Åkre-Særvold and his mother's name was Anna Johnsdatter Dalland. Scandinavians took their father's given name and then added son or *sen* if they were male, and daughter or *datter* if they were female. Since John's father's given name was Johannes, John's surname then became Johannesen



It was not unusual for emigrants to take their farm name from the old country when they emigrated particularly if their name was very common - - and thus the family names of Akre and Særvold

According to Martin Ulvestad's book Nordmandene i America, (Norwegians in America), John Johannesen emigrated in 1861 from Fusa near Bergen and settled at Big Canoe. They left Fusa 05 May

of 1861 and, considering the time for the voyage, it must have been some three months later that they began to set up some semblance of a homestead in Iowa. They settled at Big Canoe, Pleasant Township in Winneschiek County. Big Canoe was a Norwegian settlement near Decorah, Iowa. One of the first orders of business was to get married.

Martha Margrete Olsdatter Særvold was born September. 5th, 1839 and her father was Ole Servold. The name Servold comes from Os Parish at Strandvik. At age 17, Martha received a dowry chest from her parents engraved with rosemalling and written on the chest is the name, "Martha Margrite datter Ole - Særvold" and it is inscribed with the date of 1857 and Martha brought it to America from Norway. This chest is today in the possession of Martin Cowan's eldest daughter, Beverly Cowan Miller of Woodbury, Minnesota. The chest came into her possession by her aunt Anne Bidne many years ago and she says that she treasures that chest dearly. I'm sure that chest has many stories to tell.

John and Martha were known to each other from their farms in Norway and, in fact the ship's manifest recording their voyage to America lists John's name first and



immediately below is Martha's name! In the late summer and almost immediately upon arrival at Big Canoe the bachelor John Johanneson Akre, age 34, married the maiden Martha Margrete Særvold, age 21. Marriage records of Winneshiek County, Iowa list John Johanneson and M. M. Olsdatter (daughter of Ole) were married on August 5th, 1861, by F. Chr. Clausen. Reverend Clausen was the minister associated with the Norwegian Lutheran Church at Big Canoe and served there from 1857 - 1861.

Big Canoe Lutheran Church has a fascinating history dating back to 1851 when the first non-Indians began settlement in the Decorah area. The land was almost entirely forest. The first Norwegian settlers were from Voss, Hallingdal and Numedal, In 1852 Pastor N. O. Brandt from Rock River, Wisconsin, visited the early settlers at the Peder Langland home and the next year, In 1853, the Big Canoe congregation was formally organized at the Torgeir Luross home with 35 charter members.

After meeting over the years in various homes, and at the log school house, the congregation decided to build a church of local quarry stone. The members themselves furnished the labor. The church was completed and dedicated in 1867. This church building, remembered as "The Old Stone Church," is where John and Martha worshipped and where the children were baptized and many eventually married. The present brick church was built across the road in 1902.

For further information, search township history on the Winneshiek County Iowa USGENWEB site <http://iagenweb.org/winneshiek/townships/highland.htm>



It is interesting to note that they came from an area close to the Åakre farm and likely were at least acquainted prior to travel. It is conceivable that John and Martha were betrothed even back in Norway (or perhaps it was a shipboard romance?) Several of their families came on the same ship traveling together.

So the dowry chest came to good use. A census of Pleasant Township of Winneshiek County taken in June of 1870 lists John age 43, a farmer with assets of \$800 in personal property and \$1,800 in real estate. His wife Martha is age 30 and is keeping house. Their children are Inger, age 5; Martin, age 3; and Ole, age 1/12. Ten years

later, an 1880 Iowa census of Pleasant Township of Winneshiek County lists John A. Johnson, 52; Martha M., 40; Inga, 15; Martin J., 13; Ole, 10; John, 8; Anna, 5; Hendricka A., 5; Jonas J., 2; Ingabor M., 9 months (Sept.). All of the children were born in Iowa. I have no information about their family life - - And I hate to leave this section without relating any of the many events which must have occurred in their lives as the children were growing up. If anyone has stories, I'd appreciate including them here.



Highlandville is the only platted village in the township of Highland. In 1912 when it had a population of little over 100 residents, besides the post office, it had three general stores, a blacksmith shop, creamery, one doctor, and two farm machine dealers.

John and Martha had a large English language family bible that lists the names of the children along with their dates of birth and several of the dates of death. This Bible is now in the possession of Sylvia Akre of Decorah. Sylvia is the daughter-in-law of Martin J. Akre.

A photograph taken about 1896 shows John and Martha seated in their parlor with their children Ingabor and Jonas. Ingabor looks to be about 16 and Jonas about 18 and so John is 68 and Martha is 56. The Parlor room has a wood beam border around the ceiling and some framed pictures are hung on wires high on the wall



and slanting down so that they can easily be seen. (The rooms were generally small and pictures were usually up high so that folks wouldn't brush against them as they moved about.) The two end pictures look like portraits and the two middle ones may be landscapes.

John and Martha are seated in rocking chairs behind a dining table which has a cloth over it. There is a large book, probably their family bible, on the table. John has a full head of hair and a fuzzy full beard and Martha has her hair brushed back in a bun. They are dressed in black Sunday clothes. Jonas is wearing a suit with a white turned-up collar shirt and bow tie. Ingaborg is wearing a dark tight bodice dress with puffy shoulders and a dark lace collar. Ingaborg and Jonas are sitting in upright chairs in front of a good-sized pump organ. Portraits of John and Martha sit on the organ along with an opened music book. I assume that someone in the family could read music and play the organ. The original of this photograph is in the possession of Bobbe Akre (2B-1 below), granddaughter of Martin. I would guess that some persons have copies of those portraits of John and Martha somewhere.

The accompanying recent photo of that organ was taken in the summer of 2012, 116 years later. It was then in the possession of Bobbe Akre at Cedar Falls.

At the time of the U.S. Census in 1900, only Jonas and Ingabor of the children are listed living at home. If this photograph was taken about that time of the U.S. census, Jonas would be 22 and Ingaborg would be age 20.

The Twelfth Census of the United States taken on 19 June, 1900 lists the following family members (Only two children are listed at home, daughter Christine b. 1882 died prior to census):

Name	Age	Notes
John Akre	72	Farmer Immigrated 1861
Martha	60	Spouse Immigrated 1861
Jonas	12	Son (must be an age entry error - son Jonas would be age 22 here)
Isabelle	24	Daughter (must be dtr Ingaborg who would be 20 here)
George R.		(no age or status entries given - possible relative)
Christian Servold	50	Martha's Brother
Edward Hagrup	27	Cousin (born 1873) Immigrated 1899
Sampson Akre	66	Farmer (John's brother) Sampson born 1834,
Henry	28	Son Immigrated 1861,
Hattie	23	Daughter Married 1861,
Isabelle	20	Daughter Married 39 years, Died _____
Christie Haldorson	69	(No status entry given - possible bil? Considering the above errors, is his name possibly Helgeson?)

According to Martha's death certificate, she died at age 63 of heart disease shortly before Christmas on December 2nd, 1902 at Pleasant Township in Winneshiek County, Iowa. About a year and a half later, her husband John died on June 7th, 1904. John and Martha are buried next to each other at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery. Thanks be to God.

The following names are mentioned in family letters of the 1880's. These letters are found at the end of this chapter. Bessie Helgeson, Sampson Akre, John and Ole Hjne, Anne Halvorson, Mary J., John A. Forde, siste Uge Hvis, Martha Berge, M. J. Akre, Johan Martin, Christina Anfinson, Alla Hanson, Franklin Sampson, Nellie (Franklin's wife) , cousin John Akre, soster Anna, soster Tina, Ole Særvold, Broder Edd, LeRoy, Andrew Hanson, John S. Forde. Sampson Akre is John's brother and Ole Særvold is Martha's father.

Over the years, John and Martha raised nine children. These are the descendants of John Akre, b.1827 d.1904, and his wife, Martha Margrete Olsdatter Særvold, b.1839 d.1902.

1. Inger Jansen Akre

Born Sept. 8, 1864 died Jan. 14, 1940. Inger Akre was born at Big Canoe, Iowa and is the daughter of John Akre and his wife Martha Særvold Akre of Highlandville, Iowa, both originally from Os Parish in Norway. The above date of Inga's birth is recorded in John and Martha's family Bible. The year of Inga's birth recorded on her tombstone, however, is 1865. Inga's birth and baptism dates are likely in the records of Big Canoe Lutheran Church at Highlandville. Inger was confirmed at the age of 15 on May 23, 1880 at Big Canoe Lutheran Church. On her confirmation record, Inga's middle name is recorded as *Jansen*.

Inga was the first of nine children and was born when Martha was 26 and John was 38 years of age. The other children (in order) are Martin, b. 1867; Ole J., b. 1870; John, b.1872; Anna and Henrikke (twins), b. 1875; Jonas, b. 1877; Ingabor (Belle J.), b. 1879; and Christine, b. 1882.

In the period of 1883 or 1886 when Inga was 19 to 21, she married a person whose name was likely Johan Martin (surname unknown) and they may have lived in North Dakota. According to Francis Cowan, wife of Martin, Anna Bidne told her years ago that Inga was married to someone before her marriage to Jim Cowan; that they had a son who was called Billy; and that the child died while just a toddler and that her husband died about the same time before or after the child. The following seems to corroborate this story.

A letter of Oct. 12th, 1888 to Inga from her uncle Martin states: "*Greet Johan Martin and give him a kiss from me. I also send you \$100 that I want you to buy him something from me.*" This is likely Inga's first husband! By what he writes, he seems to know and approve of Johan Martin - - so he is probably from a family in the Highlandville area. \$100 was an awful lot of money in those days (\$2,500 today)!

A letter of October 12, 1888 from sister Anna written in Norwegian is addressed to "Dear Inga and Family" and mentions the child: "*I was at Franklin Sampson and Nellie for two months. They have two small ones. The first time they had twins. and one of them died when she was 8 months old. One was a boy who was one month older than your boy. He is big and heavy as you told me your boy was. I was thinking of you often when I was there. Hattie was there for a while also.*"

The above text suggests that Inga's boy must be almost two years old at the time of the letter. Since the Franklin's twins were born one month earlier than Inga's boy and they had another child since the birth of the twins, then Inga's boy must be no less than about two years of age. The salutation "*Dear Inga and Family*" confirms that both the child and her husband are still alive at the time of the letter. If Inga's husband and child had died, Anna, indeed, did not know it. See translations of letters in the section, "Six Letters to Inga," at the end of this chapter.

On April 30th of 1888, six months earlier than the above letter, Inger received a letter from her cousin, Emma Barrett of Washington Territory congratulating her on her marriage - Inga would have then been 23 years of age. The date of this letter suggests the time of her first marriage at the latter part of 1887 or very early 1888, however it could have been a couple of years earlier considering the time that it took for letters to travel.

Monday April 30, 1888

Dear Cousin Inger

I had quite a surprise the other day when I got a letter from you as I never expected to hear from you any more but as you have condescended to write to me once more I shall answer your letter and your questions to the best of my ability, here is all kinds of land here as well as in other new counties, most of the land around Vancouver is taken but up in Spokane County There is a good deal of land yet it is growing fast as many is coming all the time. I think the price of land is the same here as in Dakota. The wages for laboring man is from a dollar and a half to two and three dollars a day. but it seems to me that a man could get plenty of land and work up in Dakota but then this is a much nicer country as we only have two months winter and not very cold either

Living is very cheap here all sorts of vegetables and fruit is very cheap as everybody that has any land at all raises it themselves we have new potatoes and many kinds of vegetables for the table already we have very nice weather now just like June in Minnesota all fruit has begun to grow and we expect to have cherries to eat by the first of June and perhaps ...[illegible]

Dear cousin I wish you would tell me more about yourself how you came to go to Dakota and about your marriage and your husband if he is Norwegian, and now I must close with much love to you and your husband from your

Affectionate Cousin

Emma Barrett

Vancouver[Krk ?]

Clarke County

Washington Terr

PS I wish you much joy, and that you may have many a long and happy day together and that you will never quarrel Don't forget to write and answer this letter good by

My guess is that Inga was married in the spring of 1884. This period coincides with a note written to Inga in April of 1884 celebrating some event. It is a poem or prose in 6 parts on 2 pages in Old Norwegian written on the 11th of April in the year of our Lord 1884 by Anna Olsonatte Haalam[sp] to Enga Johnsonattee Akre. The note needs to be translated into English and may well be an important tie to the past. Inga is 18 or

19 years of age at the time of this letter - the proper age for marriage. The writer may be Inga's mother's sister's daughter - and thus her cousin.

The letter concludes with:

*Skevet den 11 April. Soret 1884.
Af Anna Olsdatter Haalam.
og til Enga Jonsdatter Akre.*

William James Cowan (Jim) b. Feb. 5, 1874 turned 10 years of age two months before the above letter was written. After the death of her husband and child, which likely occurred in 1889 or early 1890, Inger married Jim of Sheldon, North Dakota in the spring of 1891 on April 10th. Jim's father had to sign a parental permission for him to get married. He had fathered Inga's child seven months earlier when he was sixteen. I suspect that Inga had been living in the Sheldon area with her family and that her husband was Norwegian. I don't think it's farfetched to say that when her young family ended in their deaths, she was devastated and alone; she probably buried them tearfully in unmarked graves. So a 16-year old farm boy who had a place to put her up where she would be accepted would do. Her English was still very poor. I have heard that her parents and family were not particularly pleased with the union and I have often wondered how it was that Inga married someone so young as Jim.

Their first child was Mae - she was born on July 15th of 1891 hardly two months after they married. Inger was 25 and Jim was 17 years of age. During their first eight years of marriage they lived at Sheldon where Jim's father lived and they produced four children. Then in 1898 they homesteaded a farm at Anselm, about five miles to the south of Sheldon. They later moved to Buffalo near Enderlin in North Dakota and then to Minneapolis. In about 1925 they moved back to the farm; this time up at Granville, North Dakota. Over the years Inga and Jim had 11 children.

Inga died in their forty-ninth year of marriage at Minneapolis General Hospital on January 14, 1940 at 75 years of age. Jim had a stroke back in 1933 and was placed at the State hospital at Rochester, Minnesota. He was there for over eight years and died on May 4th, 1942 at age 68, two years and five months after Inga died. Jim and Inga are buried side by side at the Crystal Lake Cemetery in Minneapolis. There are many stories. *The complete Story of Inga and her Husband Jim and of her children is told in another section of this anthology: File 004 Wm James w photos PPS 129-195 (PDF).* Contact author Larry Cowan for a copy of that text or for information.

1X William (Billy) ____?. - Son of Johan Martin _____.?

b. 1886? d. 1889? Toddler son of Inga and unknown husband, possible name of Johan Martin ____, both of whom died at a time close together likely on the (North) Dakota plains.

1A Mae Elizabeth Cowan

b. June 15, 1891 d. July 2, 1973 Married Paul Penfield

1A-1 Florence Inga Penfield b. 1909 d. 1992 Married Lawrence (Pete) Graham, Granville, ND and they farmed there. One daughter, Marcia who is adopted.

1A-2 Floyd Lowelland Penfield b. June 14, 1911 d. Oct.26, 1994. Married Hildegard Heipler, Williston, ND. No children.

1A-3 Francis (Fran) William Penfield b. 1915 d. 1992 Married Alice Cody, 2 children

1A-4 Forrest (Forrie) Henry Penfield b. 1915 Married Alice Barnett, 2 children

1A-5 Ferde Roland Penfield b. 1919. Married Amy Westrom, 2 children. Married Winnie Murphy. Fargo, N.D.

1B William (Willie) Cowan

b. 1893 d. 1913 Not married, no children, died age 19 of pneumonia. Anselm and Enderlin, ND. Buried at Enderlin.

1C Robert Oliver (Bud) Cowan

b. Aug. 8, 1895 d. Oct. 21, 1964. Married Audrey ____, no children, Brainard, MN. Served in the army in The Great War (WWI). Buried at Fort Snelling Cemetery.

1D Lloyd Adrian Cowan

b. Jan. 3, 1897 d. Sept. 10, 1980. Married Louise Van Horn (sister of Kate Van Horn, married to Lee, #7 below), Long Beach, CA. 6 Children.

1D-1 Kenneth Lloyd Cowan b. Oct. 11, 1920. Married Amelia ____. 4 children. Died Jan. 10, 2000.

1D-2 Madelyn Mae Cowan b. Ap. 11, 1922. Married James Dodd. One son. Died Feb. 2, 2006.

1D-3 Lois Elaine Cowan b. Aug. 12, 1923. Married Michael Alasko. 3 children. Died Nov. __, 1981.

1D-4 Eileen Faith Cowan b. Feb. 14, 1925. Married Jack Walsh. 2 children. Date of death unknown,

1D-5 William (Bill) George Cowan b. Aug. 27, 1929. Married Jane Terrell. 5 children. Died Oct. 28, 1994.

1E Melbourn Julian (Tip) Cowan

b. June 5, 1899 d. Mar. 25, 1959 Born at Anselm. Married Myrtle Hegstrom - 3 children, married Dolly Bouressa, Marshall, MN - 3 children.

1E-1 Donald A. Cowan b. May 24, 1922 d. Oct. 7, 1975. Not married

1E-2 Robert Vaughn Cowan b Apr. 18, 1924 d. Aug. 18, 1994 Married Rose Eileen Gibson b. Sep. 6, 1923, 6 children Seattle, WA

1E-3 Lois Lorraine Cowan b. Feb. 27, 1926 d. Aug. 17, 1983 Married Dan Robson, 4 children, Maryland

1E-4 Carol Ann Cowan b. Aug. 23, 1935. Married Jim McKay, 4 children, Omaha, NE

1E-5 Dean Melbourn Cowan b. May 8, 1938 Married Marie Flemming, 3 children, Mpls, MN

1E-6 James George Cowan b. Dec. 5, 1939 Married Kay Strand, 2 Children, Mpls, MN

1F Margaret Jane Cowan

b. 1900. d. 1948 Married for short time, no children.

1G Harriet Cowan

b. Oct. 9, 1902. d. Feb. 29, 1992. Married Earnest (Whitey) Bowen, one child, Minneapolis

1G-1 Dorothy Pearl Bowen b. July 19, 1921 d. Dec. 6, 1970. Married Clyde Patterson. Two children

1G-1a Shirley Ann Patterson, b. Nov 14, 1944. Shirley has two children. Shirley married Larry Fast on June 30, 2002 and they live in Portland, Oregon.

1G-1a-1 Anne McDonald, b. July 23, 1964. Anne was adopted by Bob & Lila Bueermann of Portland, Oregon.

1G-1a-2 Brandon Scott Griswold, b. Dec 20, 1974. Married Deanna Stuhr on Feb. 14, 2008. 1 daughter.

1G-1a-2a Alexis (Lexi) Griswold, b. Oct 1, 1998.

1G-1b Sharon Lois Patterson, b. Jan. 31, 1947. Sharon is married to Dennis James Polston and they live in Portland, Oregon. One child.

1G-1b-1 Terry Michael Polston, b. Sept 21, 1962 Terry has one daughter.

1G-1b-1a Ashley Marie Polston, b. Oct 5, 1992

1H Martin Lawrence Cowan

b. Oct. 27, 1904 d. Oct. 25, 1961 Married Francis Zaradka, 4 children, Minneapolis

1H-1 Beverly Jean Cowan b. Oct. 18, 1930. Married Jim Miller, 3 children by previous marriage.

1H-2 Mary Lou Cowan b. Oct. 5, 1934. Married Larry Cronin, 8 children

1H-3 Jerry Martin Cowan b. Mar. 6, 1937. Married Margaret Ann Buechele, 4 children

1H-4 Martin Carl (Rusty) Cowan b. Sept. 5, 1944. Married Gail Christiansen, 3 children and later to Bobbie Hazen, one child

1I Walter Orville Cowan

(twin) b. Sept. 16, 1907 d. Feb. 15, 1977. Married Esther Seims, seven children, Minneapolis

1I-1 Shirley Diane Cowan b. Dec. 27, 1929 d. June 19, 1933. died at 3 yrs. 6 mo.

1I-2 Walter Orville Cowan, Jr. b. Jan. 24, 1931 d. Jun 05, 2003. Married Shirley Maseline, 3 children

1I-3 Mary Ann Cowan, b. Sept. 9, 1933, Married to Ronald Jordan, 8 children

1I-4 Wayne Owen Cowan b. Aug. 24, 1934 d. Oct. 13, 1939. Died at 5 years.

1I-5 Betty Diane Cowan b. Jan. 10, 1937 d. June 14, 1938. Died at 17 months.

1I-6 William Owen Cowan b. Dec. 30, 1938. Married Beverly Coakley, 2 children

1I-7 Lawrence Richard Cowan, b. May 11, 1940, Married Nancy Ellen Dornfeld, 2 children. Oakdale, MN

1I-7a Jennifer Lynn Cowan b. May 4, 1970, Married Mark Reckner. NE Minneapolis

1I-7b Jeffrey Lawrence Cowan b. Oct. 1, 1974. Married LeAnn Gerenz Dec. 10, 1994. Divorced 2009. Golden Valley, MN

1I-7b-1 Noah Jeffrey Cowan b. April 11, 1995.

1I-7b-2 Hannah Marie Cowan b. May 8, 1997

1J Wallace Owen Cowan

b. Sept. 16, 1907 (twin) d. Aug. 25, 2003. Married Gladys Haiskary, 5 children, Detroit, MI

1J-1 **Darlene Cowan** b. Sept. 20, 1934 d. Ap. 3, 1997. Married to Francis Kochinski but divorced many years ago. One daughter.

1J-1a Sherryl Koshinski b. ____ Married to Bob Amell. Three children.

1J-2 **Richard Cowan**, b. Dec 8, 1932 d. May 10, 1988. Richard was married to Geraldine Grimsby and they have four children.

1J-3 **Ronald Cowan** (Buddy) b. May 6, 1936 d. July 18, 1994 Married to Joyce Honeycutt. Two children and 10 grandchildren.

1J-4 **Donald Alvin Cowan** b. May 23, 1933 d. Oct. 7, 1975. Married to Carol Marie Fairbanks. Donald and Carol have one daughter Lynne and two grandchildren. Carol lives at Romulus, MI.

1J-5 **Gary John William Cowan** b. May 16, 1947. Married to Nadeen Levere in Sept of 1969 and they divorced some years ago. Gary and Nadeen have three children.



1K Pearl Agnes Cowan

b. September 2, 1909, d. September 25, 1969. Married Chet Clairmont, 4 children, Minneapolis, MN

1K-1 **Edward Clairmont** b. April 2, 1932. Married Darlene Samuelson, 3 children, San Diego.

1K-2 **LeRoy Clairmont** b. Sept. 27, 1933. divorced, 2 children, Los Angeles, CA

1K-3 **Lois Clairmont** b. Dec. 22, 1937 Married to Bob Rowbottom, 2 children, Plymouth, MN

1K-4 **Marlys Clairmont** b. Mar. 15, 1942 married to John Williams, One child. Los Angeles.

2. Martin Johann Johnsen Akre

b. May 2, 1867. d. Oct. 8, 1921. Martin was born at Big Canoe, Iowa. He was confirmed at Big Canoe Lutheran Church at 15 years of age on Nov. 5, 1882. At age 27, he married Olena (Lena) Petersdatter Eide, born Feb. 14, 1871, on June 26th of 1895.

Martin's wife Lena is sister to Susanna (Susie) Christine Petersdatter Eide below whom Jonas married. Lena and Susie's parents were Lars Peterson Nord-Eide and Karen

(Kari) Iversdatter. The girls had different mothers, however. Lena was the daughter of Lars' first wife. Lars remarried after she died and had another child and this was Susie. Their grandfather was Peder Peterson.

In 1895 when Martin was 28, he and Peter Bidne along with Lars Bjorgo purchased the creamery at Highlandville. Three years later, In 1898, Martin and Peter bought Lars Bjorgo's share and it became known as the Akre-Bidne Creamery. Martin worked with the creamery for 26 years and, when he died in 1921, he left the ownership of his share to his heirs. His son Leonard then stepped in to help manage the creamery. Martin was 54 years old when he died.

A photograph taken in the summer of 1907 shows three men working horse drawn machinery in the fields at Locust, Iowa. On the back of the photo is written, *"Congratulations from Mr and Mrs M. J. A.[Martin Akre], Locust, Ia to Mr. W. J. Cowan, Valley City. Oct. 11, 1907."* This note was sent to his sister Inga and her husband on the birth of their twin sons, Walter and Wallace.

Photograph taken in 1921 and dated Sept. 1922 at Clariss, Minn: Martin and Lena are standing in a field, Martin is wearing a white shirt and tie with a vest and watch on a chain and is wearing a hat. Lena is wearing a very pretty dress. Their youngest child, Margaret, is standing between them. She is six years old and wearing a white dress.

Photograph: Highlandville, someone's yard, single story home and barn in background; a group of people standing and sitting, posing for the picture. The picture was taken about 1925 of a family gathering at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Strinmoen. Lena and her daughter, Margaret, Mrs Inger Cowan, and Mrs Anne Bidne are in the Photograph. Mrs. Strinmoen is holding a child and Lena is standing next to her on the right. The girl about 10 - 12 with the long necklace in the front row on the far right is Margaret. Names are: Mrs Bersie, Mrs J. Strinmoen, Miss Miner, Mrs Cowan (Inger), Mrs Simenson, Mrs. Bidne (Anne), Mrs. ____ Strinmoen, Kenneth Strinmoen, Mrs Boo, Mrs M. Akre (Lena), Margaret Akre (Lena's daughter), Ingolf Schjudahl, Mrs Olson, Mrs. K. Mestad and children, Mildred Strinmoen, Mrs Ford, Mrs J Mestad, Mrs [Gul?]bro, aunt to Mrs. Schjudahl, Norman Strinmoen, Lloyd Strinmoen, Celin Strinmoen, Helen Bersie, Oslen Ford and Paul Strinmoen.



Aunt Lena Akre and daughter Margaret (and doll) in front of their home tending the flowers. Lena is the wife of Martin Akre.

Martin died in 1921 at the age of 54. Lena continued to live at Highlandville for another 25 years or so and moved to California in the late 1940's to live with her daughter Margaret and her family. Lena lived with her daughter until a few years before her death. She died in a nursing home in Hayward, California on July 21, 1968 at the age of 96. As was her wish, she was buried beside her husband at Big Canoe Cemetery. Martin and Lena had six children - - two of whom died small.

2A James Lawrence Johnsen Akre

b. June 17, 1896 d. April 15, 1899. James died at 34 months at Highlandville and is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery.



2B Leonard Melvin Akre

b. Sept. 1, 1901 d. Nov. 15, 1994 Born at Highlandville, the son of Martin and Lena (Peterson) Akre. He received his elementary education at Highlandville and was confirmed at Big Canoe Lutheran Church in September of 1916. He graduated valedictorian from Luther Academy at Albert Lea, Minnesota and graduated from Luther College at Decorah.

In 1921 when Leonard's father died, he left the ownership of his share in the Akre - Bidne Creamery to his heirs. Leonard then joined Peter Bidne in operating the creamery for nine years until 1930. Leonard was on the School Board at Highlandville and became acquainted with the teacher Martha Barbara Fisher. They courted and on Nov. 11, 1932 they were married. Martha was born March 6, 1901, and was the daughter of Joseph and Louisa Fisher of Spillville.

Leonard left the creamery when he and Martha moved to Monroe, Wisconsin where Leonard worked for the Huber Company. In August of 1933 their daughter Barbara was born.

Martha died on June 12, 1994 at age 93 and Leonard died five months later at age 93 on Tuesday, Nov. 15, 1994 at the nursing home in Monroe, Wisconsin. Memorial services were held at the Historic Old Methodist Church (Monroe Arts and Activities Center) on Saturday, Nov. 19. According to the obituary notice, his parents, his wife, and two brothers preceded him in death. Actually there were four brothers who died before him, two of whom died many years earlier as children.

2B-1 Barbara (Bobbe) Joyce Akre b. Aug. 18, 1933. Bobbe was married at one time but has been single for the past 25 years and has gone back to using her family name. Bobbe is a nurse and lives at 1456 Valley View Cir., Coralville, Iowa 52241. She has an interest in family history and has helped in providing information for this book.

2B-1a Leonardo John Joseph Sirios (Leo) b. Nov. 8, 1965. Leo lives in Bellville, Wisconsin and works in superconductivity at Madison.

2C Perry Johnsen Akre

b. Nov. __, 1903 d. Dec. 9, 1903. Little Perry died at 5 weeks at Highlandville and is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery.

2D Walter Eugene Akre

b. Aug. 30, 1905 d. Oct. 21, 1963. Walter was married twice. His first wife was Jennie Frye and his second wife was Gudron (Goodie) Wilhelmsen (a good Norwegian name). They lived at Spring Grove where Walter was a barber. They have three boys. Stories?

2D-1 Ronald Dean Akre b. _____. Child of Jennie. Married Elizabeth _____.

Ronald lived at Decorah and had eight children. Jerry and Marge Cowan know more about Ronald and his family. Although Ronald lost some fingers in the corn picker he was very good at woodworking. Ronald is now retired and lives at 1 May Lane, Belle

Vista, Ark. 72739-4804. In an email to me on 08 Aug 2010, Ron says, "My wife Elizabeth of 51 years, died on October 14, 2007."

His aunt Margaret wrote to me in February of 1996 and says,

"I got a letter from Ronald dated Feb. 16, 1996. It included a lovely picture of Ronald and Elizabeth seated and all eight children standing behind them.

Also included was a lengthy article from local paper entitled: 'Norwegian Keeps Old Style Carving Alive,' and this is all about Ronald and his carving. He has taken several lessons over the years from the old Norwegian style teachers at the Vesterheim Museum at Decorah, Iowa. Trunks and beds are a few of his larger projects. He builds them from scratch. His long term project is a bed designed after a famous one in a Norwegian burial ship. Ronald also sent me several snapshots of him and his carvings. Remarkable!

2D-1a _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-1b _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-1c _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-1d _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-1e _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-1f _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-1g _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-1h _____ Akre. b. _____

2D-2 **Wallace Dean Akre Larson** b. ____ Child of Jennie. Married and lives in Coon Rapids. Mary Lou Cowan Knows about Wallace.

2D-3 **Terry Roderick Akre** b. ____ Child of Goodie and Walter. Age 59 in 1996. Married to Darlene ____.



Altar at Big Canoe Lutheran Church, Highlandville, Iowa
Peace banner depicts the end of the WW in 1918.

2E Norman Clifford Akre

b. Dec. 6, 1907 d. July 7, 1962. Married Sylvia Clarise Jarland on _____. In 1938 Norman purchased Peter Bidne's share in the Akre-Bidne Creamery at Highlandville and he operated the creamery for 17 years from 1938 to 1955. In 1955 at age 48 Norman became ill with MS and could no longer operate the creamery. His wife Sylvia then went to school to become a teacher and she taught at two room school at Highlandville and then at Decorah. Norman died seven years later in 1962 at the age of 55. Sylvia continues to live in her home in Decorah.

Sylvia has the family Bible of John and Martha Akre - - She says it's a big, heavy Bible and it has the names of the older generation family and their dates of birth and death. Sylvia's sister-in-law, Margaret Akre wrote to me of that bible in February of 1996 and said, *"Quite some years ago I was so pleased when Lloyd gave the family Bible to Sylvia. She did so much for that*

family I can't possibly begin to tell everything. She baked for those boys, invited them to her home, helped them move, cleaned house. When they were in nursing homes, Sylvia was the only one who looked after them and took care of their needs. What a comfort she was to them! - and she was a cousin by marriage only. I remember once mother got a letter from Susie. They had all been sick - - Susie in bed downstairs, Jonas in bed in the living room and Lloyd in bed upstairs. Sylvia left her family and went over there and stayed and took care of all of them. One can't buy devotion like that but Lloyd appreciated it to the point where he gave her perhaps what he valued most of his possessions - - the Bible."

2E-1 Robert Dale Akre b. Aug 15, 1945.

Married to Judy Kluster of ____ on _____. Robert has an art supply shop at Des Moines.

A (ca. 1954?) Christmas photo greeting from Robert's parents show Robert fishing by the side of Bear Creek. He's about nine years old and kneeling on a flat ledge by the water's edge, cane pole in hand, worms at his feet and his dog by his side. What else could one want in life.

2E-1a Lisa Karen Akre b. Feb. 19, 1987 twin

2E-1b Sara ____ Akre b. Feb. 19, 1987 twin



"Season's Greetings
Sylvia, Norman and
son Robert Akre



Margaret, b. 1914, dtr of Martin and
Lena Akre at Jonas Akre's farm
Photo 1944

2E-2 Joyce ____ Akre b. _____. Joyce lives at Ceder Rapids, Iowa and is a Nurse.
Married? Children?

2F Margaret Charlotte Akre.

b. Dec. 4, 1914. Margaret was married to Charles Jesse for many years. She remarried to Frank Pearson in 1967. He died in 1974. Margaret sponsored a Seeing Eye dog "Boots" in his memory. Margaret lives in San Leandro, CA and has two children who also reside in California. A photograph shows Margaret, age 13, standing on the creamery property beside the frozen Bear Creek in the wintertime. Margaret is a retired Nurse.



In remembering the time that her aunt Bell and her family came back to Highlandville for a visit back in the mid 1920's, Margaret says that,

"I am sure many happy times can be recalled by anyone who visited Highlandville. It was a great place to live. There was always fishing. In the spring we picked wild flowers. Gooseberry bushes were found "in the pasture." At Christmas time we gathered at the Bidne house to go to the evening Christmas tree program at the church. Gilbert Gjere, a farmer who lived one mile to the north, came with his sleigh pulled by horses. We all piled in and covered ourselves with blankets and went to our annual Christmas Tree Program. After all of the children had performed with their "speeches" and songs, we paraded around the alter and were given a bag of candy and fruit. Then home again. The horses were kept in the shed and covered with blankets. This was a yearly ritual."

An email from Bobbe Akre September 2, 2010

Hi Cousins,

Just got off the phone about Auntie Margaret, my dad's (Leonard) baby sister. She died Fri. Aug. 27, 2010, at age 96, in California. She will be cremated.

2F-1 Stephen ____ Jesse b.1949? Married to Sharon ____ and they have no children. Stephen is an industrial Engineer and builds and repairs industrial plants such as Ice cream plants, etc. Stephen is 47 at this writing in February of 1996.

2F-2 Catherine ____ Jesse b. 1951? Catherine was married to ____ Ford but is now divorced. She graduated from U. C. Berkley and works with computers. According to her mother, She knows many different programs and is able to work with a lot of different kinds of Networks. Catherine has one daughter. Catherine is 45 at this writing in February of 1996.

2F-2a Danyala ____ Ford b.1972?. Married Kevin Cook. Danyala and Kevin are both college students. Kevin is studying accounting and plans to be a CPA. Danyala is 24 at this writing in February of 1996.

2F-2a-1 K'jala Cook b. 1992


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### 3. Rev. Ole Jensen Akre



b. May 1, 1870 - d. Feb. 23, 1946. Ole was born at Highlandville, Iowa. He was confirmed at the age of 16 on July 11, 1886 at Big Canoe Lutheran Church. In 1897, Ole married Anna Louise Strand: b. ca. 1873 d. 1918. Ole married Mathilda Toftness in 1921, three years after Anne died, while serving as pastor at Hinsdale, Montana.

Ole was a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod and was called "Uncle Preacher" and he baptized and married many of the nephews and nieces. Ole attended Luther College in Decorah from 1886 to 1893 and graduated A. B. He then attended Luther Seminary 1893 - 1896 and graduated C. T. Ole was ordained in 1896 N. S.

Pastor Akre took his first parish at the bustling town of Lead, South Dakota and served the church there for six years from 1896 to 1901. Twenty years earlier in 1876, rich deposits of Gold had been discovered in the Black hills and Lead was the site of the Homestake Mining Company; the richest gold mine in the Western Hemisphere. I'm sure his parish ministry there was interesting and demanding in this gold mining town. From 1901 to 1907, Ole served at Whitewater, Wisconsin. Whitewater was a rather large town about 40 miles equidistant between Madison and Milwaukee. Roland, his only son, was born to Anna Louise while at Whitewater.

Uncle Ole then served the Lutheran Church at Velva, North Dakota from 1907 to 1913. It is interesting to note that at Velva he was able to visit regularly with many of his family and relatives. His sister Inga's in-laws lived close by at Granville and his sister Hattie and her family lived at Mercer. Velva is about 15 miles south of Granville where Ira and Lizzie Nead and Mae Penfield and their families and Stan and Mae Cowan lived; about 25 miles to the northeast of Douglas where Bob and Anna Cowan lived; and about 40 miles north of Mercer where Krogh and Hattie Ovre had their farm.

From 1914 to 1916 Ole served as solicitor at Northwest College. Then beginning



Uncle Ole and Aunt Mathilda  
Photo printed Oct. 4, 1937  
at Laverne, Minn.

in 1917 he served for twelve years through 1929 at Hinsdale, Montana. He served as vice-president of the Rocky Mountain District 1917 - 1919. In 1936 he served as supply pastor at Beach, N. Dak. and in 1938 at Ambrose, N. Dak. Ole was then 68 years old.

In his biography, Ole is listed as a son of John Johnson Akre and Martha Margrite Særvold. This information is from Gerharg B. Naeseth, Norwegian researcher, 4909 Sherwood Road, Madison, Wis.

The following are a few mementos: A photo postcard from sister Inga dated June 30th, 1908 is addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Ole J. Akre at Velva, North Dakota. Inga and her husband, Jim Cowan, were living at Enderlin, N. Dak.

A photograph taken 1918 shows their house in Montana. The note at the back reads, *"Brother Ole house in [H?]ingodale, Montana, 1924."* This is Inga's writing.

A Photograph taken 1937: I have a photograph of Ole and Mathilda standing at the back of their car. Ole is wearing a suit and tie and a straw hat and Mathilda, a slender lady, is wearing a light dress and a broad hat. The picture was developed by XL Film Services of Laverne, Minnesota on October 4th, 1937. It's interesting to note that they'll make two prints for each negative and the cost is 25 cents per roll!

Ole died two months short of his 76th birthday on February 23, 1946 and is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery at Highlandville. The large tombstone at Big Canoe lists both Ole and Mathilda and it was intended that she be buried next to him. Mathilda in later years lived at the nursing home at Rice Lake, Wisconsin where she was near her brother. At age 85 Mathilda died at the nursing home in July of 1968, 22 years after her husband. Her stepson Roland took care of arrangements and she was buried at Our Saviors Lutheran Cemetery at Rice Lake and not moved to Big Canoe to be next to her husband Ole. I remember going out to Rice Lake with my mother for the funeral. A nice luncheon was held afterward by the ladies of the church. Stories?

### 3A Col. Roland O. S. Akre

b. \_\_\_\_ (app. 1904) d. 1987. Roland, son of Ole and Anna Louise. Roland was born at Whitewater, Wisconsin and spent his childhood

Marty Cowan and Roland Akre - Note on card reads, "Taken while in Council Bluffs [Iowa] Jan. 13." Circa early 1920's perhaps while Marty and Roland were at Luther.



Roland and Betty Akre early in their marriage. Photo taken at Bidne Veterinarian's Office above. They look very happy. Roland and Betty eventually had two children, Rosa Nell and Roland, Jr. Betty died at an early age. Photo mid 1920's.

at Velva, North Dakota. During his early teens, his father was solicitor at Northwest College. Roland's mother died in 1918 while his father was serving the church at Hinsdale, Montana. Three years later, in 1921, Roland's father married Mathilda Toftnes at Hinsdale and Roland enrolled in Luther College at Decorah. His cousins Leslie Ovre and Martin (Bidne) Cowan were students there at that time as well. Roland was a serious student and graduated in \_\_\_\_ while Les and Martin were said to be mischievous.

Roland joined the US Air Force as an officer and rose to the rank of Four Star Colonel. According to his cousin Margaret, when the family wrote to him, they proudly addressed his letters thus: Col. Roland O. S. Akre. Roland visited his relatives in Iowa from time to time, also after he married Betty who was nurse. Roland was married to Betty and they had two children. After Betty died, Roland married Henriette \_\_\_\_\_. Henriette lives at 6121 S.W. 82nd Ave, Miami, Florida 33143.

Roland's cousin Margaret relates a story that, *"One time Roland flew an army plane to Decorah and found his way to Highlandville by following the road. Then he dipped his plane over the Akre and Bidne homes. What excitement for everyone! Roland then flew back to the Decorah airport - - which he said he would never do again, that tiny airport with all its bumps. Roland had to hire guards for the plane. It was the talk about for months and we were always so proud of him."*

Stories? family?

**3A-1 Rosa Nell Akre** b.\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_ Daughter of Roland and Betty. Story?

**3A-2 Roland O. S. Akre, Jr.** b.\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_ Son of Roland and Betty. Story?

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4. Johanes (John) Johnsen Akre

b. March 27, 1872. d. Feb. 15, 1959. John was confirmed at age 16 on May 6, 1888 at Big Canoe Lutheran Church. In 1898, John married Nellie Mathilde Halvorson Juve - - John was 26 and Nellie was 19 years of age. Nellie was born March 8, 1879 and was confirmed at age 16 Oct. 7, 1894 at Big Canoe Lutheran Church. She was in the same confirmation class as John's young sister Ingebor Marie (Belle). Nellie died July 19, 1935 at age 56 and is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery.

A photograph taken about 1917: John and Nellie are standing in the yard by some bushes. John has a white shirt and tie and Nellie is wearing a print dress. There is a young girl about five standing between them and Nellie is holding an infant. The note at the back of the photograph reads, *"Mr. and Mrs. John Akre and Martha their daughter."* The photo was taken at Jonas' farm.

John and Nellie lived at Spring Grove, Minnesota where John worked for many years as a harness maker and blacksmith. Spring Grove is only about ten miles to the



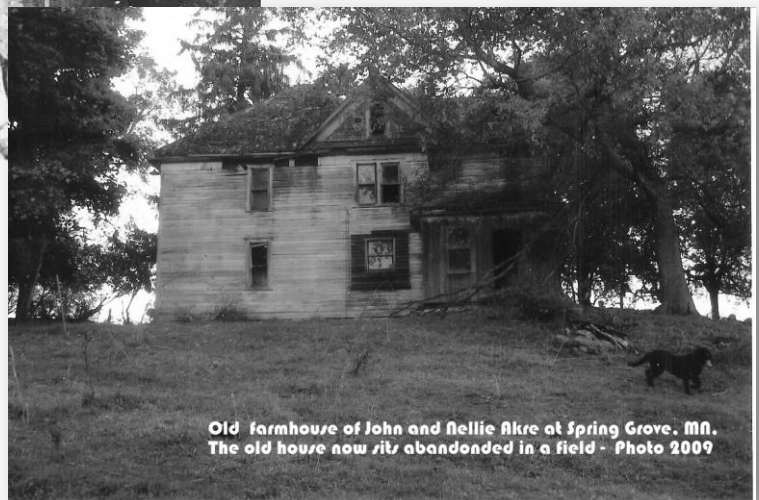
Nellie and John Akre of Spring Grove, MM and their dtr. Martha (adopted) b. 1912 Photo is taken at their farm. Nellie is holding an unknown child.

north of Highlandville. John died at the age of 87 on February 15, 1959. John was buried February 19 from the Lutheran Church at Spring Grove where he had been a member for many years.

4A Martha Akre b.1912

Daughter of John and Nellie Akre. Martha is an adopted child. Martha lived at Wayzata, Minnesota.

These steps are the same as on that old abandoned house below.



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## 5. Anna Akre

b. March 23, 1875 d. Sept. 26, 1963 Anna is Hattie's twin sister. Anna and Hattie were baptized and confirmed at Big Canoe Lutheran. They were confirmed at the age of 14 on June 23, 1889. They attended two room school at Highlandville. Anna sent sister Inga letters in 1889 and 1891 written in Norwegian (See next section "Six Letters to Inga.").



Anna married Peter J. Bidne, born Sept. 17, 1871, son of John and Susie Ophelm Bidne of Big Canoe on \_\_\_\_\_. Peter Bidne, together with Anna's brother Martin, owned and operated the Creamery at Highlandville for many years. It was just down the road from their homes alongside Bear Creek. The creamery was called the Akre-Bidne Creamery and later, when Peter sold his share to Martin's son Norman it was changed to the Highlandville Creamery. A story of the creamery is told separately below. Peter died on April 3, 1958 at age 83 five years before Anna. Anna and Peter are buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery of Big Canoe Lutheran Church where they were also baptized, confirmed and married.

Picture postcard dated 1908: From Anne Bidne at Highlandville addressed to sister Inger [Inga] Cowan at Valley City, N. Dak. The note written on back reads: *Paid a visit to Dakota from Sept to Dec 1908, Highlandville, Iowa from your sister Anne.* The photograph is of Anne and Peter's home.

In 1908 the Bidne's took in sister Inga's son Martin (Cowan) who was four years old. Martin grew up there at Decorah. In the years 1921 - 1922, Martin attended Luther College in Decorah along with his cousins Roland Akre and Les Ovre. No other children.

The Bidne's owned land in the foothills of Montana which upon their deaths was willed 75% to Martin and the rest to Martin's brothers and sisters. The land was in probate for many years during which time the brothers and sisters died off leaving scores of secondary heirs. Martin's children sold the right to their portion of the estate to the person who was renting the land and, in the 1980's, because so many years had passed, the state turned over the land to the renter and the will was declared void.

Martin's son, Martin Jr. (Rusty), remembers Peter's funeral at Big Canoe Lutheran Church and remembers the minister saying that "Peter was the finest man he ever knew, that he was gentle and caring." My sister Mary Ann Cowan Jordan also remembers Peter and says that he was, "The sweetest, kindest man there could be."



*Peter and Anne Bidne Wedding Anniversary - Photo June 15, 1924.  
From left - Jonas Akre (Anne's brother), \_\_\_\_, Francis Cowan, Peter,  
Marty Cowan, Anne, \_\_\_\_, and Susie (wife of Jonas).*

### **The Creamery at Highlandville**

Circa 1888 - 1955

Martin Akre 1867-1921 ~ Peter Bidne 1871-1958

Leonard Akre 1901-1994 ~ Norman Akre 1907- 1962

The following story of the creamery at Highlandville is adapted from information told to me by Sylvia Akre in December of 1995. Sylvia is the wife of Norman Akre who operated the creamery for 17 years from 1938 to 1955.

In 1888 Lewis Fosse, Henry Hanes and Hank Moberg built the Highlandville creamery with Peter Bidne, age 17, as butter maker. Not long after it was built, however, ownership changed and Henry Hanes and Andrew Stoen became full owners. In the fall of 1889 the creamery closed and later it was bought by William Beard and sons and they hired Peter Bidne as butter maker.

Six years later, in 1895, the Beards sold the creamery to Peter Bidne, his brother-in-law Martin Akre and to Lars Bjorgo for \$1,500. Peter was now 24 and Martin was aged 28. Three years later, In 1898, Bidne and Akre bought Lars Bjorgo's share and it became known as the Akre-Bidne Creamery. Peter was becoming known as one of the best butter makers in the area and his butter won the blue ribbon at the Chicago World's Fair in 1900.

Martin Akre died in 1921 at age 54 leaving the ownership of his share to his heirs. Martin's son Leonard at the age of 20 joined Peter in operating the creamery until 1930 when Leonard moved to Monroe, Wisconsin. The creamery remained in the Akre-Bidne title until 1938 when Leonard's younger brother Norman purchased Peter Bidne's share and it became known as the Highlandville Creamery. Norman was 31 years old and Peter was aged 67 and had been making butter for 49 years! Peter retired from the creamery in 1938 and lived another 20 peaceful years and died at the age of 87 in 1958. His wife Anna died five years later in 1963.

Many improvements to the operation of the creamery were made over the years including the transition from use of horse pulled wagons to truck routes and the

transition in the method of buying cream. At one time cream was bought by the inch! Milk cans were made to contain a narrow glass strip which was marked off to measure inches of cream.

A humorous story is told to me by a retired minister who went to Highlandville school back in the 1930: *"A woman during the late 1930's brought a can of cream to the buttermaker and said there was a mouse in the cream. She didn't want to churn the cream herself because of the mouse but suggested that since the creamery made so much butter it wouldn't be noticed and so she said, 'Would you mind exchanging my can of cream for another?' The butter maker said, 'Sure, that's no problem,' and took the can. Inside. He rattled some cans around and brought her can back out to her. 'Here you are,' he said, and she went home with her original can to churn her butter!"* I wonder which butter maker that was.

Cordwood was used to run the furnace and for power until 1940 when the creamery converted from cordwood to electricity. Bear Creek ran alongside the creamery and oftentimes, over the years in the spring, the creek would overflow its banks and carry off part of the creamery's woodpile. A photograph taken in about 1920 shows the children Lloyd, Oliver and Earl and their cousin Margaret standing by the creamery in the water of the overflowed creek. Jonas, father of the boys, is standing by the edge.

The creamery always obtained cream by haulers. The creamery had purchased cream from the territory extending to Hesper on the west, to Glenwood on the south, into Allamakee County on the east and several miles into Minnesota on the north.



Norman Akre operated the creamery for 17 years from 1938 to 1955 and during that time Sigurd Rauk and Charles Langland were butter makers. The tubs of butter were shipped to Chicago and Philadelphia and these tubs always received a #1 rating. The pints were sold in the Johnson Grocery Store and Holmberg and Erickson Store in Decorah and in the Thune Store and Highlandville Store in Highlandville. Some of the

cream haulers were Carl Grindeland, Harold Olson, Lloyd Forde, Morris Hegseth, and Ted Flatberg. Albert K. Grindeland was one of the first cream haulers.

In 1955, when Norman was 48, he became ill with multiple sclerosis and could no longer operate the creamery. So that they could continue to bring in money, His wife Sylvia then went to school to become a teacher and she taught at the two-room school at Highlandville and then at Decorah. Norman died in 1962 at the age of 55, seven years after becoming ill. Sylvia continues to live in her home in Decorah.

The creamery building was old and could no longer keep up with more modern production methods and so production was stopped and the building eventually was torn down.



## 6. Henrikke Amalie Akre

(Norwegian form of Henrietta) b. March 23, 1875 d. Oct. 15, 1952. Henrikke was called Hattie and was twin sister to Anna. They are the fifth and sixth children of John and Martha Akre. I have no information about their childhood years. Hattie and Anna likely were baptized at Big Canoe Lutheran Church. Hattie and Anna were confirmed at Big Canoe Lutheran Church on June 23, 1889 and attended one room school at Highlandville. The following is a rather complete family genealogical record and family story of Hattie and her husband Krogh Ovre. Much thanks to Beverly Christensen of Mercer, North Dakota and to Pat Mohrbacher of Lakewood, Colorado for their work in compiling these stories and data.



## The Family of

### **Krogh Nielsen Ovre and his wife**

#### **Henrikke Amalie Akre**

1865 - 1932 and 1875 - 1952

On October 26, 1894 at age 19, Hattie married Krogh Nielsen Ovre, age 29, whose family also resided in the Highlandville area. The following is a family history of Krogh Ovre: Krogh was born Sept. 14, 1865 to Nels (b. Mar. 12, 1835 - d. Sept. 20, 1906) and Christiane (Aug. 13, 1839 - d. Aug. 7, 1899) Ovre of Roswald farm at Trondheim, Norway. Trondheim is in Nord-Trondelag County and Parish of Leksvik. Krogh was baptized Oct. 22, 1865. In 1868 when he was three years old, the family came to America and settled in the Highlandville area. Krogh was confirmed at Big Canoe Lutheran Church on July 3, 1881, eight years prior to Hattie. As Krogh grew up, he did carpentry work in Iowa around Highlandville. Krogh died on Dec. 15, 1932 and is buried at Mercer, North Dakota.

Krogh's father, Nels Ovre Nilsen, Sr., was born March 12, 1835 at farm Myhr to Niels Christophersen Myhr and Ane Martha Nielsdatter at farm Rosvold. Nels was baptized May 3, 1835 and lived at Rosvold on the Oxaas farm in Leksvik Parish. On Nov. 7, 1862, Nels (age 27) married Christianna Guneriusdatter Oxaas. (age 23) at Leksvik, Norway and they had six children - Krogh (the Oldest), Anna (never married), Julius (never married), Nels N. Jr. (married Berit Hayme - - three children), Ida (married Arndt Shuros - - two children), and Sevald (buried at Mercer, ND).



Nils N. Øvre-Rosvold and Christianna were living on Oxaas farm before they emigrated. Nels emigrated in 1866 and Christianna and the children came three years later in 1869. Krogh would still have been only 3 years old because they always emigrated in the spring, and his birthday was in Sept. The Øvre's first settled in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and then to Highlandville in 1874. When Nels came to Highlandville, he was the best all-around carpenter in town. Nels died on Sept 20, 1906 and is buried close to his wife, Christianna at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery .

Krogh's mother, Christiane Guneriusdatter was born at Oxaas farm on Aug. 13, 1839 to Gunerius Andersen Oxaas and his wife Ingaborg Anna Jonsdatter. Over the years she and Nels had six children as said above. In birth order, these are:

- Anna 1863
- Krogh 1865

- Nels 1870 married to Berit Hoyme
- Julius 1873
- Ida 1875
- Sevald 1878

In later years, Christianna was crippled with rheumatism and became bedridden. Christianna died a few days before her 60th birthday on Aug. 7, 1899 and is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery near Highlandville.

In 1897, Krogh and Anna's daughter Mable died - - she was not 3 ½ months old. Two years later, in 1899 their son, John died as well - - he was eight months old. Both children are buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery. By 1901 Krogh and Hattie's surviving children were Norman; now seven, and Grant; age one. Little Mable was dead now four years and John had been gone now for two. In that year Krogh and Hattie took the children and left Highlandville for North Dakota to find their fortune.

The Leader-News of Washburn, N. D page 17, Thursday, Oct. 19, 1995 contains a wonderful rather long article written by Hattie for her study club and deals with the area's early pioneer days. It discusses their homestead stake in 1901 and includes a studio photograph of Hattie and Krogh in their Sunday best (their wedding picture) and the story of "My Fourteen Months On The Claim." Some of that story is related here.

In that year of 1901 Krogh and Hattie moved to North Dakota traveling with their two small sons by rail in an immigrant car. The rail car was packed with homesteaders going out to file on land and possibly to get rich quick. The Ovres got off the train at Balfour and traveled southwest about thirty-five miles and staked their homestead beside Brush Lake near Mercer, N.D. It is interesting to note that Hattie's brother, the Rev. Ole Akre was pastor of the church at a town about ten miles up the road from Balfour a few years later during the period of 1907 - 1913. That town was called Velva.

Getting back to 1901, Krogh and the family stayed at a big ranch house there until they got their 12 x 12 shack built. Their little cabin was three miles from the nearest neighbor. When they started out there on the plains, there were no roads, no telephone, not even an outhouse. Travel, of course was by horse. They came by rail so, of course, they initially had no wagon. Their only light at night was the moon and the stars, a few candles and an oil lamp. Their only water was from the nearby stream. Their most important possessions were their horses, the water pails and the plow and each other. The horses meant survival.

*Martha Ovre with the family's dog on their farm. Mercer, N. Dak. Born 1904, Martha is a dtr of Krogh and Hattie (akre) Ovre.*





As more homesteaders moved in, four of Krogh and Hattie's neighbors had horse teams. One story that is told is that since there were horse thieves around, the boys took turns watching the horses. Well, according to the story they kept up the watch for a week and nothing happened. But one night when they were all sleeping, the horses disappeared. Krogh paid the ranch-man they stayed with \$25.00 to find them, and he brought them back the next day! Twenty-five dollars was more than two weeks pay in those days. From this story we can surmise that the homesteaders built their shacks, filed their claims, but continued to eat, sleep, and work out of a central ranch, going to their claimed land each day. All of the horses were kept at the ranch corral. I would guess that the ranch man had a bonanza, charging fees and sometimes being unscrupulous. For example, how was he able to get the horses back in one day and how did he get them back from the thieves? Was he in on it?

Krogh then built a low flat barn and a small house and developed the land. They were on the land three years when Martha was born in 1904. Later came Leslie, Harley, and Anna Ruth.

Krogh also did carpentry work, which included building a big hotel at Harvey with his brother, Sebold. Krogh and Sebold, of course, were master carpenters trained by their father, the best carpenter in Highlandville. During his absences putting up buildings, Hattie held down the claim and had many interesting experiences. Many of the men in the area didn't have woman around to cook for them so Hattie kept busy baking bread each day and selling it to the men folk who came by for it. Once a man came by and he had some nice horses and Hattie was sure that he was a horse thief but she was hospitable and fed him anyway. They heard later that the man was hanged.

In 1917, Krogh built a large new barn for the farm of which I'm sure he was extremely proud. My mother, Esther Cowan has a photograph of the barn taken just after it was built. The store and post office where they got their supplies and mail was at Turtle Lake, four miles further to the west than it is now.

Krogh died of a heart attack at age 67 in 1932. His daughters, Martha and Ruth were married in 1938, six years after he died. Hattie lived another twenty years after her husband and died at age 77 in 1952. Krogh and Hattie are now buried side-by-side at the Mercer Cemetery. Thanks be to God.

In 1938, Hattie's sister Inga came for a visit at Mercer and writes of the visit to her son and his wife, Walter and Esther Cowan at Minneapolis. The letter states she is staying with her sister Hattie at Mercer, N.D. shortly before the joint wedding of their daughters Martha and Anna Ruth. This was one of Inga's last trips. A short time later, Inga went to Minneapolis where she stays with her son, Walter and Esther Cowan and later placed in a nursing home where she died in January of 1940.

*Sep 16 -38*

*Dear Walter Ester [Cowan] and all -*

*Gat here O.K. but ofel tired din't get here til nerley 1.a.m. he was afraid to hurt that car of his wife was tired then I was She was laying around all the next day. they had a days drive home to the South western part of N. Dak - It cloudy and cold this a.m. everything is dead around her none crores here again only some corn not fare from the lake - Martha Ovre was home from Bismark yesterday the 15- drove beck lest eving she his some country werk Thersa - hed onley hed a card from Mae*

*thet we should drive up but they heve none car is goe thet far onley a roun about the farm and Mae hes non car Floyd is a way teaching Mae dint say if Flornse was beck from Fargo yet Ferde Penfild dint get to chool this year dint make eney more this sumer so Mae got 2 hure hendes - I dont now when I*

*[page 2] If I get up to Mae She hasent asked me yet it cold lokkes like an erle winter hope not how is Pearl what did the Dr say Pleas - lest Sunday we vesited Ruth Father & mother in lone a mr mrs anderson hed chicken Super they are quit old peopel onley heve a Son and a Daughter - here will be a duble weding this fal the girls will be marred at home my brother will come here to mare them - Ruth is cleng house this a.m. so I beter get thrue and move - Here is a bank at Merser but I send it beck so you can cashe it et the please where we awek cashed it and send the mone beck to merser my sister might get a chense to goe to minet soon then I goe along to Dr Stone I got hedake all the time well let me here from yous Sun love to all from all*

*You Loving Mother - [Inga]*

## 6A Carl (Norman) Ovre

b. Nov 1, 1894 d. Feb 4, 1946. Norman was seven years old when the family boarded an immigrant rail car to homestead on the North Dakota plains. Norman grew up on the farm near Mercer, N.D. and over the years worked on farms and the Civilian Conservation Corp. (C.C.C.) during the 1930's. Norman never married.

## 6B Mabel Idella Ovre

b. Nov. 10, 1896 d. Feb. 21, 1897. Mabel died at three month of age and is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery.

## 6C John Maurice Ovre

b. August 15, 1898 d. April 2, 1899. Morris died at eight months of age and is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Cemetery.

## 6D Grant Henry Ovre

b. Oct. 11, 1900 d. Dec. 5, 1967. Grant was one year old when the family boarded an emigrant rail car to homestead on the North Dakota plains. Grant grew up on the farm near Mercer, N.D. Grant attended school at Mercer and completed almost 4 years of high school. Grant married Dorothy Peters and later Edna Haas. His step-children are



Carl and Robert Haas and his step-grandchildren are Robin, Linda, Janet, Carl and Edward. Grant worked from 1923 (age 22) to the end of 1928 in the oil fields of Wyoming, Texas and Canada. He was back on the farm from 1929 to 1935. In 1935 he

moved to Berwyn, Illinois - - he lived there until his death in 1967. Grant worked for General Motors from 1953 - 1967. Grant is buried at Concordia Cemetery at \_\_\_\_.

The photograph was taken probably in the fall of 1915 on the occasion of Grant's confirmation. Four children in a field and a low flat roofed barn is in background, Grant would be just 15 and is sitting in an oversized wooden rocking chair, Leslie and Martha are standing to his sides, A younger child, Harley at about age three, is sitting on the arm of the chair. The older boys are dressed in suits and Martha is wearing a jumper with a white blouse. Her hair is braided to the sides and she has a large bow at the top. A spotted dog is at their side. The note at the back of the photograph reads,

*"Dear sister, This is my children all but Norman. He was not at home that day, got your letter. It was slow thrashing up here it was so wet and rainy. We had a pretty fair crop. Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hattie."*

## 6E Martha Cornelia Ovre

b. May 3, 1904. d. Aug. 28, 1963 Martha attended grade school in the rural one room school and then attended one or two years at Mercer high school and then Concordia Academy two years. Martha attended the State Teachers College at Valley City for two summers and completed her Standard Teaching Certificate. to get the standard certificate. She worked at the 1st State Bank of Mercer and the Hjelle Brothers General Store. She worked at the store for 3 1/2 years from the fall of 1928 to January 1, of 1932 and taught school after that.

Photograph: November 28, 1920, of Martha Ovre and Gertrude McConaughey at Moorehead, Minn. They are standing in a field and there are two wagons in the background. Martha is sixteen years old.

At age 34, Martha married Mr. Reed B. Argent of Steele, N.D. at high noon on October 26, 1938 in a joint ceremony with her sister, Ruth, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church" in Mercer, North Dakota. Martha and Ruth were married by their uncle, the Rev Ole Akre, who came down from Ambrose, N. D. for the wedding. Reed and Martha have three children.

Reed Benson Argent was born Aug. 17, 1903 to John and Lulu (Manifold) Argent of Steele, N. Dak. Reed attended grade school and high school at Steele and graduated from there. Reed was a farmer and also worked as a carpenter for two years building and repairing elevators. He worked for the Highway Department, and from 1961 to 1971, Reed worked as a field tax collector for the North Dakota Tax Department. Martha died at age 59 on Aug.

28, 1963 and Reed died nineteen years later at age 79 on December 5, 1982. Martha and Reed are buried at the Woodlawn Cemetery of Steele.



**6E-1 Re Mar Luetta Argent** b. July 6, 1941. Baptized Dec. 7, 1941. Re Mar graduated from high school at Steele in 1959 and graduated from Concordia College of Moorhead in 1965. Married Herman Alfred Voxland, son of Alfred and Loraine (Brokke) Voxland of McIntosh, Minnesota. Herman was born on Nov. 2, 1937 and baptized Dec. 7, 1937. Herman graduated from McIntosh high school in 1955. Herman and Remar farm in McIntosh, Minnesota and have three children. Remar has taught Senior high home economics at the McIntosh High School.

**6E-1a** Stephanie Voxland. b. Oct. 29 1971, baptized Jan. 16, 1972.

**6E-1b** Ryan Voxland. b. July 13, 1981 , baptized March 9, 1975.

**6E-1c** Shane Voxland. b. Feb. 4, 1975, baptized Aug. 23, 1981.

**6E-2 Marthyn Reed (Buzz) Argent** b. November 4, 1943. Baptized \_\_\_\_\_. Confirmed June of 1958. Buzz attended school grades 1 - 8 at Excelsior #1 Country Rural School, graduated from Steele High School in 1961 and Concordia College in 1965. Since his graduation in 1965, Buzz has taught Math at Moorhead. Buzz married Sandra Lee Wentz of Steele on June 26, 1965 and they have three children including David who died at seven months.

Sandra was born Nov. 5, 1943 and is the daughter of Edmund A. and Elaine (Nelson) Wentz. Sandra graduated from Concordia in 1964 and is a substitute English teacher in the Fargo/Moorhead area.

**6E-2a** David John b. April 16, 1971 d. Oct. 19, 1971.

**6E-2b** Stacy Lynn. b. Dec 31, 1972, baptized Feb. 26, 1973

**6E-2c** James Patrick. b. Nov. 14, 1974

**6E-3 John Norman Argent** b. Feb. 7, 1945, confirmed June, 1958 at Steele, North Dakota. John graduated from Excelsior #1 and Steele High School. He graduated from Valley City State Teachers College in 1967. John married Ardyce Riskedahl of Steele and they have two children.

Ardyce was born Sept. 28, 1945 and baptized December of 1945 and is the daughter of Alfred and Gladys (Harbeck) Riskedahl. She attended Baker Township Country School and Steele Public School and graduated from Jamestown College with a B.A. in Elementary Education. Ardyce currently works as a substitute teacher in all areas of Steele Public School.

John worked as a high school social studies and P. E. teacher at Tappen, ND for four years and then worked at the ASCS office at Steele from 1972 to 1975. He then taught elementary grades 5 - 6 at Steele 1976 - 1984. In the summer of 1984 he started work as an insurance agent for North Dakota Mutual Insurance Co.

**6E-3a** Reed Jonathan. b. March 18, 1970, baptized May 10, 1970.

**6E-3b** Ross Michael. b. April 9, 1973, baptized May 13, 1973.

## **6F Leslie Orlando Ovre**

b. June 17, 1908. Bap. \_\_\_\_\_. Leslie attended Mercer High School, Luther College at Decorah and the University of Minnesota. Leslie was at Luther College at Decorah at the same time (1921 - 1922) as his cousin Martin Cowan who was raised by Hattie's twin sister, Anna Bidne and his cousin Roland Akre. Les later told about the fun they had together. Pat Mohrbacher says her uncle Les was mischievous. Leslie married Paula Hildegard Hahn b. Aug 5, 1915, on June 4, 1939 and they have no children.

Leslie was in state social work for 29 years and then executive director of North Dakota Social Services for ten years. Leslie and Paula live at Bismarck, North Dakota.

## 6G Harley Ovre

b. May 12, 1910 baptized July 6, 1910., d. Aug 24, 1981. Harley was born at Mercer. Harley attended one room rural elementary school and graduated from Mercer High School. Harley farmed in the Mercer area and was in the Civilian Conservation Corps. (C.C.C.) and then joined the army in 1942. He served in W.W.II and in the Korean conflict and was discharged in 1953. Harley lived in California from 1953 - 1957 and then moved to White City, Oregon where he lived up through 1976.

In 1976 when he was age 66, Harley was placed in the Prairieview Nursing home at Underwood, N.D. Harley died on August 24, 1981 and is buried at the Mercer Cemetery, Mercer, N.D. Services were held at Our Savior's Lutheran of Mercer. Thanks be to God.

## 6H Anna Ruth Henrietta Ovre

b. July 14, 1916 to Hattie and Krogh Ovre at Mercer Hospital. baptized Sept 10, 1916. Photograph taken 1920: Note at the back reads, "*Mrs. K. N. Ovre and Ruth.*" Ruth is four years old. Hattie and Ruth are standing in the yard and are wearing dress coats. Ruth's coat looks to be velvety and has a large pointed collar that goes over the shoulders. She is wearing a tam. Krogh's new barn built three years ago is in the background.

Ruth attended Wise School #1 and completed grades 6-7-8 in two year and graduated in 1928. Ruth graduated from Mercer High School in 1932. She attended Valley City Teacher's College in 1933 and 1934 and eight weeks at Minot Teacher's College during the summer of 1936. Ruth has worked as a teacher.

At age 22, Ruth married a neighbor, Mr. Walter W. Christensen, on October 26, 1938 in a joint ceremony at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Mercer, North Dakota.

Walter was born April 21, 1910 and baptized May 29, 1910 and is the son of Jonas and Juliana Petrea Peterson Hanson Christensen. He was confirmed Feb. 20, 1927 at Evangelical Lutheran Hope Congregation of Mercer, J. Heutmeyer, Pastor. Walter attended one room rural school at Mercer. Walter and Ruth farmed and raised their family about seven miles north of Mercer, N.D. In 1974 they moved to Mandan which is just a few miles to the south of Mercer. Walter served as North Dakota State Treasurer for 2 1/2 terms (ten years total) and one term (4 years) as administrative assistant to Governor Bill Guy of North Dakota. Walter died Aug. 3, 1979 and is buried at Mercer Cemetery.



Walter and Ruth Christensens's children include Pat, Eunice, Mary Lou, Stephen, Joel, James, and Thomas. Ruth now lives at 2111 Old Red Trail, Manden, N. Dak. 58554

**6H-1 Patricia Ann Christensen**, daughter of Walter and Ruth Christensen. b. April 10, 1941 at Bismarck and baptized June 1, 1941 at Mercer. Pat graduated from the Dakota Lutheran Academy at Minot in 1959 and graduated (2 years) 1961 from the Lutheran Bible Institute at Minneapolis with a degree in Missions. Pat attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis for one year and graduated from the University of Denver with a B.A. in English and Secondary Education in 1967. At age 22, Pat married Robert (Bob) Duane Mohrbacher on August 11, 1962 at Mercer, N.D.

Bob was born October 3, 1935 at Duluth, Minnesota to Ludwig Dahlman and Edna Elvira Benson Mohrbacher. Bob graduated from Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis in 1953 and graduate with a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Minnesota in 1958.

Pat and Bob live at Denver, Colorado where Bob works for the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Bureau of Reclamation, Design, Research Laboratories, Technical Publications. Bob and Pat live at 890 Lee Street, Lakewood, CO 80215 (302 238-5179).

Some of the information about the Akre family is from Pat (date of this entry February, 1992). Pat and Bob Mohrbacher's children are Pam (age 26) married to Dean Klenz of Fairmont, MN; Julie (age 22) married to Dan Brooks of Winona, MN; Dan (age 19).

**6H-1a Pamela Ruth Mohrbacher**. b. Dec. 4, 1965 at Wheatridge, CO. Baptized Jan. 9, 1966 at Lakewood, CO. Pam graduated from Lakewood High School in 1984 and is married to Dean Klenz of Fairmont, MN. Dean and Pam live in St. Paul and Dean attends the University of Minnesota and Pam works in accounting.

**6A-1a-1 Kendra Naomi Klenz** b. Jan. 26, 1995. Bapt. \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_.

**6H-1b Julie Anne Mohrbacher** b. April 26, 1969 at Wheatridge, CO and baptized May 18, 1969 at Lakewood, CO. Julie graduated from Lakewood High School and is married to Dan Brooks of Winona, MN. Dan and Julie live in Cloquet, Minnesota near Duluth. Dan is a substitute teacher and Julie is doing her pastoral internship at Zion Lutheran Church in Cloquet.

**6H-1b-1 Rachel \_\_\_\_ Brooks** b. April \_\_\_\_, 1994. Bapt. \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_.

**6H-1c Daniel Robert Mohrbacher** b. July 2, 1972 at Wheatridge, CO and baptized Aug. 20, 1972 at Lakewood, CO. Dan graduated May 12, 1995 from CU with a degree in Electrical Engineering and now works for Evergreen Research, a small engineering consulting firm near Lakewood. In his mom and dad's 1995 Christmas newsletter, his mother says that he "continues to be 'chief' of the sound system at church and a bass bell ringer in our church bell choir."

**6H-2 Eunice Christensen**, daughter of Walter and Ruth Christensen. b. \_\_\_\_\_. Married to Terry Bergan of Arena, N.D. and later divorced.

**6H-3 Mary Lou Christensen**, daughter of Walter and Ruth Christensen. b. June 1, 1946 and baptized August 28, 1946. Mary Lou graduated from Mercer High School in 1964 and Concordia College in 1968 with a B.Sc. in Home Economics Education. Mary Lou has worked as Berliegh County Extension Home Economist in Bismarck in 1968 - 1969. Since moving to Elgin she has taught adult education, was an elementary school teacher's aide for 2 years and is presently an elementary substitute teacher.

On May 30, 1969 Mary Lou married Eugene Emanuel Zimmerman of Elgin, N.D. Eugene was born May 27, 1944 to Emanuel and Loraine (Vetter) Zimmerman and was baptized July 30, 1944. Eugene graduated from Elgin High School in 1962 and from North Dakota State University in 1966 with a B.Sc. in Agriculture. Eugene was in the U. S. Army for two years and served in Viet Nam. He worked as Berleigh County Assistant County Agent in Bismarck in 1968 - 1969 and began a grain and dairy farm near Elgin in September of 1969. In 1982 the dairy cows were sold and Eugene became the County Director of A.S.C.S in Grant County. They continued to live on their own farm and to grow grain crops.

**6H-3a** Bradley Michael b. Dec. 11, 1969 and baptized Feb. 22, 1970.

**6H-3b** Jason Paul b. May 30, 1974 and baptized July 28, 1974.

**6H-3c** Phillip Ward b. May 23, 1981 and baptized July 26, 1981

**6H-4** **Stephen Christensen**, son of Walter and Ruth Christensen. b. \_\_\_\_\_ Mercer, N.D. Farmer. Married to Beverly \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. b. \_\_\_\_\_ Children? Family life at Mercer. . .

**6H-4a** Brent \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ and baptized \_\_\_\_\_. Age 20 in 1995 and attending third year at NDSU of Fargo in agriculture systems management.

**6H-4b** Joshua (Josh) \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ and baptized \_\_\_\_\_. Age 18 in 1995 and is a freshman at NDSU of Fargo in electrical engineering.

**6H-4c** John \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ and baptized \_\_\_\_\_. Age 14 in 1995 and in the eighth grade at Mercer.

**6H-5** **Joel Grant Christensen**, son of Walter and Ruth Christensen. b. March 6, 1952 and baptized April 27, 1952. Joel attended one year at the one room rural school and then the rest of the grades and high school at Mercer. Joel attended two years at the University of North Dakota at Williston and graduated from NDSU at Fargo as a Civil Engineer. Joel works in the Metropolitan Utilities District at Omaha, Nebraska.

Joel married Colleen Rae Vachal of Ross, N.D. on Dec. 22, 1974. Colleen was born Oct. 10, 1951 to Ernest and Agnes (Olson) Vachal. Colleen attended eight grades at Ross and graduated from high School at Stanley. She attended one year at Minot State and one year beauty school at Minot. Colleen works as a beautician. Joel and Colleen have three children.

**6H-5a** Mark Ryan b. May 8, 1977 and baptized June 26, 1977.

**6H-5b** Benjamine Scott b. Jan. 20, 1981 and baptized March 29, 1981.

**6H-5c** Aaron Paul b. July 14, 1982 and baptized Sept. 18, 1982.

**6H-6** **James Mark Christensen**, son of Walter and Ruth Christensen. b. Jan. 8, 1957. James graduated from Mandan High School, received an A. S. degree from Bismarck Jr. College and a B. S. in Horticulture from NDSU. James worked at the Dakota Boys Ranch and later as a nursery manager (He loved the garden center).

James married Nancy Kay Nelson Stavn on March 20, 1981 at the First Lutheran Church of Minot. Nancy was born on May 18, 1946 to John Roderick Nelson and his wife Harriet Marie Ellefson Nelson and was baptized June 17, 1946. Nancy graduated from Minot High School and received a B. S. from Minot State College. She later received a M. S. degree from the University of Idaho and is now an instructor at Minot State College. Nancy previously married Rockie Claire Stavn on Dec. 30, 1968 and they have one child named Thad Jonathan. James and Nancy have one child. James has



attended medical school and, as of the summer of 1995, he is a medical resident at East Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**6H-6a** Thad Jonathan Stavn. b. July 22, 1975 and baptized Dec. 12, 1976.

**6H-6b** James Mark Christensen b. Jan. 4, 1985 and baptized \_\_\_\_.

**6H-7** **Thomas Scott Christensen**, son of Walter and Ruth Christensen. b. March 24, 1961 at the Turtle Lake Hospital, Turtle Lake, N. D. and baptized on May 7, 1961 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church at Mercer. Thomas Thomas graduated from Mandan High School in 1979 and from NDSU in 1983 with a B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering. Thomas worked for the Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Thomas married Nancy Ann Joersz of Mandan on Aug. 22, 1981. Nancy was born Sept. 14, 1959 at St. Alexis Hospital Bismarck and was baptized at Christ the King Catholic Church of Mandan. Her parents are Marvin and Lucille Joersz. Nancy graduated from Mandan High School in 1978 and studied secretarial at Dickinson State College and has worked at Four Seasons Floral at Mandan. Thomas and Nancy have two children and now live at Bismarck.

**6H-7a** Eric David b. Feb. 13, 1985, bapt. \_\_\_\_.

**6H-7b** Cameron Scott b. Oct. 16, 1986, bapt. \_\_\_\_.

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7. Jonas Johan Akre

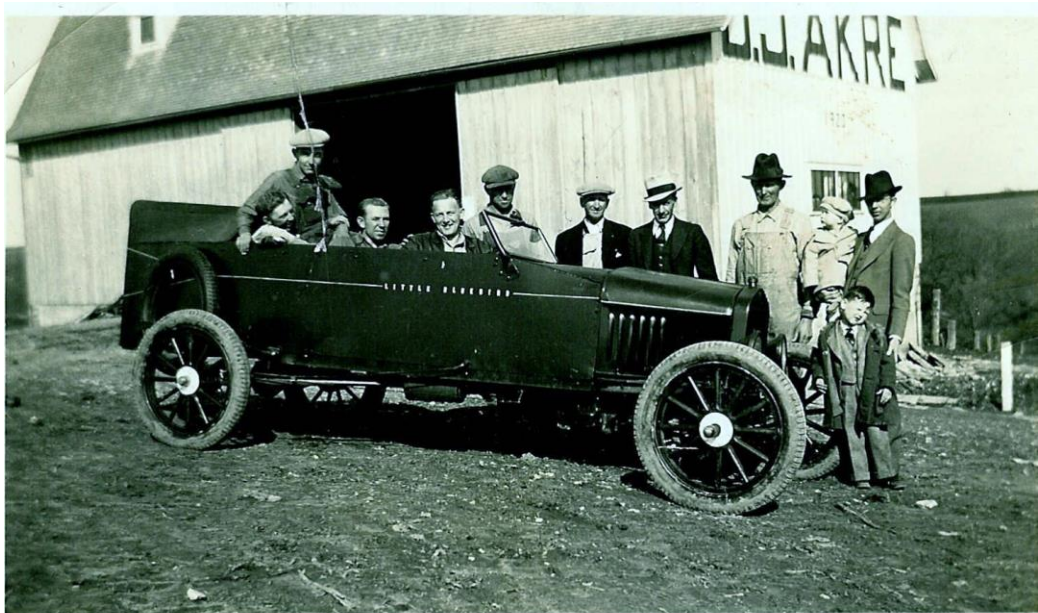
b. Sept. 15, 1877. d. Jan. 23, 1953. Jonas is the seventh child of Johanes and Martha Akre. Jonas married Susanna (Susie) Christine Peterson b. Sept. 12, 1877 d. Sept. 5, 1959. They were married on April 6, 1904 at Big Canoe Lutheran Church. Susie is the sister of Lena above who is married to Jonas' brother Martin, listed above. Jonas and



Susie had a large farm near Decorah and had four boys. They were members of Big Canoe Lutheran Church all of their lives and Susie was a member of the Ladies Aid and the Sewing Circle at church.

On November 28th, 1910 Susie sent a postcard photograph to her sister Inga. The postcard reads,

"Sister Inga, This is a crowd I had to sew carpet rags. I think you know some of them. How are you folks now? We are all well now. And did you get the picture I sent you some time ago of us all. Let us hear from you once in a while. Your sister, Susie. Decorah, Iowa."



This photo is taken at the Johan Akre homestead farm at Highlandville, Iowa in about 1925
On the far right is Walter Akre and sons (Ronald and Wallace)
Second from right is Uncle Jonas Akre (who now owns the farm).
Johan (d. 1904) is the father of Jonas and of Hattie Ovre and several other children.

The photograph is taken out on the grass and includes 29 ladies, most of them standing and holding balls of yarn, two men standing at the back, and 11 children sitting in the foreground. I assume that the tall man at the center in the back is Jonas (age 33) and several of the Akre children are there. I have another photograph of a large family group and this may be the photograph she is writing about.

A Photograph taken at the end of summer 1921: Jonas' large barn is in the background and there is a dirt road to the barn on the right. In the foreground, Susie is standing between several stalks of corn that have been pulled from the field to show them off. The tops of the tassels look to be about ten feet high! A boy of about four is sitting at her feet in a pile of large cobs of corn. A medium size dark colored dog is standing to the side of the boy. The dog has white ankles, white chest and a white nose. I'm sure they took their corn to the fair that year and won a blue ribbon. Jonas would have been 44 that year so Susie, I assume, was in her early 40's.



Stories, marriage, family? Grandchildren?

7A Lloyd Julian Akre

b. Sept. 30, 1904 - d. June 8, 1990 Lloyd was a farmer, never married and lived at Pleasant Township all of his life. Lloyd is buried in the cemetery at Big Canoe Lutheran Church.

7B Maurice Herbert Akre

b. Nov. 20, 1906 - d. Aug. 27, 1982 Maurice never married and was a teacher at Walla Walla, Washington. Maurice played the guitar and, according to his cousin Margaret, was quite a musician. Maurice was living at Fairbanks, Alaska in 1959 when his mother died, and later he moved to Kennewick, Washington where he died on August 27, 1982 of Mesothelioma. He is buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Church cemetery.

7C Earl Raymond Akre

b. June 6, 1909 - d. Dec. 15, 1986. Earl was a farmer near Highlandville. Earl was single and lived at his parent's farm at least until 1959 when his mother died. Early in the 1960's, Earl married Viola Emery who was about 25 - - Earl was about 50 years of age then. Viola was born Sept. 9, 1936 in Bluffton Township on the home farm to George and Clara (Morrison) Emery. Viola was a homemaker and lived in Winneshiek County most of her life. Earl and Viola were members of Big Canoe Lutheran Church, rural Decorah for many years. Earl and Viola had four children during the few years after they were married and, because of Viola's poor health, all have been adopted out.

On Nov. 16, 1966, when Viola was 30 years of age and five years after their marriage, she was placed in Oneota Riverside care facility where she received care for 28 years until her death on Aug. 4, 1994. Blessed be God who cares for each one of us as if we were one alone. Earl and Viola are buried at Big Canoe Lutheran Church cemetery.

7D Oliver Melbourne Akre

b. Nov. 7, 1911. Oliver lived at Kennewick, Washington for many, many years. He had some kind of business there. Oliver died in 1992 of a heart attack.

8. Ingaborg Marie (Belle J.) Akre

b. Sept. 13, 1879 d. Feb. 19, 1932 Belle is the eighth child of Johanes and Martha Akre. Her name is Ingaborg Marie but she was called Belle. The initial "J.", I'm sure, refers to the name Johanesdatter. Belle was confirmed at Big Canoe Lutheran Church at 15 years of age on October 7, 1894.

Belle was still a young girl in school when her oldest sister Ingar was married and would often write to Ingar to tell her about school and to ask about how she was getting along. This was in the middle and late 1880's. Belle married Martin Wassenberg and they moved to Wyoming where Martin worked in the oil fields. Belle and Martin had six children.

Belle's niece Margaret Akre remembers that Belle and Martin Wassenberg and their entire family came to Iowa and stayed with relatives. Belle was operated on for breast cancer at La Crosse, Wisconsin in 1927 or 1928. Belle died in 1932 at age 53 of breast cancer. The family was then out of touch with the rest of the Akre family for over fifty years, according to Beverly Christensen, and only recently in July of 1990 renewed the contact when Hattie's daughter, Ruth Christensen came out to visit Thelma, Buzz and Floyd at Shyenenne, Wyoming. Belle is buried at Kemmerer City Cemetery, Lincoln County, Wyoming. Stories?

Letter on file January 13, 1891.

This is a letter written by Belle, then age 11, to her older sister Inga. At the time of this letter, Inga is 26 years old and a couple of months pregnant with Mae. Her husband Jim will be 17 years of age on February 5. They have been married since the Fall of 1890 and living at Sheldon on the ranch with Jim's parents.

Highlandville, Iowa

Jan 13 1891

Dear Sister Inga,

I will write you a few lines and tell you how I am getting along I am very well and I hope that you are the same I am going to school and have lots of fun. we have got a good teacher her name is Clara Hover she taught here last summer. We are eighteen scholars in all but I hope we will be more after a while. I had much fun during Christmas and hoping that you had much fun. I got a scrape album from Hattie and gold brest-pin from Ole Særvold. and it is written on the



brest-pin Pet. and ma got a set of dishes from Martin and fra. got a book from Ole Særvold.. Martin has now got a long moustashe. Martin has bought gold ring for Christmas. It has not been very much snow but maybe after a while. [Ole Servold is Belle's grampa and Martin is

either her brother or her grampa's brother. Hattie is her sister.]

Your sister

Belle J. Aker *Write soon.*

A photograph shows the four children; Arlene, Thelma, Buzz and Floyd, standing in an open field at Meclusk, N. Dak. An old single seat automobile is behind them on a single lane dirt road on the open prairie. On the back of the photograph is written, "Aunt Bell children Meclusk N Dak. Jan - 8 - 1925."



The children look like they are dressed in their Sunday clothes and it is summer. The date on the card must be when the note was written and the picture was actually taken during the summer of 1924. The town of McClusky is about 10 miles east of Mercer where Belle's sister Hattie and her husband Krogh Ovre had their farm. I wonder if Belle and Martin and the children were out to Hattie's for a visit or if they had been living near Meclusk during that time. A short while later they moved out to Wyoming and eight years after that photograph Belle died of cancer.

8A Floyd Wassenberg

Born April 17, 1913. Married to Ada ____, Lives at 1535 S McKinley, Casper, WY 82601. children? Stories? Died April 26, 2003.

8B ____ "Buzz" Wassenberg

b. ____ Married to June ____, 6

8C Thelma Wassenberg

Born Jan. 24, 1923 Twin. Married to Bill Rogers, Lives at Boxx 666, Oakridge, OR 97463. Phone 503-782-2345. children? Stories?

8D Arlene Wassenberg

b. ____ Married to _____. Arlene is now deceased. children? Stories?

8E Morris Wassenberg Sonny died in his early 20's

8F Milton Erwin "Sonny" Wassenberg

Born Jan. 24, 1923. Twin. Died on Sept. 5, 1966. Ely, Nevada

9. Christine Pauline Akre

b. April 2, 1882 d. March 24, 1889 Christine is the ninth child of John and Martha Akre and was baptized at Big Canoe Lutheran Church. A letter from sister Anna of January 16, 1889 at Highlandville to her sister Inga (I presume then at Anselm, North Dakota) states in Norwegian that, "i Christina Anfinson er sick af Tering og mange andre runt om king her." Translated, it reads, "*Christina and many others around here are sick from tuberculosis.*" Two months later, as the winter snows melted and the spring flowers began to break through the ground, Christine died about a week short of her seventh birthday. She is buried at the cemetery of Big Canoe Lutheran Church near her parents. "*Blessed be God who cares for each one of us as if we were one alone.*" (St. Augustine)

Six Letters to Inga

1. Letter of April 11, 1884

A poem or prose in 6 parts on 2 pages in Old Norwegian written on the 11th of April in the year of our Lord 1884 by Anna Olsonatte Haalam[sp] to Enga Johnsonatte Akre. This may be a wedding note or wish or ...⁹ This needs to be translated into English and may well be an important tie to the past. Inga is 19 years of age at the time of this letter. The writer may be Inga's mother's sister's daughter - and thus her cousin.

The letter concludes with:

Skevet den 11 April. Soret 1884.

Af Anna Olsdatter Haalam.

og til Enga, Jonsdatter Akre.

[illegible]

Herret vaaqvad i Helvete lue lue ..
 4
 Her Duem Indeni Det Skud Loo Luter
 kom Det jorde ind vore lute og saa der rose
 Loo Luter Den i den Allet Haver guld
 Loo Luter i for fore dig Det Vrodering
 Loo Luter Lg ..
 5
 Jy lade nat og tog til gud
 At kom min Gud vil Glode ud At grov
 og grov den i Skat ^{guld} saa den Hange aei
 sa halle fast ved jase ta kom jette
 ring vor Landet gaar ..
 6
 Alre vore jg mude lode vil At
 Skrive var er ikke vore men Lute lade
 for vore vore At til min Gud i Helvete
 At Det var Lute lade Lute lade saa kom
 Loo Luter vilen Lg ..
 Skrevet den 11 April Aaret 1884.
 Af Hverne Christen Skander og Lg ..
 Enga Jonsdatter Skel ..
 for nylig forvord jg Luter dig til guld lade ind i den

2. Letter of April 30, 1888

[to Ingar from her cousin, Emma Barrett, apparently shortly after Inger's marriage - Written in English. Inga is 23 at the time of this letter.]

*Monday
April 30, 1888
Dear Cousin Ingar*

I had quite a surprise the other day when I got a letter from you as I never expected to hear from you any more but as you have condescended to write to me once more I shall answer your letter and your questions to the best of my ability, here is all kinds of land here as well as in other new counties, most of the land around Vancouver is taken but up in Spokane County There is a good deal of land yet it is growing fast as many is coming all the time. I think the price of land is the same here as in Dakota. The wages for laboring man is from a dollar and a half to two and three dollars a day. but it seems to me that a man could get plenty of land and work up in Dakota but then this is a much nicer country as we only have two months winter and not very cold either. . . Living is very cheap here all sorts of vegetables and fruit is very cheap as everybody that has any land at all raises it themselves we have new potatoes and many kinds of vegetables for the table already we have very nice weather now just like June in Minnesota all fruit has begun to grow and we expect to have cherries to eat by the first of June and perhaps ...illegible]

Dear cousin I wish you would tell me more about yourself how you came to go to Dakota and about your marriage and your husband if he is Norwegian, and now I must close with much love to you and your husband from your Affectionate Cousin

*Emma Barrett
Vancouver[Krk ?]
Clarke County
Washington Terr*

PS I wish you much joy, and that you may have many a long and happy day together and that you will never quarrel Don't forget to write and answer this letter good by

~~~~~

## 3. Letter of October 12, 1888 from \_\_\_\_\_?

The text is reprinted here as best I could read it. Names mentioned are Bessie Helgeson, Sampson Akre, John and Ole Hjne, Anne Halvorson, Mary J. Skal, siste Mandag, John A. Forde, siste Uge Hvis, Martha Berge, sist fra M. J. Akre, Johan Martin. The translation into English follows.

**Norwegian text:**

Highlandville, Iowa

Oct 12. 1888

Kjer Sister med Familie

Jeg shulde vel vare Skrevet til dig kjere soster for lenge siden det har veret udsat intil nu. Jeg har begynt fraa flere brev til dig men har ikke fulfort dem Vu lever vel til denne tid med hilsen og hauber at dette vil finde eder med Kan her na[K] vere forsjerige jeg Kan borstele dig at Bessie Helgeson har veret hjeme fraa besog hos sin gamle Fader hun er reist tilbage til Chicago vor hun skulde holde Arylof hun var forlonet med en gentteman des nede

Jog Kan og saa fortelle dig at Samson Akre og John og Ole Hjne var til Minneapolis fraa Fairen og fraa besog til sine dotre Anne Halvorson fulgte sin fader hjen fraa besog og var hjen en to ugers tid men er reist tilbage til Minneapolis jeg havde en good time med hende jeg var og besogte hende flere gange ja endog Kuelden for hum reist

Samson vilde nok vare Mary med sig men hun var saa syg at hun ikke kunde vere med ham den dag saaskulde John vente til dagen efter men hun blev ikke sneu ham heller men saa blev hun bedre om en Uges thid

og saa Kom hun alene hun er nu her nede hun er fra frisk nu siger Highlandville med mig 3 gange i en uge Pigerne her runt liker vist at Kjore med mig det er nesten ikke en enste gang jeg er til Highlandville uden at en eller to es med mig ja siste Mandag hanede 3 styker med mig.

Mary J. Skal reise til Minneapolis iggen om 2 rigers thid hun Gifte sig Skulde jeg forstelle dig Jeg Kan og saa fortelle dig at John A. Forde har fot sig en ny Livesledsagerinde Kan du tro hven det er. Han varr lige til Staten Kansas han Kom tilbage siste Uge Hvis du husher til Martha Berge. eller Fugla Martha son man kalte hende hun og hendero Moder reiste til Kansas for en 6 a 8 Aar siden.

Jeg holder fraa og Kjorer Flode frendeleo og liker det nok saa godt.

Nest gang jeg skrive til eden skal jeg sende eder mit Potret hvis du vil skrive snart tilbage De hilseo fra alle her hjeme men forstog sist fra M. J. Akre.

Hilo Johan Martin ag giv han et kryss fra mig og hermed sendes jeg dig \$100 som du skal Kjofe ham nu get i fra mig

[Not signed]

**Notes on this letter:** Inga, d.o.b. Sept 8, 1864, was 24 years old at the time of this letter. The person M. J. Akre mentioned at the end of the letter is likely not Martin Johann Akre her brother who is 21 but probably Inga's uncle - her father's brother. The reference to M. J. Akre at the end of the letter, I suspect, has bearing on who wrote the letter. The Johan Martin mentioned at the very end of the letter is probably Inga's first husband who died a short time later. The letter is unsigned.

Inga was 24 at the time of this letter and her oldest sister at the time of this letter would have been just 9 years old. Considering the maturity of the content it is unlikely that any of her sisters wrote the letter. And considering the stuff about who's going with whom and who is married to whom and the remark "Give Martin a kiss from me", it is unlikely that it was a male sharing this information. It also was not the wife of her brother Martin because she was just thirteen and didn't marry him until seven years later. So considering that she's "still hauling cream" and that she apparently knows of all of the goings on with folks at Highlandville, and that she has the ability to send \$100 to Inga, the writer must be an older woman, perhaps the sister of her husband.

Oct 12, 1888 letter translated to English

*Highlandville, Iowa*

*October 12, 1888*

*Dear sister and Family*

1. *I should have written to you long ago, dear sister, but it has been delayed until now. I have started several letters to you, but have not finished them.*

2. *We are all fine and am sending greetings and hope that this will find you with the same good news.*

3. *I can tell you that Bessie Helgeson has been home to her old father. She went back to Chicago where she was getting married. She was engaged to a gentleman down there. I can also tell you that Sampson Akre and John and Ole Hjue were to Minneapolis at the State Fair and also visiting their daughters. Annie Halvorsen followed her father home for a visit and was home for a couple of weeks, but has gone back to Minneapolis now.*

4. *I had a good time with her. I visited with her many times while she was here, even the night before she left. Sampson would have liked Mary to have gone with him, but she was so sick she could not go with him that day. So John waited till the day after, but she did not go with him either. But then she got better after weeks time - so then she came alone. She is down here now. She feels pretty good now she says. She has gone with me to Highlandville three times in one week. The girls around here likes to drive with me. There isn't hardly a time I go to Highlandville with out one or two of them going along. Last Monday as many as three of them went along.*

5. *Mary J. says that she is going back to Minneapolis in about two weeks, and she ask me to tell you that she is getting married then. I can also tell you that John A Forde has found himself a new wife. Can you believe who that is. He was all the way to the State of Kansas. He came back last week. Do you remember Martha Berge - or Bird Martha that she was called. She and her mother left for Kansas 6 - 8 years ago.*

6. *I am still hauling cream, and I like that pretty good. Next time I write to you I'll send you my picture if you write me soon.*

7. Greetings from all of us here at home - But first and foremost from M. J. Akre.

8. Greet Johan Martin and give him a kiss from me. I also send you \$100 that I want you to buy him something from me. [unsigned]

.....

#### 4. Letter of January 16th, 1889

[to "Dear Sister Ingar" from sister Anna Johnson of Highlandville, Iowa. This is actually Inga's sister Anna writing at age 14. A four page letter written in Norwegian - the text is reprinted here as best I could read it. The script is different than the above letter so it is likely that this "Anna" is not the same person as above.

#### Norwegian text:

Highlandville, Iowa

Jan. 16. 1889

Dear Sister Ingar.

Det er nu lenge siden gig mutag Hit breb og en tich siden de jul leg aver fra dig. det afron og - - frotreif naar. Gina nar her nede hun vilde syntest det var saa fint og hun vilde gjerne have et saa fifk hun mit. i Christina Anfinson er sick af Tering og mange andre runt om king her.

Vi gaar nu (all) el skalen og vi har den same Teacher som el sommer. hum er en god Teacher og lever op i Minn. hum har mange slegt. ninge her nede hun og Bagnigenter du husker vel den. (de) er saskenborn Alle Hanson genter er hjeme Lilda er gift og har faaey en son som blu vel ved.

Jeg var 2 maaneder has Franklin Sampson og Nellie de har 2 smaa forste gang fik de twins ig en af dem dode der hun var o maaneder og d var en guhsam er 1 maaned gamlere end eder gut han er stor og lung som du fortalte din gut var saa jeg jom ofte iku dig naar geg varder. Hattie var der ogoan en stimo stund.

Hattie fik breb ifra Cousin John J. Akre han fortalte at hans soster Inga Som er el Washington Terr. skal faa frension. og velde besoge sit hjem til Sommeren og hans soster Anna har nu faaet en. son til hun har nu 3 smaa 2 gutter og en frige. og hans tridje soster Tina var ude og tente og tente og deres moder haver tjenestefrige og at de alle var friske. han var d Northwood ibo. og skulte han var hjime med julen vg havde vi ogsaa 3 ab vaare soskenborn var her nede Ole Servold son du vel husker han gaar nu fraa breckenridge skolen e Decorah. og hans broder Edd var med ham. og deres soster son er e LeRoy kom ogsaa ned her uge saa Maate hun til lage til LeRoy men vilde straks skrm med ijen. Ole gaar enduu fraa College han var hjeme 2 uger med julen. Vi havde ikke sne for anden julodag.

Prestefruen er meget syg nu og gaar snart med hende. Seekus hab holt skole for jul og efter Jul Andrew Hanson son du vel Kjender til.

John S Forde skal nu snart blive gift og hvis det sker skul du faa vide det en an den gang. Jeg faar nu slute far dene gang Skriv snart.

From your sister, Anna Johnson

**Translation of above letter into English:**

*January 16, 1889  
Highlandville, Iowa  
Dear Sister Inga*

1. *It is now a long time since I received your letter and some time since Christmas gifts from you, the apron and picture. When Gena was down here she thought it was so nice - and would like very much to have one - so she got mine. Christina and many others around here are sick from tuberculosis. [Christina is 6 years old and Inga's youngest sister - She will die in March.]*

2. *We all go to school now and we have the same teacher as last summer. She is a good teacher and live up at Minnesota. She has many relatives down here. She and the Bagne-girls, I suppose you remember them, are first cousins. All the Hanson-girls are home. Ida[?] is married and has a healthy born son.*

3. *I was at Franklin Sampson and Nellie for two months. They have two small ones. The first time they had twins. and one of them died when she was 8 months old. One was a boy who was one month older than your boy. He is big and heavy as you told me your boy was. I was thinking of you often when I was there. Hattie was there for a while also. Hattie got a letter from John J. Akre. He told that his sister Inga who is in Washington Territory will get a free pension and would visit her home this summer. And his sister Anna has another son - she now has three small ones - two boys and a girl, and his third sister was out working as a maid, and that their mother has a maid and that they are all healthy. He was in Northwood Country and was going to have a Merry Christmas at home.*

4. *We also had a fine Christmas. Three of our first cousins were down here. Ole Servold, who you remember I'm sure, is now going to the Breckenridge School in Decorah, and his brother Odd was with him here. Their sister who is in LeRoy came down here the day before New Years, and she stayed about a week - then she had to go back to LeRoy but would soon come back down again.*

5. *Ole still goes to college. [Ole is 18, attending Luther College, and will go on to seminary at St. Paul.] He was home for two weeks around Christmas. We did not have any snow until the second day of Christmas. The pastor's wife is very sick now. Seehus kept school before Christmas and after Christmas Andrew Hanson, who you probably know, will do the same.*

6. *John S. Forde will soon be married - and if it happens I'll let you know another time. I have to close for now.*

7. *Write soon.*

*From your sister  
Anna Johnson [Akre]*

.....

**5. Letter of January 13, 1891.**

This is a letter from Inga's sister Belle, age 11. At the time of this letter, Inga is 25 and has been married to Jim since the Fall of 1890 and is living at Sheldon on the ranch with Jim's parents. Inga is a couple of months pregnant with Mae, her first child.

*Highlandville, Iowa*

*Jan 13 1891*

*Dear Sister Inga,*

*I will write you a few lines and tell you how I am getting along I am very well and I hope that you are the same I am going to school and have lots of fun. we have got a good teacher her name is Clara Hover she taught here last summer. We are eighteen scholars in all but I hope we will be more after a while. I had much fun during Christmas and hoping that you had much fun. I got a scrape album from [sister] Hattie and gold brest-pin from [grampa] Ole Servold and it is written on the brest-pin Pet. and ma got a set of dishes from [brother] Martin and fra. got a book from Ole Servold. Martin has now got a long moustashe. Martin has bought gold ring for Christmas. It has not been very much snow but maybe after a while.*

*Your sister*

*Belle J. Aker*

*Write soon.*

~~~~~

6. Letter of January 25, 1901.

At the time of receiving the following letter, Inga is 36 years old and has children Mae, Willie, Oliver, Melbourn, Lloyd, and Maggie. Mae, the oldest, is eight years old and Maggie is a baby.

Sattre, Iowa

Jan. 25 1901

Dear Sister Inga,

I promised to write after Xmas but now is a while after so I think I better write. And I have been waiting for a letter from you. Well Xmas was kind of still this year every place around. We did not have slughing so I guess that was why. And we have so many sick ones. Anne has been sick since before Xmas but she has been up and around this week. Before Xmas she has been sick in bed for a week but these last days she has been up again. She has got many kinds of diseases. It is kidney trouble she has had and the doctor said she ought to had doctored for it two years ago and now it has turned to dropsy but he thought he could cure it. and she cought a cold and she got the grippe and neuralgia that she was so swelled up in her face that we could hardly see her eyes but now she is almost alright of that she has had quite a time while the doctor has . . .

[the rest of the letter is missing] Is this letter from sister Belle? Who is Anne written of here?

7. Postcard of December 26, 1907

This postcard is from Peter and Anna Bidne of Highlandville Iowa to her twin sister Hattie and he husband Krough Ovre at Mercer, 26 Dec., 1907. It was among Inga's old photos and memorabilia. The postcard had been glued inside an old black photo album. The album paper was scraped off as best I could to read the text. The picture on the other side is of the village of Highlandville that you see at the front of this genealogy record.

Postmark: Mercer, N.D. PM Dec. 26, 1907

Addressed to: Mr Mrs K. N. Ovre, Mercer, N. Dak.

Postage stamp: The stamp is green and the top of stamp engraved "United States of America." At the center of the stamp is a print of Benjamin Franklin and below the print is engraved "Franklin 1790" and below that are the words POSTAGE ONE CENT. A cherub in a loincloth decorates the left side of the stamp.

The text of the note on the postcard is:

It is nice of you to write.

Did you get your work _____?

We have been sick now but will be better soon.

We have very nice weather.

Not any snow.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and

Happy New Year

From Peter Anna.

A note written later on the edge is the text:

"Center house is Bidne's," Mom said. The note is in my mother Esther Cowan's handwriting so it was a comment made to her by her MIL Inga (perhaps while she was living with her and her son Walter).



center house in Bidnée
mom
said

POST OFFICE

BIDNÉE

DEC 1907

NAME AND ADDRESS

CORRESPONDENCE

Don't write me or you to
write. Did you get your
in ask it for a time
sick now but it will
will be better soon.
We have very good water
not any more.
Wishing you all a
Christmas and
Happy New Year
from Laura Anna.

