

Larsen Family, Chapter 4 - Andrew Larson & Karen Margrethe Hansen

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My grandfather, Andrew Larson, was born in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, the second of three children of Danish immigrants Niels (Christensen) Larsen and Maren Larsen. Andrew and his wife, Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen, had nine children, listed in boldface in the above contents.

Most of this chapter consists of sections for each of the nine Larson siblings.

Portions of these sections deal with my cousins and my cousins' children, and thus are private, to be viewed only by family members. These portions have been removed from the Big Pigeon copy that you are viewing.

The Lives of Andrew Larson and Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen

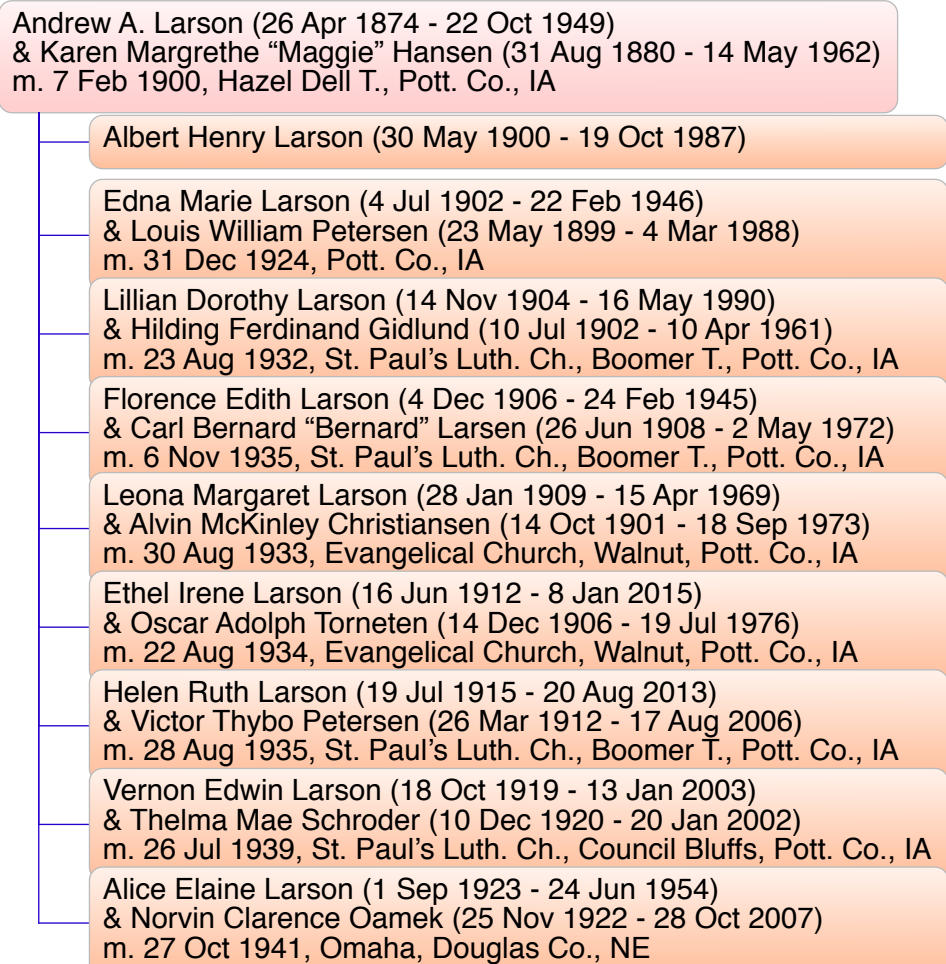
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- **Andrew A. Larson**, my maternal grandfather and the second child of Niels (Christensen) Larsen and Maren Larsen, was born in Pottawattamie County, Iowa in 1874, I believe Andrew remained at home with his parents and helped farm the 120-acre Larson home place in Hazel Dell Township until he married.

In 1900, when Andrew was 25 and his bride was 19, Andrew married Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen, whose parents, Peter and Dorthe Hansen, lived nearby.

After their marriage, Andrew and Maggie Larson moved to a nearby farm just southeast of his parents' farm. Their nine children, listed on the chart below, were all born at home on this farm.

Andrew and Maggie Larson and Their Children



As a young man Andrew Larson had a drinking problem. Sometime in the 1910s, he was sent to a state institution for treatment. As far as I know, he never touched alcohol again after returning from his treatment program.

Andrew Larson had reddish features, and was sometimes distinguished from others in the area with the same name by being called "Red Andrew".

When my grandfather, Andrew, was born, he had no middle name and his last name was Larsen. As early as 1900 Andrew assumed the middle initial "A.", presumably to differentiate himself from Andrew J. Larsen, who also received his mail through the Weston, Iowa, post office. I believe my grandfather and his children gradually drifted from "Larsen" to "Larson" for the spelling of their last name. For instance, when Andrew registered for the World War I draft in 1918, his last name was printed as "Larson" but signed as "Larsen".

Andrew and Maggie Larson rented their 80-acre farm from the Graham family, who were absentee landlords from Canton, Illinois, with extensive holdings in both Illinois and Iowa. Unlike most landlords, the Grahams did not provide buildings on the land they rented out. Andrew built a small house on his rented farm, and later built a two-room addition. My grandparents were never well off financially, and even if they had been, there was little incentive to invest in buildings on land that they didn't own. Thus, my grandparents' farm never had substantial buildings.

In addition to the land he rented from the Grahams, Andrew, inherited 40 acres after his father died in 1915, and bought his sister Annie's 40 acre inheritance. During the farm crisis of the early 1920s, Andrew became upside down on his mortgage. During the depression, between 1930 and 1935, Andrew lost these 80 acres.

In the 1935 and 1939 Pottawattamie County plat books, the 40 acres is owned by the B .T. Dow trust of Davenport, Iowa. Mr. Dow was born Gilbert Tristan Dow and sometimes was known as Bert and sometimes as B. T. He was a long-term grain dealer along the Mississippi in Davenport, and his family ran a financial institution in Davenport.

By 1950, Andrew's son, Vernon, had acquired the 80 acres his father had earlier lost.

Around the 1940s, the Graham estate holdings in Hazel Dell Township were liquidated and Andrew's son, Albert, bought the 80 acres his father had rented.

Andrew was in poor health for over fifteen years before his death. He never sought medical treatment and moved to the periphery of household activities. Some of his children subsequently regretted ignored him when they came to visit. The family now suspects Andrew may have had Parkinson's disease.

Andrew's wife, Karen Margrethe "Maggie" (Hansen) Larson was a quiet woman of a mild disposition. She worked tirelessly to care for her large family, cooking and baking, gardening and canning, washing and sewing.

My grandfather, Andrew Larson, died at his farm home in 1949 at the age of 75. When he was being carried out, Maggie is reputed to have said, "He wasn't good to me but his children were."

Andrew's widow, Maggie, continued to live on the farm with her son, Albert, until

shortly before her death, in 1962 at the age of 81. For the next 15 years Albert lived at home by himself.

After Albert's death, the house and other buildings were burned and the farmyard bulldozed into piles of debris that were covered with soil. Eventually Andrew and Maggie's grandson, Gary Larson, built a house nearby on higher ground along the country road. (See the following poem "*Grandma's Place*".)

The nine children of Andrew and Maggie Larson grew up in a small house in financially meager circumstances. Many of the few amenities they enjoyed were provided by nearby relatives, their bachelor uncle, Pete Hansen, and their uncle and aunt, Henry and Ellie Larson.

All nine children of Andrew and Maggie Larson graduated from the eighth grade at Hazel Dell #5, also known as Center School, a one-room rural school 1 1/4 miles southwest of the Larson farm.

Here I summarize the lives of the nine Larson children after their 8th grade graduation. For more, see the sections that follow.

- **Albert**, born in 1900, remained at home, working in the family farming operation.

All of Uncle Albert's siblings married and became parents.

- **Edna**, born in 1902, was working nearby in the Delorma Parish household in 1920. Edna married Louis Petersen from the St. Paul's community in 1924. Edna and Louis first lived in Council Bluffs, and then at several locations in the greater Council Bluffs area, ending on Louis's parents' farm west of Neola. Edna went to the Oakdale tuberculosis sanitarium near Iowa City in 1939 and died at Oakdale seven years later.
- **Lillian**, born in 1904, worked near her parent's home in the Charles Hough household for a time. In 1923, possibly earlier, Lillian moved to Council Bluffs, where she initially lived in the Pusey McGee household at 218 3rd Street just south of downtown. In Council Bluffs she met Gladys Braden from the Macedonia area and subsequently, probably in 1927, she and Gladys moved to Brush, Colorado, where they worked in the Ebenezer Sanitarium. Lillian met her future husband, Hilding Gidlund, in Brush where he was a patient. Lillian and Hilding remained in Denver, Colorado thereafter.

Of Interest: Several of the Larson sisters stayed with the Pusey McGee family while living in Council Bluffs as teenagers. Pusey McGee was the grandson of W. H. M. Pusey and the great-nephew of Thomas Officer. In the 1850s Pusey and Officer built homes, now sadly lost, on what is now Willow Avenue across the street from Bayliss Park. Abraham Lincoln, a Springfield, Illinois acquaintance of Pusey and Officer was entertained in these homes when he visited Council Bluffs in August 1859.

The next four daughters, Florence, Leona, Ethel and Helen, boarded in Council Bluffs while they took the normal training course at Abraham Lincoln High School. After turning eighteen, they taught one-room rural schools in the area until they

married.

- **Florence**, born in 1906, boarded with unknown families in Council Bluffs while attending high school, graduating in 1923 or 1924. Florence then stayed for a time with Spencer and Johanna (Keeline) Smith, an elderly couple who lived next door to Pusey McGee, until past her 18th birthday. Florence then taught in rural Pottawattamie County schools for ten years, from 1925 to 1935. In 1935 Florence married Bernard Larsen from Kenmare, North Dakota. Florence lived in Kenmare the remainder of her life.
- **Leona**, my mother, born in 1909, boarded with Devere and Freole Watson in Council Bluffs while attending high school, graduating in 1926. She then stayed for a year with Clara Imler at 20 Benton Street, attending classes at Boyle's Business College and working as a bookkeeper. Leona taught rural Pottawattamie County schools for six years from 1927 until she married Alvin Christiansen in 1933. Leona and Alvin initially lived on the Jim Christiansen home place in Boomer Township, moving to the Avoca area in 1948.
- **Ethel**, born in 1912, boarded with Cecile Baldwin, who was divorcing Bill Baldwin, and then with Claude and Grace Sparks, while attending high school. Ethel turned 18 soon after graduating in 1930, so was able to begin teaching that fall. Ethel taught the same school, Hazel Dell #4, for four years. After she and Oscar Torneten married in August 1934, they lived briefly just south of McClelland. They moved to the Torneten home place southwest of McClelland before Richard was born in 1936, and there she remained until around January 1, 2012. Ethel died at age 102 in January 2015, the last of the nine Larson children.
- **Helen**, born in 1915, graduated from the 8th grade at the ripe age of 12 and in the summer of 1928 moved to Council Bluffs to attend high school. Helen remembered staying with nine different families in Council Bluffs before she turned 18 and was could begin teaching. After one year of teaching at the Oamek School, Hazel Dell #4., Helen married Victor Petersen. Helen and Victor lived in various locations in Pottawattamie County, at Lake Panorama, and then in Mesa, Arizona for twelve years before returning to Council Bluffs.
- **Vernon**, born in 1919, remained at home while attending Underwood High School. After graduating in 1937, Vernon continued to farm with his brother, Albert. Vernon married Thelma Schroder in 1939, and he and Thelma first lived in a small rental house near the Andrew Larson farm. Vernon and Thelma lived in four other houses in the area before they divorced in the mid 1980s and Vernon moved to a house on the west side of Council Bluffs.
- **Alice**, born in 1923 attended Abraham Lincoln High School but did not graduate. She and Norvin Oamek married in 1941 when Alice was 18. After World War II Alice and Norvin lived in Council Bluffs until Alice's early death.

All nine of the Larson siblings reached adulthood. Sadly, four of the nine died long before reaching the biblical age of 70. Florence died from a cerebral hemorrhage in 1944 at the age of 38, Edna from tuberculosis in 1946 at 43, Alice from leukemia in 1954 at 30 and Leona from breast cancer in 1969 at 60. Florence, Edna and Alice left five minor children, ranging in age from five upwards.

The five surviving Larson siblings compensated by living into their 80s, 90s, and beyond. Three died in their 80s, Albert at age 87 in 1987, Lillian at age 85 in 1990, and Vernon at age 83 in 2002. Helen died at age 98 in 2013. The last sibling, Ethel, died at 102 in 2015.

My grandparents, Andrew A. and Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Larson, are interred in St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Boomer Township, as are their parents, most of their siblings, their oldest child, Albert, their son-in-law and daughter, Victor and Helen Petersen, and many other relatives.

Here are interment locations for their remaining seven children:

- Edna - the Sorden Cemetery east of Keswick in Keokuk County, Iowa.
- Lillian - Fairmount Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.
- Florence - Lakeview Cemetery just west of Kenmare in Ward County in northern North Dakota.
- Leona - Graceland Cemetery at the north edge of Avoca, Iowa.
- Vernon - Cedar Lawn Cemetery, Council Bluffs.
- Vernon - the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township. Pottawattamie County.
- Alice - the Hazel Dell Cemetery in southern Hazel Dell Township.

My Larson Cousins

The nine Larson siblings developed deep bonds of affection which they maintained for the remainder of their lives, and which in turn they passed on to the next generation in the extended Larson family.

In 1991 and again in 1996, Aunt Thelma hosted Larson family reunions on a Sunday summer afternoon at her home behind the Hazel Dell Township Hall. At the 1996 reunion a decision was made to have a Larson Cousins' reunion extending over more than one day. Subsequently the following reunions were held:

- 1997 Estes Park, Colorado, hosted by Sylvia, Rosalie and Jeanette.
- 2000 Phoenix, Arizona, hosted by Barb and Pattie.
- 2003 Mahoney State Park between Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska, hosted by the Torneten children.
- 2006 Carlsbad, California, hosted by the Christiansen children.
- 2009 Council Bluffs and McClelland, Iowa, hosted by Richard and Kathy, Gary and Sandy, and Chris and Bob.

Some of my fondest childhood memories are of the Sunday afternoons I spent with my cousins, often at my grandparents' farm. My sister, Chris Christiansen, has memorialized these afternoons in the following poem.

Grandma's Place

Standing in front of the floor to ceiling windows
In a beautiful new home
Overlooking farmland in a loess hills valley.
"See that clump of grass in the midst of the hayfield
That's where your grandma's place was."

Grandma's place
Down the lane
Into the maze of Uncle Albert's junk
Of gray worn out buildings
Of tall untrimmed trees
Of pieces of antique equipment.

With grandpa sitting in a chair by the gate
Watching the relatives arrive.
The children, afraid of the bearded stranger,
Scurrying past.
My gentle mother stopping to visit, raising her voice
So Red Andrew could hear.

Into the house
With its distinct smell of coppery water,
With Albert's finger floating in formaldehyde
In a jar on the mantel.
The house so small, so poor

To have been home to nine children.

We grandchildren
Marveling in the mysteries of the farmyard.
Rusting Model T's
Decaying horse-drawn buggies
The old railroad car,
Such fuel for young fantasies.

The abandoned house across the creek
The barn with its dusty haymow
The cob-webbed wash house
The dirt bank waiting to be dug
So many treasures to find
So many places to explore.

Down the tree covered lane towards Vernon's
Across the fields to Uncle Pete's
Or further to Aunt Ellie's
Up the long hill to the township hall
Down the hill on a sled in winter
The daring voyages we would take.
Our world of many Sunday afternoons
Warm memories in a clump of grass.

Carolyn Christiansen, 1997

The 22 grandchildren of Andrew and Maggie Larson are all listed on the following page. Unlike some of their parents, all the grandchildren survived into middle age and beyond. As of April 2017, all were living, except for the following:

- † Alvin Petersen (died 2003 at age 77, three children)
- † Larry Larsen (died 2010 at age 71, two children)
- † Ron Larsen (died 2012 at age 68, three children)
- † Rosalie (Gidlund) Nelson (died 2014 at age 76, no children)
- † Donald Petersen (died 2015 at age 87, three children)
- † Donald Thompson (died 2017 at age 80, two children)

As of April 2017, the remaining sixteen cousins range in age from 86 to 65.

My aunts, uncles and cousins have always been an important part of my life. I feel privileged to have been born into such an inclusive extended family. Sadly, among my cousins there are instances where siblings are alienated from each other. It is to the credit of those cousins that issues between these siblings have not kept them from interacting with the rest of us. May we all remain in each other's thoughts as we pass through the final phases of our lives. (Bob, March 2009)

The Grandchildren of Andrew Larson and Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen
As most are living, I have omitted dates. "*" after a name indicates multiple marriages.

Andrew A. Larson & Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen
| Albert Henry Larson
| Edna Marie Larson & Louis William Petersen
| | Alvin Louis Petersen & Marie Dorothy Ullerich
| | Donald Eugene Petersen & Agnes Lorraine "Lorraine" Ware
| | Phyllis Jean Petersen* & Floyd Arnold Rauch
| | Phyllis Jean Petersen* & Alton F. Carey
| | Phyllis Jean Petersen* & Marshall L. Werth Jr.
| Lillian Dorothy Larson & Hilding Ferdinand Gidlund
| | Sylvia June Gidlund* & Charles "Chuck" Woodruff
| | Sylvia June Gidlund* & David Snow
| | Sylvia June Gidlund* & William T. Deshler
| | Rosalie Sigrid Gidlund & Richard Nelson
| Florence Edith Larson & Carl Bernard "Bernard" Larsen
| | Virginia Claire "Ginny" Larsen
| | Lawrence Andrew "Larry" Larsen & Carol Lynn Hager
| Leona Margaret Larson & Alvin McKinley Christiansen
| | Robert Alvin "Bob" Christiansen* & Janet Lee Koll
| | Robert Alvin "Bob" Christiansen* & Susan Beth "Beth" Christensen
| | Robert Alvin "Bob" Christiansen* & Martha Lynn Dennis
| | Carolyn Leona "Chris" Christiansen
| | Donald Alan "Don" Christiansen & Mercedes Ann Martin
| Ethel Irene Larson & Oscar Adolph Torneten
| | Richard Oscar Torneten & Kathryn Jean "Kathy" Hessel
| | Marilyn Janice Torneten & Richard Lee Formanek
| | Jeanette Elaine Torneten & Uwe Malchow
| Helen Ruth Larson & Victor Thybo Petersen
| | LaVonne Helen Petersen & Gailen Dean Sidebottom
| | Carol Sue Petersen & John Tharal Hartzog Jr.
| Vernon Edwin Larson & Thelma Mae Schroder
| | Barbara Jane Larson & James Edward Hoyt
| | Ronald Vernon "Ron" Larson & Carolyn Kephart
| | Gary Lynn Larson & Sandra Ring
| | Patricia Lynel "Pattie" Larson* & Ronald Dean Thiel
| | Patricia Lynel "Pattie" Larson* & Joseph L. Trumbull
| | Donald William Thompson & Helen Maxine Dideriksen
| Alice Elaine Larson & Norvin Clarence Oamek
| | Joanne Elaine Oamek* & Dale G. Butterbaugh
| | Joanne Elaine Oamek* & Dean Dreesman
| | Joanne Elaine Oamek* & Steven "Steve" Jacobs
| | Geraldine Marie "Jeri" Oamek* & Nels Conrad Bramberg
| | Geraldine Marie "Jeri" Oamek* & Roger Keith Lucas
| | Geraldine Marie "Jeri" Oamek* & Gordon S. Kolacny

End of the *Lives of Andrew Larson and Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Hansen* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.

The following sections sketch the lives of the nine children of Andrew and Maggie
Larson, along with their families.

Albert Larson Sketch

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- **Albert Henry Larson** (30 May 1900 – 19 Oct 1987) was the oldest of the nine children born to my grandparents, Andrew A. and Karen Margrethe "Maggie" Larson. Like his siblings, Albert was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school.

Uncle Albert remained at home and never married. Albert farmed the home place, first with his father and then later with his younger brother, Vernon. Around 1940 Albert acquired title to the 80-acre Andrew Larson farm, which had previously been rented from the Graham estate.

As a young man, Albert played baseball on Sundays with a local team and was an avid hunter. Although he was a genial person with a hearty laugh, Albert was on the shy side, with his shyness exacerbated by hearing problems.

Uncle Albert remained in the house where he was born after all his siblings left, after his father died in 1949, and after his mother's death in 1962. After his mother died, Albert lived by himself for nearly a quarter century.

Various family members helped Uncle Albert remain in his home, but eventually he moved to a nursing home in Council Bluffs, where he died at age 87. In the nursing home Uncle Albert enjoyed for the first time in his memory the luxury of being waited on.

Uncle Albert was well known in the community as a regular attendee at farm auctions, buying low-cost junk and artifacts that most auction participants scorned. These artifacts were a source of great interest for his nephews and nieces on Sunday afternoons, and some would be of considerable value today if they had been preserved.

In his latter years Albert lost a finger in a farm accident. He preserved his finger in a jar in his refrigerator for years before a sister, reportedly my mother, threw it out.

Aunt Ethel once told me "He was a good brother". I can't imagine that Uncle Albert ever had an enemy.

Albert Larson is interred near the north end of St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Boomer Township alongside his bachelor uncle, Hans Peter Hansen, and other relatives.

Except for one road trip around 1930, I don't know of Albert ever journeying further than the South Omaha stockyards, which were about 25 miles from the Larson home.

During Albert's long road trip, he visited the Hukill family, former neighbors who had moved to the Chadron area in northwestern Nebraska. I believe he also visiting our Hannibal and Petersen relatives in Dannebrog in central Nebraska.

Albert did not inherit his father's youthful tendency to drink too much. On one

occasion, while returning in his pickup from the South Omaha stockyards, Albert was peeling fruit and thus driving erratically. Two highway patrolmen, expecting an easy arrest, stopped him, and one said to the other, "Smell his breath". The other replied in a disgusted voice "Bananas!"

I remember one fall Saturday morning in the mid 1980s, not long before Uncle Albert went to the nursing home. My stepsons Sam and Jeff and I went with my cousin, Gary Larson, to the Andrew Larson home place to light the oil burner that Albert used for wintertime heating in the small Larson home. That morning Albert told us the following story:

One night I was lying on the couch watching the pattern on the wall that the car lights made as they went by on the county road. Then I noticed that the pattern changed. There was a car coming down the south lane towards the buildings. I got up and stood by the side of the window and watched. A car pulled into the farmyard and two guys got out. One headed towards a tractor and the other headed towards the house. I hollered out in a gruff voice 'You guys better get out of here before this gun goes off'. Boy did they move!

My gentle Uncle Albert's insomnia and his ability to act tough in a scary situation may have saved his life. A few years later in August of 1988, burglars smothered and terribly beat Francis Leonard, an 87-year-old bachelor farmer who lived on the top of the hill south of the Larson home place. Francis Leonard remained in the hospital and died from his injuries four months later. The identification of the murderers' vehicle by Albert's nephews, Ron and Gary, helped to develop the case against the killers.

End of the *Albert Larson* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.

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Louis & Edna (Larson) Petersen Family

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- **Edna Marie Larson** (4 Jul 1902 – 22 Feb 1946) was the second of nine children born to my grandparents, Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like her siblings, Aunt Edna was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school.

After graduating from the 8th grade, Edna worked as a domestic on nearby farms in Hazel Dell Township.

In 1921 Edna, along with her sister, Lillian, was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township, about four miles north of the Andrew Larson farm. Early in 1920 Edna was working in the Delorma Parish household about two miles north of the Andrew Larson farm.

When Aunt Edna was 22, she married **Louis Petersen**, who had been raised on a farm in Neola Township about eight miles northeast of the Andrew Larson farm.

About Louis Petersen's family:

Louis William Petersen's parents, **Hans Andersen Petersen** and **Christine Marie Christoffersen**, were both born in Denmark and immigrated to the Midwest as young adults. They married in 1898 and settled on a farm in Neola Township about three miles west of the town of Neola. Hans and Christine Petersen were early members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Louis Petersen had an uncle, Lars C. Petersen, who lived near Hans and Christine Petersen before selling his farm to Otto Christoffersen and retiring to Underwood.

My Christiansen ancestors and Hans and Lars Petersen all came from Smerup village in Denmark, which is about 40 miles south of Copenhagen.

In 1933 Hans Petersen became ill with pernicious anemia and the Louis Petersen family moved to the Hans Petersen farm, where they shared the house with Hans and Christine.

Hans died at home in bed in 1937. After Hans died, Christine began spending part of the year, especially winters, with her daughter, Julia, in Des Moines. About a year before her death in 1956, Christine moved to Ames, Iowa, where her daughter, Louise, lived.

Louis Petersen's parents, Hans (30 Nov 1863 – 24 Feb 1937) and Christine (5 Mar 1875 – 12 Aug 1956), are interred in St. Paul's Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The six children of Hans and Christine Petersen are listed below.

- **Louis William Petersen** (23 May 1899 – 4 Mar 1988) was my uncle by his marriage to my Aunt Edna.

Louis and Edna Petersen had three children:

- ▲ **Alvin Louis Petersen** (12 Jan 1926 – 15 Jun 2003) married Marie Dorothy Ullerich (9 Jul 1931 – 5 Aug 2007).
- ▲ **Donald Eugene Petersen** (26 May 1927 – 16 Jan 2015) married Agnes Lorraine "Lorraine" Ware (26 Jul 1934 – 12 Aug 2013).
- ▲ **Phyllis Jean Petersen** married Floyd Arnold Rauch (2 Feb 1928 – 9 Jun 1994). Phyllis and Floyd subsequently divorced. Phyllis then married Alton F. Carey (9 Aug 1929 – 27 Aug 2002). After Alton's death, Phyllis married Marshall Layton Werth Jr. (26 Jun 1930 – 24 May 2014).

After Edna's death Louis married **Pearl Ethel Severn** (6 Mar 1909 – 14 Nov 2012). Louis and Pearl had one child, Louis W. Petersen Jr.

- **Louise Christine Petersen** (23 May 1899 – Mar 1980) married **Melvin Bennie Paulson** (18 Apr 1897 -?) at St. Paul's in 1921. Melvin and Louise Paulson lived in Ames, Iowa.

Melvin and Louise Paulson had six children:

- ▲ **Gertrude Lucille Paulson** (20 Feb 1922 – before 1998) married William Armstrong.
- ▲ **Ralph Lloyd Paulson** (1923 – 27 Nov 1943) served with the 2nd Marine Division and was killed during the invasion of Tarawa in the Pacific during World War II.
- ▲ **Roland Arthur Paulson** (25 Apr 1924 -)
- ▲ **Rodney Allen Paulson** (25 Apr 1924 – 29 Mar 1954) died in a B-36 bomber crash at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington.
- ▲ **Franklin James Paulson** (18 Sep 1925 – before 1930)
- ▲ **Leonard Irving Paulson** (3 Apr 1931 -)

The Paulson children grew up during the depression near the Skunk River valley in Ames. Their father was often absent and their mother worked long hours, leaving the children to help support the household.

Roland and Rodney Paulson were identical twins who had a close personal bond. During World War II Roland and Rodney managed to circumvent army regulations and serve on the same B-17 bomber crew in Italy. Roland Paulsen has published a memoir of his early life entitled *In the Valley of the Skunk* that focuses on his relationship with his brother, Rodney.

- **Martin Francis Petersen** (17 Jan 1901 – Dec 1973) married **Erna**. Martin and Erna Petersen lived in Wisconsin.

Martin and Erna Petersen had three children:

- ▲ Gladys Petersen
- ▲ Dorothy Petersen
- ▲ Howard Petersen

- **Henry Theodore Peterson** (29 Sep 1902 – 6 Nov 1977) married **Edna Matilda Nelson** (26 Mar 1902 – 29 Nov 1964) at St. Paul's in 1925. Edna was the daughter of C. P. T. Nelson and Jennie Nelson of the St. Paul's community.

Henry T. and Edna Peterson settled on the farm of her maternal grandparents, Lars and Carrie Nelson, in Hazel Dell Township. In the 1940s Henry T. Peterson added to their farm by purchasing from the Graham estate the land on which my great-uncle, Hans Peter Hansen, and before him my Hansen great-grandparents had lived. Around 1952 Henry and Edna sold their farm to John C. Larsen, whose descendants own it to this day.

Henry T. changed the spelling of the family surname from *Petersen* to *Peterson*.

Henry T. and Edna Peterson had five children:

- ▲ **Calvin Philip Peterson** (9 Mar 1926 – 2 Nov 1976) married my second cousin, Elvera Magnussen (18 May 1923 – 23 Aug 2008).
- ▲ **Orvan Bernard Peterson** married Ann Louise Wickstrom.
- ▲ **Orpha Beulah Peterson** (23 Mar 1927 – 24 May 2011) married Jack Welch (25 Aug 1925 – 9 Feb 2009).
- ▲ **Clyde Eugene Peterson** died at birth in 1929.
- ▲ **Cleo Gretchen Peterson** married Arthur Christoffersen (7 Jul 1926 – 27 Nov 1978) from the St. Paul's community.
- **Elsie Marie Petersen** (30 Apr 1904 – Aug 1972) married **Tom T. Blakesley** in Hollywood, California, in 1930. Tom and Elsie Blakesley divorced after a brief marriage.

Tom and Elsie Blakesley had one child:

- ▲ **Bonita Louise Blakesley** (6 May 1931 – 21 Jul 1998).

Later Elsie married **Joseph Coffman** (28 Jan 1907 – Apr 1980), who was from the North English, Iowa area. Joseph and Elsie Coffman lived in the Chicago area and in Wisconsin.

- **Julia Dortehea Petersen** (2 Mar 1909 – 4 Sep 2002) married **Kenneth Martin** (? – 1958).

Kenneth and Julia Martin lived in Des Moines and eventually divorced.

Kenneth and Julia Martin adopted a child, David, and they had two additional children:

- ▲ **David Martin**
- ▲ **Kenneth Martin Jr.**
- ▲ **Constance "Connie" Martin** married John W. Klockentager.

Twins ran in the Hans Petersen family. Louis and Louise Petersen were twins. Louise (Petersen) Paulson had identical twin sons, Roland and Rodney. Henry T.

Peterson had twin children, Orvan and Orpha. Louis Petersen's son, Donald, had twin grandchildren, Hallie and Malina.

For more on the Hans Petersen family, see the *Vilhelm Pedersen and Maren Olsen Family* sketch in my *St. Paul's Boomer-Neola Early Families* report.

Louis and Edna Petersen:

Louis Petersen and my aunt, Edna Larson, married in Pottawattamie County on December 31, 1924. Louis was 25 and Edna 22 when they married.

After marrying, Louis Petersen worked at the Ford assembly plant in Omaha for a number of years. In 1925 the Louis Petersen family was living at 1924 Avenue B in Council Bluffs. By the fall of 1928 they were living on an acreage on the Dutch Hollow road just east of Council Bluffs. Around 1932 they moved to the Florence, Nebraska vicinity.

As noted earlier, in 1933 the Louis Petersen family moved to his father's farm, where he took over the farming operation and the five Petersens shared the house with his parents.

My Aunt Edna was hospitalized with tuberculosis at Oakdale, Iowa, in the spring of 1939, perhaps in June. Her oldest child, Alvin, was still in the 8th grade. Edna's brother, Vernon, drove Louis and Edna to Oakdale, with Edna lying in the back seat. While Louis was gone, the children stayed at home doing the chores, and took their meals at the home of Martin Cornelius Jensen, a neighbor.

After Aunt Edna was hospitalized, Louis Petersen's widowed mother helped keep the household running for the next several years.

In 1943 Louis Petersen sold part of his livestock and moved his children to eastern Iowa to be closer to Edna. Louis and his two younger children, Donald and Phyllis, moved to a farm near Columbus Junction around March 1, 1943. Alvin had started boarding in Columbus Junction at the beginning of the semester. At the time Alvin was a high school senior, Donald a sophomore, and Phyllis a seventh grader.

The Columbus Junction farm Louis rented was about 500 acres in size, with about 400 acres in timber and pasture. It was on a creek about a half-mile from the Iowa River and was an intriguing place for Louis's children to explore.

Louis moved his registered Duroc hogs from his farm in Neola Township, and he also started a cow-calf operation on the Columbus Junction farm. However his livestock operation was not very successful, and in 1945, after two and a half years, Louis bought and moved to a farm four miles north and a half mile east of Keswick in northwestern Keokuk County.

Edna was in the Oakdale Sanitarium for seven years, and died at Oakdale at age 43.

Edna (Larson) Petersen is interred in the Sorden Cemetery east of Keswick in Keokuk County. Louis Petersen is interred in Ottawa, Kansas, near their daughter's home.

Two years after Edna (Larson) Petersen's death, Louis Petersen married **Pearl Severn** on April 4, 1948.

About Pearl Severn:

Pearl Ethel Severn (6 Mar 1909 – 14 Nov 2012) was born to John W. Severn (1887 – 1960) and Edna Carman (1889 – 1983), probably in Mills County, Iowa. Pearl's parents moved to Council Bluffs before 1920, were living in Garner Township in 1930, near Glenwood in 1946 and 1950, and back in Garner Township in 1955.

Pearl Severn was the oldest of seven children who were still living in 1955, namely Pearl, Clayton, John Jr., Ida Marie, Goldie, Lyman and Herbert. A sibling, Elmer, may have died earlier.

Five of the Severn children pursued callings as ministers or missionaries in the United Missionary Church, a denomination related to the Church of the Brethren.

Pearl Severn graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs in 1926 and became a teacher. Pearl was a parochial school teacher in Mitchell, South Dakota, in 1930, and was her future stepdaughter Phyllis's fifth and sixth grade teacher at the Neola #8 school in the early 1940s. In 1945 Pearl became the Adair County, Iowa, welfare director. Pearl was also an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren or the United Missionary Church, preaching in Omaha and in Sigourney, Iowa.

Louis and Pearl Petersen:

After Louis Petersen and Pearl Severn married, they remained on his farm in Keokuk County for around thirty years. In 1978 Louis and Pearl Petersen moved from their farm to Ottawa in northeastern Kansas to be near Phyllis.

After Louis died, Pearl (Severn) Petersen moved to Keosauqua, Iowa, to be near her son. Pearl died at the age of 103 in Fairfield, Iowa.

Louis and Pearl Petersen had one child:

- ▲ **Louis W. Petersen Jr.** (18 Mar 1950 -) was born in Oskaloosa, Iowa. Louis married Pat Swallow. Louis and Pat divorced, and Louis married Susie. Louis and Susie Petersen settled in the Keosauqua, Iowa area and had two children, Tabitha and Stephanie.

As of 2016, Louis and Edna's Petersen's two oldest children, Alvin and Donald, are deceased, and Phyllis lives in northeastern Kansas.

End of the public portion of *Louis and Edna (Larson) Petersen Family*.

The following five-page private portion, written for Louis and Edna's descendants, sketches the lives of Louis and Edna's children.

Private Portion - *Louis & Edna (Larson) Petersen Family*
End of the Private Portion - *Louis & Edna (Larson) Petersen Family*

End of the *Louis & Edna (Larson) Petersen Family* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.

Hilding & Lillian (Larson) Gidlund Family

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Reviewed by Sylvia (Gidlund) Snow Sep 2012.

- **Lillian Dorothy Larson** (14 Nov 1904 - 16 May 1990) was the third of nine children born to my grandparents, Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like her siblings, Aunt Lillian was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school.

After graduating from the 8th grade, Lillian worked as a hired girl for nearby families. At one time she worked for the Charles Hough family, who lived on the county road a mile south of the Andrew Larson farm.

In 1921 Lillian, along with her sister, Edna was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township, about four miles north of the Andrew Larson farm.

By October 1923 Lillian was working in Council Bluffs and living with the Pusey McGee family at 218 South Third Street. I find her working as a domestic and living with the McGees in the 1925 and 1927 Council Bluffs directories.

Sometime in 1927 or early 1928, Lillian and her friend, Gladys Braden, hitchhiked to Colorado. Gladys' family had moved to Berthoud, Colorado, north of Denver. However, Lillian and Gladys stopped in Brush in northeastern Colorado, perhaps because they were low on funds. They took jobs as the Ebenezer Sanitarium, which was a Lutheran institution.

While working at the Ebenezer Sanitarium, Lillian met **Hilding Gidlund**, an electrical engineer and a tuberculosis patient from Columbus, Ohio.

About Hilding Gidlund's family:

Hilding Ferdinand Gidlund's parents, **Johan Ferdinand "John" Gidlund** and **Hilda Johanna Molin** were born on the east coast of Sweden, in Vaesternorrland County about half way up the Gulf of Bothnia. However, before marrying in 1901 they moved several hundred miles further north to Norrbotten County on the extreme northern of the Gulf of Bothnia.

Hilding Gidlund, John and Hilda's first child, was born in Norrbotten County in Torefors, Nederkalix Parish.

The Gidlund family emigrated from Sweden in April 1903 when Hilding was a baby. Their route took them through Gothenburg in southern Sweden and then through Southampton, England.

The Gidlund family settled in Columbus, Ohio, along with relatives of Hilda (Molin) Gidlund.

John Gidlund worked as a pattern maker in the Pennsylvania Railroad shop in Columbus.

After John Gidlund died in 1944, his widow, Hilda, went to live with her four surviving children, spending six months in rotation with each of them. Eventually she settled in her daughter Sigrid's home.

Hilding Gidlund's parents, John Ferdinand "John" Gidlund (26 Apr 1878 – 26 Oct 1944) and Hilda Johanna Gidlund (9 Apr 1879 – 1 Apr 1974), are interred in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Columbus.

The five children of John and Hilda Gidlund are listed below.

- **Hilding Ferdinand Gidlund** (10 Jul 1902 – 10 Apr 1961) was my uncle by his marriage to my Aunt Lillian.

Hilding and Lillian Gidlund had two children:

- ▲ **Sylvia June Gidlund** married Charles A. "Chuck" Woodruff. Sylvia and Chuck later divorced. Sylvia then married and divorced David J. Snow (20 Dec 1919 – 1 Jul 2010). Sylvia then married William T. "Bill" Deshler (2 Jul 1932 – 22 May 2008).
- ▲ **Rosalie Sigrid Gidlund** (4 Jul 1938 – 26 Oct 2014) married Richard Nelson. Rosalie and Richard later divorced.

Hilding Gidlund studied electrical engineering at Ohio State University, while at one point playing professional football with the Columbus Tigers of the National Football League to help pay his college expenses.

Hilding worked at General Electric in Schenectady, New York, before being diagnosed with tuberculosis. He was confined to his parents' home in Columbus before being sent to the Ebenezer sanitarium.

- **Nanny Amalia Gidlund** (23 Feb 1904 – 22 May 1907) died at the age of three.
- **Gerda Kattarina Gidlund** (9 May 1905 – 21 Mar 1991) married **Wallace Terry Loyd** (18 Sep 1902 – 30 Aug 1954). After divorcing, Gerda lived with her parents for some time. Later Gerda married **Thomas Richard Thomas** (29 Jul 1895 – 31 Dec 1965).

Thomas and Gerda Thomas moved to Arizona where they both died.

Wallace and Gerda Loyd had one child:

- ▲ **Betty Jean Loyd** married Frank E. Croyl.
- **Sigrid Linnea Gidlund** (25 Feb 1915 – 22 Jun 2010) married **Edward Cowall** (31 Jan 1915 – Aug 1977) in Columbus, Ohio, on 14 Dec 1940.

Edward and Sigrid Cowall had one child:

- ▲ **David Eric Cowall**

Sigrid (Gidlund) Cowall died near her son in a nursing home in Salisbury, Maryland.

- **Eric Alexander Gidlund** (12 Dec 1924 – 14 Aug 1999) married **Fay Maxine "Maxine" Smith** (13 Mar 1924 -) in Bluefield, West Virginia, on 30 Apr 1949.

Eric and Maxine Gidlund had two children:

- ▲ **Debra L. Gidlund**
- ▲ **Eric A. Jr. "Ric" Gidlund**

Hilding and Lillian Gidlund Together:

Hilding Gidlund recovered from tuberculosis and he and Lillian moved to Denver sometime between the end of 1928 and August 1930. In the 1930 census, Hilding was working for the electrical company and boarding on Colorado Boulevard and Lillian was working as a domestic at 918 York Street. Hilding and Lillian lived in Denver the remainder of their lives.

Hilding Gidlund and my aunt, Lillian Larson, were married at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township on August 23, 1932. Hilding was 30 and Lillian 27 at the time of their marriage. Their attendants were my father and mother, Alvin Christiansen and Leona Larson. In fact, Hilding stayed with my Christiansen grandparents before the wedding.

Hilding had a distinguished career as a senior manager at Public Service Company of Colorado in Denver. Hilding died at age 58 of heart problems, leaving Lillian a widow for 29 years.

In the 1940 census the Hilding Gidlund family was enumerated at 1649 Glencoe in Denver. They then moved to South Humboldt Street just south of Washington Park in south Denver. In 1943 they moved across the street to their bungalow at 1335 South Humboldt, where Lillian subsequently lived for nearly 45 years.

Among my family, Hilding and Lillian were noted for their hospitality to visitors. For half a century, my Aunt Lillian hosted numerous Iowa relatives, several who stayed in their home for extended periods.

My gracious Aunt Lillian died at age 85, having spent her last several years in the Iliff Care Center in Denver.

Hilding and Lillian Gidlund are interred in the Fairmount Cemetery at East Alameda Avenue and South Quebec Street in Denver.

As of 2015, the one surviving child of Hilding and Lillian Gidlund, Sylvia, is living in the Denver area.

End of the public portion of the *Hilding & Lillian (Larson) Gidlund Family*.

The following four-page private portion, written for Hilding and Lillian's descendants, sketches the lives of Hilding and Lillian's children.

Private Portion - *Hilding & Lillian (Larson) Gidlund Family*

End of the Private Portion - *Hilding & Lillian (Larson) Gidlund Family*

End of the *Hilding & Lillian (Larson) Gidlund* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.

Bernard & Florence (Larson) Larsen Family

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Reviewed by Virginia Larsen Sep 2012.

- **Florence Edith Larson** (4 Dec 1906 – 24 Feb 1945) was the fourth of nine children born to my grandparents, Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like her siblings, Aunt Florence was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school through the 8th grade.

In 1923 Florence, along with her sister, Leona, was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township, about four miles north of the Andrew Larson farm.

Florence was the first of the children to have formal schooling beyond the eighth grade, working for her room and board with a family in Council Bluffs while she attended high school.

Florence graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1923 at the age of 16. I believe that after graduating, Florence remained in Council Bluffs until she was age 18 and could begin teaching in the rural country school system. In the January 1, 1925 Iowa census, Florence is enumerated with Spencer and Johanna Smith, a prominent elderly couple who lived at 220 South 3rd St., near Abraham Lincoln High School. The Smith's next-door neighbors were Pusey and Helen McGee, with whom both Aunt Lillian and Aunt Helen lived at one time.

For ten years, from the fall of 1925 to the spring of 1935, Florence taught at several one-room rural schools north of Council Bluffs in Hazel Dell and Boomer townships before marrying and moving to North Dakota late in 1935.

I haven't completely figured out Aunt Florence's teaching history. Here is my current knowledge:

- Hazel Dell #8, in south central Hazel Dell Township: three years, from fall 1925 to Spring 1928. Photos show 12 to 15 students.
- Hazel Dell #1, in northeastern Hazel Dell Township: at least five years, from fall 1928 to Spring 1933. Ginny's photo shows 11 students.
- Boomer #7, in southeastern Boomer Township: one or two years, ending in spring 1935. Ginny's photo shows 22 students.

My Aunt Florence was a spirited young woman. Not only was she the first of the nine Larson children to attend high school, but she also was the only one of the seven Larson sisters to own an automobile before marrying.

Most of us Larson cousins have seen photos of Florence and her automobile. My cousin, Kathryn, remembers riding in the rumble seat on an excursion from my grandparent Christiansen's farm in Boomer Township to Beebeetown. Aunt Ethel took a much longer ride in Florence's rumble seat, all the way from Hazel Dell Township to Colorado to see Aunt Lillian. Aunt Florence was driving and my mother, Leona, was riding shotgun.

When Aunt Florence taught at Boomer #7, one of her students was Junior Marion Rasmussen, my father's cousin. Junior told me that some people in the neighborhood were scandalized when Florence bought her car, thinking that such a possession was inappropriate for a single female schoolteacher.

While a schoolteacher, Florence was active in St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township. Aunt Florence taught vacation Bible School in Underwood for at least one year. Once when I was visiting at St. Paul's, two old ladies recalled riding on the running board while Florence took them to Bible School.

In the 1930 Hazel Dell Township census, enumerated on April 21, my aunt Florence Larson was boarding with another schoolteacher, Cornelia Hannifan, in the John F. Scott residence a mile and a half east of the Andrew Larson farm.

Of interest: The John F. Scott house in Hazel Dell Township, Section 13, was a modern four-square house built around 1922 and resembled somewhat the older house in Hardin Township that my aunt, Ethel Torneten, lived in for 75 years. The John F. Scott house had indoor plumbing with four bedrooms and a bath upstairs and a bedroom downstairs. (Aunt Ethel's house always lacked the upstairs bathroom.) Residents enumerated in the 1930 census were John and Marie Scott; John's son, Amos; Marie's daughter from her earlier marriage, Eileen Slocum; a hired man, Laurence Clayton; Cornelia Hannifan; and Florence Larson. I believe Florence was teaching at the Denmark School, Hazel Dell #1, 1 1/4 miles to the north. Cornelia was probably teaching at the Tucker School, Hazel Dell #6, 3/4 miles to the south. Incidentally six years later, when she was 18, Eileen Slocum died, perhaps under tragic circumstances.

John F. Scott bought his farm around 1910 and owned it until 1969, when he sold it to Larry and Marilyn (Handlen) Larsen, who still live on it as of 2012. Thus by coincidence the John F. Scott farmhouse, once the residence of my late cousin Larry Larsen's mother, has for over 40 years been the residence of another Larry Larsen.

As another coincidence, Marilyn (Handlen) Larsen's great-grandparents, Mads and Matilda Rasmussen, lived on the John F. Scott place from 1889 to 1910.

I don't know when Aunt Florence bought her car, or even what make it was. I have been told that after she and Uncle Bernard married in November 1935, Florence's car was sold to Everett Smith who lived near St. Paul's, and that when Everett and his wife, Bernice Parish, moved to California to work in defense industry around 1940 Florence's car disappeared with them into the western sunset.

While she was teaching in rural Pottawattamie County, Florence met **Bernard Larsen**, who was working in the area as a farmhand. Bernard was raised on a farm north of Kenmare in northern North Dakota.

About Bernard Larsen's family:

Carl Bernard "Bernard" Larsen was the son of **Lauritz Christian Larsen** and **Ane Margrethe Pedersen**, both of whom were Danish immigrants.

Bernard's father, Lauritz Christian Larsen was born in Magleby Sogn on the island of Møn in Denmark. As a child Lauritz Larsen lost one or both of his parents. He became a teenaged sailor and then immigrated to the Dakotas at the age of 18 in the fall of 1892, crossing on the Steamship *Island*.

Late in 1903 Laurits C. Larson (sic) acquired 160 acres from the United States government. His farm was in Ward County in northern North Dakota, in Denmark Township north of Kenmare. Lauritz Larsen remained on this farm until he and his wife retired to Kenmare, where they died.

Lauritz Larsen was married twice. His first wife, **Marie** died in 1904 after the birth of their second child.

Bernard Larsen was the son of Lauritz Larsen's second wife, **Ane Margrethe "Mary" Pedersen**, whom Lauritz Larsen married in Ward County in 1906. Ane Margrethe was born in Sværdborg Sogn, Præstø Amt, Denmark, and immigrated in the late winter of 1904.

There may be a tenuous family connection between the two wives of Lauritz Larsen. Marie's sister may have married Ane Margrethe's brother.

Bernard Larsen's father, Lauritz Larsen (13 Nov 1874 – 10 Nov 1953), Lauritz's first wife, Marie Larsen (28 Nov 1871 – 13 Jan 1904), and Lauritz's second wife, Ane Margrethe Larsen (6 Apr 1870 – 13 Nov 1958), are all interred in the Trinity Lutheran Cemetery north of Kenmare in Ward County, North Dakota.

The following two children were born to Lauritz Larsen and his first wife, Marie.

- **Lillian Margrethe Larsen** (9 Sep 1901 – 2 May 1959) moved to Boomer Township from Kenmare in 1927 with the family of Reverend Lund, the new pastor at St. Paul's.

In 1928 Lillian Larsen married **Willie Martin Christoffersen** (29 Nov 1903 – 27 Jan 1964) of the St. Paul's community. Willie and Lillian Christoffersen farmed the Bondo home place in Hazel Dell Township.

Willie and Lillian Christoffersen had three children:

- ▲ **Doris Elaine Christoffersen** married Kenneth Oliver Bertelsen (15 Nov 1924 – 23 Apr 1981). After Kenneth died, Doris married Herbert Leland Grote (1 Sep 1925 – 21 Oct 1999). Doris Christoffersen lived in Underwood, Iowa, near Council Bluffs.
- ▲ **Glen Robert Christoffersen** married Bonnie Lou McNabb (22 Jan 1937 – 27 Oct 1966). After Bonnie's death Glen married Margret Brinch Nielsen.
- ▲ **Paul Martin Christoffersen** married Leana Mae Darnold. Paul farmed the Bondo home place.

- **Marie Larsen** (13 Jan 1904 – 22 Sep 1986) married **Ernest Thorvald Madsen** (10 Feb 1907 – 20 Apr 1984). Ernest and Marie Madsen farmed north of Kenmare.

Ernest and Marie Madsen had two children, who were twins:

- ▲ **Carol Madsen**

- ▲ **Carlyle Madsen** (18 Dec 1937 – 19 Dec 1937) lived only ten hours.

The following four children were born to Lauritz Larsen and his second wife, Ane Margrethe Pedersen.

- **Abner E. Larsen** (17 Apr 1907 – 2 Jun 1915) died at the age of eight.
- **Carl Bernard "Bernard" Larsen** (26 Jun 1908 – 2 May 1972) was my uncle by his marriage to my Aunt Florence. Bernard worked as a farmhand until marrying.

Bernard and Florence Larsen had two children:

- ▲ **Virginia Claire "Ginny" Larsen**

- ▲ **Lawrence Andrew "Larry" Larsen** (5 May 1939 – 21 May 2010) was born "Laurence" but had the spelling of his name inadvertently changed when he joined the United States Navy.

After Florence's death, Bernard married Virginia Halvorsen. Bernard and Virginia had three children:

- ▲ **Daniel Lloyd Larsen**

- ▲ **John Rinde Larsen**

- ▲ **Richard Charles Larsen** (11 Nov 1954 – 1 Aug 1980) died at age 25 in an automobile accident.

- **Ruth Eleanor Larsen** (8 Jul 1909 – 13 Jan 2000) married **Alfred Nelson**. Alfred and Ruth Nelson farmed north of Kenmare.

Alfred and Ruth Nelson had no children. However, Ruth had a daughter, Florence, by a previous relationship. Florence grew up in the Lauritz Larsen household and was treated as a younger sister of Ruth.

- ▲ **Florence M. Larsen**

- **Ezra Wilhelm Larsen** (17 Jan 1913 – 18 Aug 1967) married **Clara**. Ezra and Clara Larsen farmed north of Kenmare.

Ezra and Clara Larsen had three children:

- ▲ **Phillip Larsen**

- ▲ **Susan Larsen**

- ▲ **Paul Larsen**

Bernard and Florence Larsen:

Bernard Larsen and my aunt, Florence Larson, married at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township on November 6, 1935. Bernard and Florence were 27 and 28 years old respectively when they married.

After their marriage Bernard and Florence returned to North Dakota, where they lived the remainder of their lives.

Bernard and Florence lived on a farm north of Kenmare for a few years and then moved into Kenmare, where by 1938 Bernard had established the Larsen Feed and Seed Co.

On Valentine's Day 1944, Florence (Larson) Larsen suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, and died in the Kenmare hospital twelve days later after a second stroke. My Aunt Florence was 38 years old, and left behind two children aged seven and five.

After Florence's early death, housekeepers helped care for her two children.

Five years after Florence's death, Bernard Larsen married **Virginia Halvorsen** in Kenmare.

About Virginia Halvorsen:

Virginia M. Halvorsen (18 Sep 1924 – 16 Feb 2015) was born near Kenmare in Carpio, North Dakota to Amund H. "A. H." Halvorsen (1869 – 1945) and his wife, Leonora Rinde (21 May 1889 – 10 Aug 1976). A. H. Halvorsen, an emigrant from Norway, owned a grocery in Carpio and he and his wife are interred in Saint Johns Cemetery in Carpio.

Virginia was the youngest of five known children, Rolf, Winifred, Vernon, Donald and Virginia, and was a schoolteacher in Kenmare before marrying.

Bernard and Virginia Larsen:

Bernard Larsen and Virginia Halvorsen married in Kenmare on June 8, 1949.

Bernard Larsen was instrumental in saving a historic windmill that had been built by a Danish immigrant north of Kenmare in 1902 and operated until 1918. This windmill was moved to the center of Kenmare and restored in 1959.

Bernard Larsen was elected to the North Dakota state legislature in 1949 and 1951. The family moved to Minot between terms, where Bernard established the Larsen Seed and Grain Co. Around 1953 Bernard became director of the North Dakota Commission on Alcoholism, and in June 1955 the family moved to Bismarck.

Bernard and Florence Larsen are interred in Lakeview Cemetery just west of Kenmare, North Dakota.

As of 2009 Virginia (Halvorsen) Larsen was living in an assisted living facility in Austin, Minnesota. She died in Austin in February 2015.

The three children of Bernard and Virginia Larsen are listed earlier.

As of 2015, Bernard and Florence's daughter, Ginny, is living in Austin, Minnesota. Their son, Larry, is deceased. Bernard and Virginia's son, Daniel, is living in Roanoke, Virginia and their son, John, in Moorpark, California.

End of the public portion of *Bernard & Florence (Larson) Larsen Family*.

The following five-page private portion, written for Bernard and Florence's descendants, sketches the lives of Bernard and Florence's children.

Private Portion - *Bernard & Florence (Larson) Larsen Family*

End of the Private Portion - *Bernard & Florence (Larson) Larsen Family*

**End of the *Bernard & Florence (Larson) Larsen* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.**

Alvin & Leona (Larson) Christiansen Family

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Reviewed by Carolyn Christiansen Sep 2012.

- **Leona Margaret Larson** (28 Jan 1909 – 15 Apr 1969), my mother, was the fifth of nine children, two boys and seven girls, born to Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like her siblings, my mother was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school through the 8th grade.

In 1921 Leona, along with her next-older sister, Florence, was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township, about four miles north of the Andrew Larson farm.

Leona was the second of the four Larson girls (Florence, Leona, Ethel and Helen) who graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs and then taught in one-room rural schools before marrying.

While attending high school, Leona stayed with Devere and Freole Watson.

About Devere Watson: Devere Watson, a long-term Council Bluffs attorney, was the state senator for Pottawattamie County from 1941 to 1957. He was also elected national president of the Eagles lodge in 1948. Aunt Helen also shared a room in the Watson home with Jeanne Watson, one of the six Watson children, after Aunt Helen was fired, at age 14, for her lack of furnace skills.

Back to Leona Larson: Like many of the bright and motivated female students in high school normal training programs in that era, Leona was only seventeen in 1926 when she graduated, with the minimum age for teachers being 18. Thus Leona remained in Council Bluffs for an additional year, hired by Devere Watson to keep the books for the local Eagles Lodge. During this time she also took courses at Boyles Business College. I believe Leona stayed with Clara Imler on Benton Street during her final year in Council Bluffs.

About Clara Imler: Clara Imler was a hard-bitten divorcee who worked as a seamstress out of her two-story shotgun house on Benton Street near the Broadway Methodist Church. My mother's most vivid memory of her year living with Clara stemmed from a night when an agitated Henry Imler entered the Imler house armed with a handgun. Fortunately Mr. Imler fired into the wall, rather than at my mother or Mrs. Imler. Clara Imler remained a family friend for many years thereafter, occasionally coming to Sunday dinner with a friend, Miss Cora Stoodt.

Back to Leona Larson: After turning 18, Leona taught in one-room schools in Hazel Dell and Lewis townships for six years until she married in 1933.

1927-29 Hazel Dell #4, the Oamek School, boarding with Howard and Dollie Smith.

1929-31 Hazel Dell #5, the Center School, living with her parents.

1931-33 central Lewis Township, the Pony Creek School, living with Roy and Inez Saunders.

As a young woman Leona enjoyed traveling. I know of four summer trips she took before marrying:

- 1928 Florence and Leona took a train or bus to Brush, Colorado to visit Lillian. Then they traveled to Estes Park and other scenic areas of the Colorado Front Range, at times hitch-hiking. Returning to Iowa, their bus broke down during a rainstorm on an unpaved road in southern Nebraska.
- 1930 Florence drove Leona and Ethel to Colorado to visit Lillian and to sightsee. Ethel had to ride in Florence's rumble seat.
- 1931 Florence, Leona and Ethel visited the Washington, DC area traveling with three young neighbor women, Erma Hough and sisters Leona and Ruth Hansen, and with Uncle Vic Petersen's sisters, Agnes and Helga.
- ? A trip to the Black Hills.

While she was still a teenager, Leona met **Alvin Christiansen** at a Luther League meeting at St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

About Alvin Christiansen's family:

Alvin McKinley Christiansen was the son of James P. "Jim" Christiansen and Rasmie "Minnie" Rasmussen. Alvin was born and raised on the Jim Christiansen farm in Boomer Township about six miles north of the Andrew Larson farm.

Jim Christiansen was born as Jens Christiansen on the island of Sjælland in Denmark, in Smerup Sogn near Fakse. Jim immigrated to Council Bluffs as a baby with his parents, Christian Christiansen and Ane Kirstine Jensen, and older half-brother, Christen Ole Christiansen.

Minnie Rasmussen was born in northern Jutland, north of Aalborg in Voer Sogn. Minnie came to the Council Bluffs area at the age of nine with her parents, Lars Christian Rasmussen and Karen Marie Andersen, and four sisters.

After marrying in 1893, Jim and Minnie Christiansen farmed in central Boomer Township about three miles northwest of St. Paul's for 48 years.

The two children of Jim and Minnie Christiansen are listed below.

- **Vesta Christiansen** (15 Jan 1899 – 14 May 1980) met **Tolford Gerhard Thompson** (30 Jan 1901 – 9 Apr 1976) when both were students at St. Oluf College in the early 1920s. After marrying, Tolford and Vesta lived in Eagle Grove, Iowa for the remainder of their lives. Tolford was a bank employee.

Tolford and Vesta Thompson had three children:

- ▲ **Kathryn Pauline Thompson** married Vernon Lowell Hansen (21 Jun 1925 – 20 Nov 2007).
- ▲ **Philip Gerhard Thompson** (28 Jan 1930 – 10 Nov 2014) married Fay Lorene Morgen (13 Dec 1935 – 19 Jun 2001).
- ▲ **Jeannette Elaine Thompson** married Rolf Scott "Scott" Haasarud.
- **Alvin McKinley Christiansen** (14 Oct 1901 – 18 Sep 1973), my father, was

born a month to the day after President William McKinley was assassinated. His first name of Alvin was evidently derived from Alvina, sometimes spelled Alvine, a common given name in his mother's family.

Alvin graduated from the 8th grade at the one-room Boomer #5 school. Alvin lived at home, farming with his father, until his marriage to my mother, Leona Larson, in 1933. Alvin did spend the fall term of 1918 at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, dropping out at Thanksgiving. Alvin was active in civic affairs throughout his life, taking the 1920 Boomer Township census only a few months after he turned 18.

Alvin and Leona Christiansen had three children:

- ▲ **Robert Alvin "Bob" Christiansen** (16 Dec 1935 -) authored this history. Robert married Susan Beth "Beth" Christensen of Burlington, Iowa in 1962. Bob and Beth divorced in 1978. Robert married Martha Lynn (Dennis) Mobley of Terre Haute, Indiana in 1981.
- ▲ **Carolyn Leona "Chris" Christiansen** lived in the Des Moines, Iowa area and never married.
- ▲ **Donald Alan "Don" Christiansen** and Mercedes Martin lived in Carlsbad, California.

My much-beloved grandfather, Jim Christiansen, died suddenly in his sleep at age 73, and Minnie remained in her farm home for six more years. In October 1947 Minnie moved to Eagle Grove in north central Iowa, where she lived the remainder of her life in a small house next to her daughter. Minnie died suddenly in her Eagle Grove home at age 77.

Alvin Christiansen's parents, James P. "Jim" Christiansen (28 Mar 1868 – 11 Nov 1941) and Rasmine "Minnie" Christiansen (28 Apr 1873 – 20 Oct 1950), are interred in St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Boomer Township.

To learn more about Alvin Christiansen's older relatives see the following:

- The *Christiansen* chapter of *Robert Christiansen's Family History – Christiansen, Rasmussen, Larsen & Hansen*.
- The *Christian Christiansen and Anna Jensen Family* sketch in my *St. Paul's Boomer-Neola Early Families* report.

You will find a supplementary list of my other relevant family history reports just before the private portion of this report.

- ➔ The remainder of the *Alvin & Leona (Larson) Christiansen Family* excerpt of *Robert Christiansen's Family History* is identical to that found in a corresponding location in the *Christiansen* chapter. It was last updated on 8 Jan '16 and last copied to the *Christiansen* chapter on 11 Sep 2012.

Alvin and Leona Christiansen:

My parents, Alvin Christiansen and Leona Larson, married at the Evangelical Church in Walnut, Iowa, on August 30, 1933. At the time Alvin was 31 and Leona 24. Leona's sister, Ethel, and Ethel's beau, Oscar Torneten, were their attendants.

After marrying and spending a one-night honeymoon at a tourist camp in Oakland, Alvin and Leona Christiansen lived with my grandparents Christiansen for three months. During this time Pete Juergens built a small two-bedroom house across the creek from the Jim Christiansen farmstead. Our parent's little house cost \$1200 in 1933. The Alvin Christiansen family lived in this house from Thanksgiving 1933 until February 1948. In 1949 our little house was moved to the grounds of St. John's Lutheran Church, across from the Boomer Township Hall, where it became the parsonage. There it stands today, albeit enlarged.

In 1941 my grandfather and father were jointly farming 240 acres, consisting of the following parcels:

- The 80-acre Jim Christiansen home place, purchased from Jim's parents. This 40-acre plot contained both my grandparent's farmstead and my parent's house.
- 40 acres to the southwest that Jim and his brother, Nels, had purchased in 1898 from the widow Elizabeth Driver, Jim later buying Nels' interest.
- 40 acres of the Jacob Jensen home place, which my father purchased in 1924.
- The remaining 80 acres of the Jacob Jensen home place, which my father purchased from the Federal Land Bank of Omaha in the early 1940s, and which contained a set of buildings, including an old two-story house and a nearly new barn.

In November 1941 my grandfather, Jim Christiansen, died suddenly, leaving my father with an incredibly heavy workload during World War II.

My father had always planned to leave the steep and erodible hills in the area where he farmed. In the fall of 1946 he and my mother began looking at farms in the Avoca area. However, my father had responsibilities to my grandmother, who was still living across the creek from our small home.

In 1947 my grandmother's health deteriorated and in October my father borrowed Uncle Vernon's new car and took my grandmother to Eagle Grove, Iowa, where Aunt Vesta lived.

In February 1948 the Alvin Christiansen family moved to a 120-acre farm two miles west and 3/4 miles north of Avoca, Iowa. We moved to a smaller farm having a larger house. My sister and I moved from a one-room rural school to the Avoca Public School, holding over 300 students in grades 1-12.

My father took advantage of having fewer acres to farm by taking on additional civic responsibilities. My father and mother developed a new circle of friends.

In 1963, fifteen years after moving to the Avoca area, my mother was diagnosed

with breast cancer, which subsequently metastasized into her bones. She had surgery and different experimental chemotherapy treatments, suffering terribly at times.

In 1969 my dear mother, Leona (Larson) Christiansen, died in a nursing home in Avoca. Years later I realized that I had never heard her speak ill of anyone.

My parents, Alvin and Leona Christiansen, are interred in Graceland Cemetery in Avoca. From their stone, one can see the Christiansen farmstead on the western horizon across the Nishnabotna River valley.

After Leona (Larson) Christiansen's death, Alvin Christiansen married **Ferne (Spencer) Bertelsen**. Ferne was the younger sister of Alvin's close friend, Russell Spencer.

About Ferne (Spencer) Bertelsen's family:

Lila Ferne "Ferne" Spencer was the daughter of Ralph Edward Spencer (1 Jan 1886 – 3 Feb 1958) and Johannah "Hannah" Madison (15 Feb 1887 – 6 May 1954). Ralph and Hannah Spencer farmed in Boomer Township a mile east of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and are interred in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

Ferne Spencer was the fourth of six children:

- Mildred Iona Spencer (22 Mar 1911 – 22 Sep 1996) married Fremodt Bondo Hansen (22 Apr 1909 – 30 May 1991).
- Russell Madison Spencer (10 Jul 1912 – 28 Oct 1997) married Martha Katherine Norgaard (12 Jun 1915 – 24 Oct 1968).
- Leona Celia Spencer (13 Nov 1913 – 8 May 1997) married Donald Miles Hansen (28 Aug 1911 – 28 Dec 1989).
- Lila Ferne Spencer (10 Jul 1916 – 14 Aug 1974) married John Vern "Vern" Bertelsen (6 Nov 1915 – 19 Mar 1965) and after Vern's death married Alvin Christiansen (14 Oct 1901 – 18 Sep 1973).
- Ralph Edward Spencer Jr. (24 May 1920 – 5 Jun 2001) married Donna Lou O'Neill (10 Sep 1925- 2 Jun 2003).
- Calvin Alexander Spencer (6 Sep 1925 – 28 Jul 1998) married Rogene Ann Kahl (15 Mar 1929 -).

Ferne Spencer taught at the rural one-room Neola #9 school until marrying Vern Bertelsen in 1940. Vern Bertelsen was the son of Alfred Bertelsen and Martha Wohlers of Boomer Township.

Vern and Ferne Bertelsen lived in Underwood, where Vern was a trucker. Vern Bertelsen died of cancer at age 49, leaving Ferne with two children in their early 20s:

- ▲ **Arlon Glen Bertelsen** married Evelyn Jane Hough, the daughter of Charles Maxwell "Max" Hough and Lavon Opal Warford of Hazel Dell Township. Arlon farmed south of Underwood. Arlon and Evelyn Bertelsen had two children and then divorced. Arlon subsequently married Carol Holmes, a Council Bluffs native.

- ▲ **Brenda Beth Bertelsen** married Howard Earl Reelfs, the son of Earl LaVern Reelfs and June Oliver. Brenda was the elementary school principal at Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs in the early 1970s. Howard and Brenda Reelfs had two children.

Ferne (Spencer) Bertelsen was a special education teacher at Iowa School for the Deaf.

Alvin and Ferne Christiansen:

Alvin Christiansen and Ferne (Spencer) Bertelsen married at the Little Brown Church in Nashua, Iowa, on June 1, 1970. Several months after marrying, Alvin had a farm sale and he and Ferne moved to the Greenbriar apartments on the eastern edge of Council Bluffs. Alvin began working in the county assessor's office at the courthouse in Council Bluffs.

In July 1973 both Alvin and Ferne were diagnosed with cancer.

Alvin Christiansen died in Omaha of lung cancer, which metastasized into his brain after a two-month illness. He survived my mother by three and a half years.

Ferne (Spencer) Bertelsen Christiansen died in 1974, less than a year after my father, from recurrent breast cancer, which had spread into her bones. Ferne is interred with her first husband, Vern Bertelsen, in the Ridgewood Cemetery in Council Bluffs.

My stepmother, Ferne, was a warm and much-beloved person. She was "Grandma Ferne" to my two little daughters. Her name was preserved in three of her nieces, who were given "Ferne" as their middle names.

The three children of Alvin and Leona Christiansen:

As of 2016, Alvin and Leona Christiansen's older son, Robert, was living in Scottsdale, Arizona. Their daughter, Carolyn, was living in Johnston, Iowa, and their son, Donald, lived in Carlsbad, California.

- ▲ **Robert Alvin "Bob" Christiansen** (16 Dec 1935 -) authored this history. I was born in Mercy Hospital in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and began school at the one-room Boomer #8 school in 1942. Because of my small size and the long distance from school, I was held back for one year before starting school.

My family moved from Boomer Township to the Avoca, Iowa area in 1948. I graduated from Avoca High School in 1954 and then served three years in the United States Army Signal Corps.

After leaving the military, I used the GI bill to attend Iowa State University (1957-59, the University of Colorado (various summers) and the University of Iowa (1959-65).

While studying at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, I met a fellow mathematics student, **Beth Christensen**.

About Beth Christensen's Family:

Susan Beth "Beth" Christensen was born in Burlington, Iowa, to Roger William Christensen (11 Aug 1907 – 16 Nov 1989) and Gladys Harriet Hove (29 Feb 1908 – 28 Apr 1996). Beth had one sibling, Marla Jo.

Roger Christensen was a native of Burlington, Iowa, while Gladys Hove was born and raised in Stanhope, Iowa. Both Roger and Gladys were schoolteachers when they were young.

Bob and Beth Christiansen:

After graduating from Burlington High School in 1959, Beth received a General Motors scholarship and attended the University of Iowa where she studied mathematics, graduating in three years. I met Beth in a mathematics class in the fall of 1961.

Beth and I married in the Danforth Chapel at the University of Iowa on June 8, 1962.

After marrying, Beth and I lived at 911 East Washington St. in Iowa City for three years. During these three years I completed my PhD in mathematics while Beth first completed her MS degree and then taught mathematics at Coe College in Cedar Rapids in 1964-1965.

In 1965 Beth and I moved to Victoria, British Columbia, where we both taught at the University of Victoria. In 1968 we returned to Iowa with our oldest daughter, Tanya, to teach at Grinnell College. While in Grinnell, a second daughter, Natasha, joined our family.

I did not receive tenure in the Grinnell College Mathematics Department and in 1976 I started working at the Grinnell College Computer Center.

Beth and I separated in 1976 when Beth moved to Marshalltown, Iowa, and became a computer programmer for Fisher Controls. We divorced in 1978 and Beth moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1979.

In Atlanta Beth met and married Chester Micek Jr. (20 Feb 1946 -). As of 2017 Beth and Chet Micek were still living in the Buckhead area of northern Atlanta.

In 1979 after Beth and I divorced, I took a job at the Indiana State University Computer Center and moved to Terre Haute, Indiana, where I met a neighbor, **Martha (Dennis) Mobley**.

About Martha Dennis and Her Family:

Martha Lynn (Dennis) Mobley was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, the only child of Albert Dennis (about 9 Aug 1907 – 15 May 1990) and Lucille Shower (10 Feb 1910 – 12 Jun 1999). Albert Dennis was born in the area of Bangor Maine and raised by several families of relatives. Lucille Shower, a Terre Haute native, studied art at the University of Chicago. Albert and Lucille worked in Chicago in the 1930s and in 1941 moved to Terre Haute, where they opened a retail shoe business.

Albert Dennis served in the United States Navy in the Southwest Pacific on

the *U.S.S. Oyster Bay* during World War II. After the war Albert and Lucille married.

Martha Dennis graduated from Wiley High School in 1965 and attended Indiana State University where she received a BA and an MA in English. Martha taught English in junior high schools before returning to Indiana State University to study psychology. Martha received a PhD in Counseling Psychology in 1985.

While in high school, Martha met **John Samuel “Sam” Mobley**.

About John Samuel “Sam” Mobley Sr.’s Family:

John Samuel Mobley Sr. was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, the second of three sons of Archie Scofield Mobley Sr. (15 Feb 1908 – 8 Apr 1993) and Pauline Arnold (21 Oct 1920 – 23 Jun 2010). Archie and Pauline Mobley ran a nursery on the north edge of Terre Haute.

Of interest: Sam Mobley Sr.’s grandfather, Samuel Wagoner Mobley, was born in Brazil where the family had emigrated from South Carolina after the Civil War. Later most of the family returned to South Carolina. Slavery was outlawed in Brazil in 1888.

Martha married John Samuel “Sam” Mobley on January 18, 1969 and had two children, Sam and Jeff. Martha and Sam divorced in 1978.

About Robert Christiansen and Martha (Dennis) Mobley:

Martha and I moved to the same street in the Lincolnshire neighborhood of Terre Haute in October 1979 but did not meet until Ground Hog Day of 1980.

Martha and I married at our home at 14 Rutledge Place on June 27, 1981.

After Martha completed her counseling psychology coursework at Indiana State University in 1983, we moved to Iowa City, Iowa. Martha worked in the University of Iowa Counseling Center until 1997. During this time, I taught in the Computer Science Department, worked in a multimedia lab in the Department of Ophthalmology, and worked as a software engineer for Breakthrough, Inc.

In 1997 we moved to Williamsburg, Virginia, when Martha became the Counseling Center director at the College of William and Mary. This move marked my retirement, except for part-time teaching in the Computer Science Department at William and Mary.

In 2001 we moved from Williamsburg to Tempe, Arizona, when Martha became director of Counseling and Consultation, and later an associate vice president, at Arizona State University.

Martha retired in 2013 and in 2015 we moved to northern Scottsdale to be nearer to our youngest grandchild.

- ▲ **Carolyn Leona “Chris” Christiansen** was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and graduated from Avoca High School in 1959.

Chris attended Drake University in Des Moines, graduating in 1963 with a double major in Social Studies and Political Science. Later she earned a master's degree in Urban Studies from Drake University.

After a year in graduate school at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, Chris joined the Lyndon Johnson administration's war on poverty. She worked as a counselor at the Youth Opportunity Center in Des Moines from 1964 to 1967.

In 1968 Chris began teaching in the Des Moines school system. She taught social studies at Irving, Franklin and Merrill Junior High Schools and at Roosevelt High School. For her last few years before retiring, she was the attendance administrator at Roosevelt High School. She retired in 1999.

For many years Chris lived in Des Moines and Windsor Heights with college friends and fellow teachers Peggy Dierzen and Nancy Willis.

In 1987 Peggy died of cancer and shortly thereafter Chris moved to Aspen Circle in Johnston, Iowa, where in 2017 she was still living, sharing her residence with Teri Breck, also a teacher.

- ▲ **Donald Alan "Don" Christiansen** was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa and graduated from Avoca High School in 1964.

After high school graduation, Don attended the University of Iowa in Iowa City, graduating as a business major in 1968.

After college, Don served six months of army reserve active duty at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and then began working for the Crum and Forrester insurance company, first in Freeport, Illinois, and then in Kansas City. Later Don worked for the Lynn insurance group in Kansas City.

Don left the Lynn group around 1974 and co-owned the Middle Earth store in Westport, Missouri, for several years before becoming self-employed.

While working for the Lynn Insurance Group in the early 1970s, Don first met a fellow-employee, **Mercedes Martin**.

About Mercedes Martin's Family:

Mercedes Ann Martin was born in Kansas City, Kansas, the middle of three children of Glenn Clifton Martin (23 Sep 1924 – 16 Oct 2014) and Bertha Jenelle "Jenelle" Burton (18 Nov 1928 – 11 Apr 2004).

Mercedes' parents divorced when Mercedes was a child. After Mercedes reached adulthood, her mother and stepfather, William Dean Daly Sr. (13 May 1928 – 19 May 2000), left the Kansas City area and moved to La Cygne, Kansas.

In 1972 Mercedes father, Glenn Clifton Martin, married Laurel Frances _____ (29 Oct 1927 – 15 or 16 Nov 2014) and retired to Cordes Lakes, Arizona in the Prescott area. Laurel had two children by an earlier marriage to Mr. Smith.

Mercedes had two siblings, Pamela Eve and Lesa Gaye, and a half-brother,

William Dean Daly Jr.

Over ten years after they first met, Don Christiansen and Mercedes Martin became reacquainted in Kansas City.

Don Christiansen and Mercedes Martin:

Don Christiansen moved from Kansas City to Carlsbad, California around 1985 and Mercedes Martin followed with their young son around 1987. Don was a consultant in innovative technology and a real estate agent in Carlsbad. Mercedes worked for the city of Del Mar. After studying information science and graduating from San Diego State University in 1994, Mercedes became the City Clerk and Computer Systems Administrator for Del Mar. Mercedes retired in 2014.

As of 2017 Don Christiansen and Mercedes Martin were living in Carlsbad, California.

I have written some reports for families associated with my wife, my children, and their spouses. You can view these reports through my website, bigpigeon.us.

End of the public portion of *Alvin & Leona (Larson) Christiansen Family*.

The following six-page private portion, written for Alvin and Leona's descendants, sketches the lives of Alvin and Leona's grandchildren.

Private Portion - *Alvin & Leona (Larson) Christiansen Family*

End of the Private Portion - *Alvin & Leona (Larson) Christiansen Family*

**End of the *Alvin & Leona (Larson) Christiansen Family* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.**

Oscar & Ethel (Larson) Torneten Family

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Reviewed by Jeanette (Torneten) Malchow Sep 2012.

- **Ethel Irene Larson** (16 Jun 1912 – 8 Jan 2015) was the sixth of nine children born to my grandparents, Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like her siblings, Aunt Ethel was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school through the 8th grade.

Unlike most of her other sisters, Ethel was not confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township.

After graduating from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs in 1930, Ethel taught at the rural one-room Hazel Dell #3 Oakdale School for four years before marrying.

For more about Ethel's years as a teacher, see my *Hazel Dell #3 School in 1930-1934* report.

When she was a sophomore in high school, Ethel met **Oscar Torneten** at a barn dance near the Torneten farm in Hardin Township.

About Oscar Torneten's family:

Oscar Torneten was the son of **William Herman Torneten** and **Elizabeth J. "Lizzie" Oltmanns** who farmed the original Torneten home place in Hardin Township east of Council Bluffs.

I believe that all the Tornetens living in the United States are descended from two brothers, Henry and Conrad Torneten, who emigrated from Schleswig-Holstein in northern Germany and settled in Council Bluffs.

In the 1870s the original Torneten family moved to a farm in Hardin Township, Section 18, where our dear Aunt Ethel lived until early in 2012.

Oscar Torneten's father, **William Herman Torneten**, was the youngest of six children, all boys, born to the brothers, Henry and Conrad Torneten, and their wife, Louisa (Steineke) Torneten.

In 1868 Henry Torneten Sr. died in a wagon accident at the age of 36 leaving four young sons, Henry Jr., Frederick, Conrad A. and Edward. His widow, Louisa, then married Henry's younger brother, Conrad.

Conrad and Louisa Torneten had two sons, Theodore and William. William Torneten was Aunt Ethel's future father-in-law.

Of the six Torneten brothers born to Henry and Conrad Torneten, Henry Jr. and Frederick moved to the vicinity of Idaho Falls, Idaho in the early 20th century, Frederick in February 1920 and Henry at an unknown date. Conrad never married. Edward, Theodore and William raised families on their farms in Hardin Township.

Oscar Torneten's mother, **Elizabeth J. "Lizzie" Oltmanns**, was the second of five children (Fred, Lizzie, Adelia Louise, John Adolph and Frieda) born to Adolph Oltmanns and Theodora Tiarks. Lizzie was born either in Garner Township or in Union Township in Harrison County. Adolph Oltmanns died in 1893, probably in Union Township, leaving Theodora with five children ages nine or younger.

Nearly six years after Adolph Oltmanns died, his widow, Theodora, married Johannes "John" Onnen. John and Theodora Onnen had five children. Four died at birth and one, Almuth, died at age two.

After raising her children in Harrison County, John and Theodora Onnen retired to Council Bluffs. Theodora lived to be 87 and was known in her old age as Oma Onnen.

In 1904 Oscar Torneten's parents, William Torneten and Lizzie Oltmanns, married. As was often the case in the United States with the youngest son, William Torneten remained on the Torneten home place in Hardin Township after marrying.

In November 1935, William Torneten's bachelor brother, Conrad, who had always lived at home, died. After Conrad's death, Uncle Oscar's parents retired to Council Bluffs and Oscar and Ethel moved to the Torneten home place.

Oscar Torneten's parents, William Torneten (9 Oct 1877 – 3 Dec 1959) and Elizabeth J. "Lizzie" Torneten (20 Oct 1884 – 11 May 1958), died in Council Bluffs and are interred in Cedar Lawn Cemetery in Council Bluffs.

The six children of William and Lizzie Torneten are listed below.

- **Fred C. "Freddie" Torneten** (10 May 1905 – 26 Aug 2001) married **Elsie A. Graalfs** (14 Mar 1903 – 9 May 1975) in 1927. Elsie was the daughter of Henry E. Graalfs and Anna W. Janssen of the Garner and Hardin Township area.

Fred and Elsie Torneten farmed a half-mile south of the Torneten home place in Hardin Township.

Fred and Elsie Torneten had three children. There was also a fourth child, an infant daughter who died at birth, when Elsie had scarlet fever.

- ▲ **Melvin Torneten** married Jean Manhart.
- ▲ **Wendell H. Torneten** married Bonnie L. Capek. Wendell and Bonnie divorced and Wendell later married Nancy V. (Glidden) Rhode, the former wife of my second cousin, Edwin Rhode.
- ▲ **Roger F. Torneten** married Colleen Gayle Darrington.
- **Oscar Adolph Torneten** (14 Dec 1906 – 19 Jul 1976) was my uncle by his marriage to my aunt, Ethel Larson. Oscar remained at home and farmed until he married, with the exception of a year or so he spent as a young man in the Idaho Falls area with his Idaho relatives.

Oscar and Ethel Torneten had three children:

- ▲ **Richard Oscar Torneten** married Kathryn Jean "Kathy" Hessel and

farmed the Torneten home place.

▲ **Marilyn Janice Torneten** married Richard Lee Formanek.

▲ **Jeanette Elaine Torneten** married Uwe Malchow.

- **Alma Torneten** (28 Mar 1909 – 17 Mar 1996) married **Hugo Behrens** (18 Jul 1902 – 20 Apr 1984) in 1930. Hugo was the son of John Behrens and Marie Koester who lived in the Treynor, Iowa area.

Hugo and Alma Behrens lived in Omaha and raised two foster children who were siblings:

▲ **Chester Mason**

▲ **Kathy Mason**

- **William Theodore "Willie" Torneten** (17 Jun 1913 – 27 Oct 1988) married **June Delia Meppen** (11 Jun 1917 – 28 Jun 2001) in 1940. June was the daughter of William Meppen and Louisa Young who lived in the Idaho Falls, Idaho area.

William and June Torneten lived in the Idaho Falls area.

William and June Torneten had one child:

▲ **Dixie Jean Torneten** married Darrell LeRoy Burke.

- **John J. Torneten** (26 Apr 1917 – 25 Jun 1972) married **Dorris M. Evans** (23 Nov 1923 – 30 Jul 1992) in 1943.

John Torneten was a noncommissioned officer in the Army Air Force during World War II. Afterwards, John and Dorris lived in Council Bluffs. John died from injuries received in a boating accident on the Missouri River near Council Bluffs.

John and Dorris Torneten had two children:

▲ **Patricia Karen Torneten**

▲ **Rodney John Torneten**

- **Adolph Torneten** (21 Jan 1920 – 14 May 2010) married **Therma Lucille Evans** (22 Jul 1921 – 27 Sep 1997) in 1941.

Adolph Torneten served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, from 1942 to 1945.

The Adolph Torneten family moved to the Denver area in the early 1950s, where Adolph worked in carpentry. Adolph and Therma retired to the Phoenix area, where Adolph lived in Sun Lakes until his death.

Adolph and Therma Torneten had two children:

▲ **Donna Torneten**

▲ **William Torneten**

John and Adolph Torneten married sisters, Dorris and Therma Evans, the daughters of Howard William and Florence Evans who lived in Council Bluffs.

There are a number of connections between the Torneten family and the Siebelt Meppen family, who emigrated from Germany in 1882:

- ♥ Two of Oscar's paternal uncles, the two oldest Torneten brothers, Henry and Frederick, married Siebelt Meppen's two oldest daughters, Eva Marie and Ida Auguste.
- ♥ Oscar's maternal aunt, Adelia Louise Oltmanns, married Siebelt Meppen's son, Ernest Siebelt Meppen.
- ♥ Oscar's maternal uncle, John Adolph Oltmanns, married Frederick Torneten's daughter and Siebelt Meppen's granddaughter, Margaret Louise Torneten.
- ♥ Oscar's cousin Hilda, the daughter of Theodore Torneten, married Siebelt Meppen's grandson, Herbert Meppen. While working in Idaho as a young man, Oscar dated LaVerne Meppen, Herbert's sister.
- ♥ Oscar's brother, William Torneten Jr., married Siebelt Meppen's granddaughter, June Meppen.

At one time, all six Torneten brothers were farming in Hardin Township. Between 1898 and World War I, most of the Meppen family, including all those listed immediately above, moved to the Snake River area near Idaho Falls in southeastern Idaho. Most of the Idaho Tornetens are interred in Rose Hill Cemetery in Idaho Falls.

Oscar and Ethel Torneten:

My aunt, Ethel Larson, married Oscar Torneten in the Evangelical Church in Walnut, Iowa, on August 22, 1934. Oscar was 27 and Ethel 22 at the time of their marriage. Their attendants were Oscar's younger brother, Willie, and Ethel's younger sister, Helen.

After marrying, Oscar and Ethel lived in a small house just south of McClelland that they rented from Henry Hillers. In 1936, before their first child, Richard, was born, they moved to the Torneten home place three miles southwest of McClelland.

The house on the Torneten home place was a square wood-frame structure about twenty years old with all the amenities of 1940. This house figured into a major event in Larson family history as described below.

Of interest: I believe that in 1940 Aunt Ethel and Uncle Oscar saved the life of my newborn cousin, Barbara Jane Larson. At the time Barbara's parents, my Uncle Vernon and Aunt Thelma, were newlyweds age 20 and 19 respectively. They were living in a rental home east of the Hazel Dell Township Hall. Their home had no modern conveniences – no water, electricity, phone, central heating.

Barbara was born prematurely at home on a subzero January night to very scared parents. Barbara weighed a mere 2.5 pounds at birth.

When Thelma went into labor, Uncle Vernon went to the home of neighbors, Andrew and Dorothy Ring, who had a telephone. By the time the doctor and Uncle Oscar and Aunt Ethel responded, Barbara had been born. Oscar and Ethel received cursory and discouraging instructions from the doctor such as "If she lives until morning ...". Oscar carried Thelma and Ethel carried Barbara to their car and off they drove to the Torneten farm home. For the next few months Thelma and Barbara lived with Oscar and Ethel while Oscar kept the furnace stoked and Ethel helped care for Barbara, initially feeding her with a medicine dropper.

Oscar and Ethel Torneten ran a dairy farm on the Torneten home place. Oscar was also heavily involved in agricultural-related community service in western Pottawattamie County.

Uncle Oscar and Aunt Ethel ran their farm with the assistance of their hired man, **Henry "Hank" Cohrs** (4 Jun 1878 – 10 Apr 1953). Hank Cohrs was born in Germany, the oldest of ten children of William Cohrs and Catharine Lena Gurke. The Cohrs family emigrated around 1882 when Hank was a small child and settled in the Bennington area north of Omaha, Nebraska. Hank never married and lived in the Torneten home for over 30 years. Near the end of his life, Hank had surgery for stomach cancer, returned to the Torneten home for a while, and then died in a hospital in Council Bluffs. Hank is interred in Cedar Lawn Cemetery in Council Bluffs.

Uncle Oscar was diagnosed with brain cancer in 1976. He had unsuccessful surgery and lingered for 23 days before dying in a hospital in Council Bluffs.

After Oscar's death at age 69, Aunt Ethel lived by herself in the big white farmhouse on the Torneten farm for a third of a century. She remained active, doing her own yard work and restoring antique furniture into her mid 90s. Until his death at age 96 in 2001, Ethel's companion was her neighbor and widowed brother-in-law, Freddie Torneten.

In her old age Aunt Ethel enjoyed telling visitors of her three adages for dealing with the misfortunes of life:

*** We don't know what's right around the corner.

*** We have to take what's handed to us.

*** What will be will be.

Aunt Ethel also enjoyed writing poetry. The following, written at Easter in 2003, summarizes her life both with Uncle Oscar and after she was widowed.

There was an old lady who lived on a farm,
She loved it there with all its charm.
She met this young man 73 years ago,
It was meant to be it goes to show.
Love at first sight, it just had to be,
For seven long years he courted me.
A handsome man I always said,
August 22, 1934 at Walnut, Iowa we wed.
The years went by, they were good,
We worked together as couples should.
Three kids were born, two girls and a boy,
We had our family, they brought us joy.
He milked those cows, chores to be done,
In between we had our fun.
The years went by, now what's ahead,
You don't know about tomorrow I've always said.
The time did come when he had to go,
The reason why? We'll never know.
Together we had forty-three good years,
Ah yes, there have been many tears.
I kept myself busy, plenty to do,
I refinished furniture, it looked like new.
Today is Easter, up to Richards for dinner,
Every meal Kathy made was always a winner.
There was a time they thought I should depart,
I couldn't do it, would have broken my heart.
So here I sit, I am feeling fine,
This is it, not another line.

As she approached 100 years of age, Aunt Ethel became weaker and less mobile. Finally, at the age of 99 in the winter of 2011-2012, she left the Torneten home

place and entered the Bethany Nursing Home in Council Bluffs. She died peacefully in the Bethany Home in January 2015.

Oscar and Ethel Torneten are interred in Cedar Lawn Cemetery in Council Bluffs.

As of 2015, Oscar and Ethel's son, Richard, and his wife, Kathy, lived near the Torneten home place in Hardin Township. Marilyn and Dick Formanek lived in Osage, Iowa, and Jeanette and her husband, Uwe, were leading a nomadic lifestyle during their early retirement.

End of the public portion of *Oscar & Ethel (Larson) Torneten Family*.

The following four-page private portion, written for Oscar and Ethel's descendants, sketches the lives of Oscar and Ethel's children.

Private Portion - *Oscar & Ethel (Larson) Torneten Family*

End of the Private Portion - *Oscar & Ethel (Larson) Torneten Family*

**End of the *Oscar & Ethel (Larson) Torneten Family* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.**

Victor & Helen (Larson) Petersen Family

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Reviewed by LaVonne (Petersen) Sidebottom and Carol Petersen Sep 2012.

- **Helen Ruth Larson** (19 Jul 1915 – 20 Aug 2013) was the seventh of nine children born to my grandparents, Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like her siblings, Aunt Helen was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school.

In 1931 Helen, along with her cousin Evelyn Larson, was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township, about four miles north of the Andrew Larson farm.

While attending Hazel Dell #5 school, Helen skipped two grades, graduating from the 8th grade in 1928 when she was only twelve. In 1928 she joined her older sister, Ethel, at Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs. Like her older sisters Florence, Leona and Ethel, Helen boarded with different families in Council Bluffs while attending high school.

The first family Helen boarded with "fired her" when Helen had trouble running the furnace, the furnace being a new household appliance to her. For a time she lived with her brother-in-law and sister, Louis and Edna Petersen on Dutch Hollow Road just northeast of Council Bluffs. Helen then lived with another family, and finally stayed with the Devere Watson family, where my mother had previously stayed during her years in Council Bluffs. I believe Helen shared a room with Jeanne Watson, Devere's oldest daughter, who was ten years old at the time.

During her sophomore year, Helen lived with the Taylors at 315 Benton St. Her junior year she lived with Dr. O'Meara and then with Ethel Berhardy. She lived with the Pusey McGee family at 115 5th Ave. her senior year (Aunt Lillian had worked there earlier). The McGee children were Roland and Donald.

After graduating from high school in 1932, Helen wasn't old enough to teach and worked for Gordon Ogden on Dey Ave. for \$4 a week plus room and board.

By the fall of 1934, Helen was nineteen and old enough to become a rural schoolteacher. Helen taught the one-room Hazel Dell #4 school, known as the Oamek School, for one year. Helen was paid \$45 a month and in turn paid \$12 a month to Clarence and Theda Oamek for room and board.

When Helen was 14, she met **Victor Petersen**, a young farmer from the area, at a picnic in Parish Grove north of the Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township. However, Helen was not allowed to begin dating Victor until she was older.

About Victor Petersen's family:

Victor Thybo Petersen was the son of **Peter Thybo Petersen** and **Karen Marie Jensen** who farmed in western Boomer Township about seven miles northwest of the Andrew Larson farm.

Victor Petersen's father, Peter T. Petersen was born in Barrit Sogn along the coast

east of Vejle in Denmark to Laurs Christian Pedersen and Kjersten Jensen. Peter immigrated as a teenager around 1891 and initially worked on the Northwestern Railroad in Missouri Valley, Iowa, before taking up farming with his brother, Hans Carl Petersen, in Pottawattamie County southeast of Missouri Valley.

Victor Petersen's mother, Karen Marie Jensen, was also born in Barrit Sogn, to Jens Marius "Marius" Jensen and Sophie Petersen. Sophie died when Karen was still a child, and Marius Jensen remarried. Karen immigrated as a young adult around 1899 with her younger sister, Sophia Marie.

Peter's parents and three siblings and Karen's father, stepmother, and five of her siblings all immigrated to the western Boomer Township area. I have provided some details about Victor Petersen's older relatives later.

After marrying in 1899, Peter T. and Karen Petersen settled on a farm in western Boomer Township where their children were all born.

Around 1925 Peter T. and Karen Petersen and their three youngest children, Helga, Elna and Victor, moved to Council Bluffs where they lived 2718 Avenue B. This allowed Helga and Victor to attend the nearby Thomas Jefferson High School. Uncle Vic once told me that he was quite pleased when they returned to the farm and he was able to quit high school.

After returning from Council Bluffs, Peter T. and Karen Petersen remained on their Boomer Township farm until 1945, when they sold their farm and moved to Crescent. In 1954 they moved to 7th Avenue on the west end of Council Bluffs, where they lived near their daughters, Helga and Agnes. In 1964 they were living at 3204 7th Avenue.

In addition to farming, Peter T. Petersen built a number of houses. In his late 60s, he assembled machinery for his son, Victor, who was in the implement business in Neola at the time.

Victor Petersen's parents, Peter T. Petersen (8 Apr 1875 – 2 May 1965) and Karen Marie Petersen (2 Dec 1876 – 8 May 1964), died in Council Bluffs and are interred in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The six children of Peter T. and Karen Petersen are listed below.

- **Sophus T. Petersen** (24 Oct 1900 – 25 Jun 1990) lived at home in Boomer Township and farmed as a young man. Around 1926 Sophus began farming northwest of Crescent, and in the 1950s he moved to a larger farm nearer to Crescent.

In 1956 Sophus married his housekeeper, **Juanita Hinton**, who was from Nebraska. Juanita had a small child, Ruth, whom Sophus adopted.

▲ **Ruth Petersen** married Steve Collins.

I believe Sophus and Juanita Petersen retired to Council Bluffs in the early 1970s.

After Sophus died, Juanita returned to western Nebraska.

- **Theresa K. Petersen** (18 Oct 1901 – 28 Jan 1992) married **Charles Lloyd “Lloyd” Jones** (11 Sep 1901 – 21 Jul 1997) in 1923. Lloyd Jones was the son of Louis Smith Jones and Mary E. O’Donnell of the Loveland, Iowa area.

During the first part of their marriage, Lloyd and Theresa lived in or near Council Bluffs, near Mondamin, Iowa, and then near Loveland, Iowa. After their children were married, Lloyd and Theresa lived in Council Bluffs.

Lloyd and Theresa Jones had four children:

- ▲ **Paul Lloyd Jones** (5 May 1924 – 20 Jul 2010) married Nora B. Skelton (10 Sep 1925 – 4 Sep 2006).
- ▲ **Betty Jeanne "Jeanne" Jones** (14 Apr 1926 – 30 Jan 2003) married Frank Strong.
- ▲ **Donna Jones** married William Donald Wilson (29 Aug 1922 – 15 Aug 2009).
- ▲ **Mary Lou Jones** married Richard Kirk.
- **Agnes M. Petersen** (21 Apr 1903 – 30 May 1992) was her brother Sophus’ housekeeper, worked in a defense industry in Council Bluffs during World War II, and for many years lived with her sister, Helga.
- **Elna A. Petersen** (21 Dec 1905 – 19 Jan 1989) married **Ernest George Olsen** (1 Sep 1906 – 5 Jul 1982) in 1928. Ernest Olsen, the son of Ole Christian Olsen and Caroline Elmira Peters, was raised in central Boomer Township.
Lloyd and Elna Olsen lived in Boomer Township, in the Minden area, in Council Bluffs, in northwestern Hazel Dell Township, and then in Council Bluffs again.
- Ernest and Elna Olsen had two children:**
 - ▲ **Roger E. Olsen** married Lavonne Kundel (18 Aug 1929 – 23 Dec 2010).
 - ▲ **Doris Olsen** married Stephen O. "Steve" Rule.
- **Helga Emily Petersen** (30 May 1908 – 23 Oct 1994) was a teacher for many years at the Hazel Dell #2, Boomer #9, Crescent and Neola schools and starting in the early 1950s was a bookkeeper in her brother Victor’s farm implement business. In 1964 Helga and her sister, Agnes, were living at 3202 Seventh Avenue in Council Bluffs.
- **Victor Thybo “Vic” Petersen** (26 Mar 1912 – 17 Aug 2006) was my uncle by his marriage to my Aunt Helen. Victor remained at his parents’ rural home and farmed until his marriage, with the exception of two years spent with his family in Council Bluffs when he was a young teenager.
Victor and Helen Petersen had two children:
 - ▲ **LaVonne Helen Petersen** married Gailen Dean "Gail" Sidebottom.

▲ **Carol Sue Petersen** married John Tharal Hartzog Jr.

The lives of the Peter T. Petersen family on their farm in western Boomer Township were marred by two major events:

- About the time Uncle Victor was born, perhaps in October 1912, the outlaw and sociopath Ernest Bush, later known as Fred Brown, burned the Petersen family's nearly new two-story farmhouse.

The arson was an act of retaliation for Peter T. Petersen's role in capturing Ernest Bush after Ernest Bush stole a team of horses from the Petersen farmstead in 1910. It's possible that an accomplice of Ernest Bush was the actual arsonist.

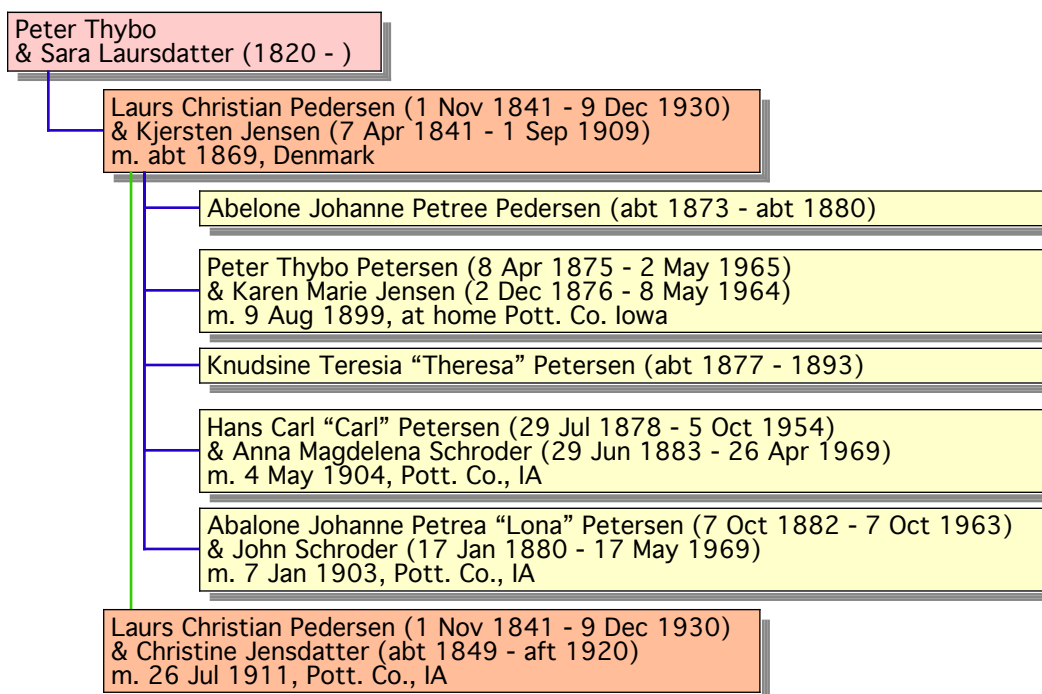
- In 1923 both Agnes and Helga Petersen were stricken with polio. Neither fully recovered, although both were eventually able to walk unassisted.

Victor Petersen's Older Relatives:

As mentioned earlier, Victor Petersen married my mother's sister, Helen Larson. Both of Victor's parents, Peter Thybo Petersen and Karen Marie Jensen, came from Barrit Sogn near the city of Vejle on the Jutland peninsula. In Denmark, Victor's father's family had used the spelling "Pedersen".

Peter Thybo Petersen's relatives:

As the following chart shows, Peter Thybo Petersen's father, Laurs Christian Pedersen, was married twice, but there were no children from his second marriage.



After Peter T. Petersen immigrated, his parents and his three surviving siblings

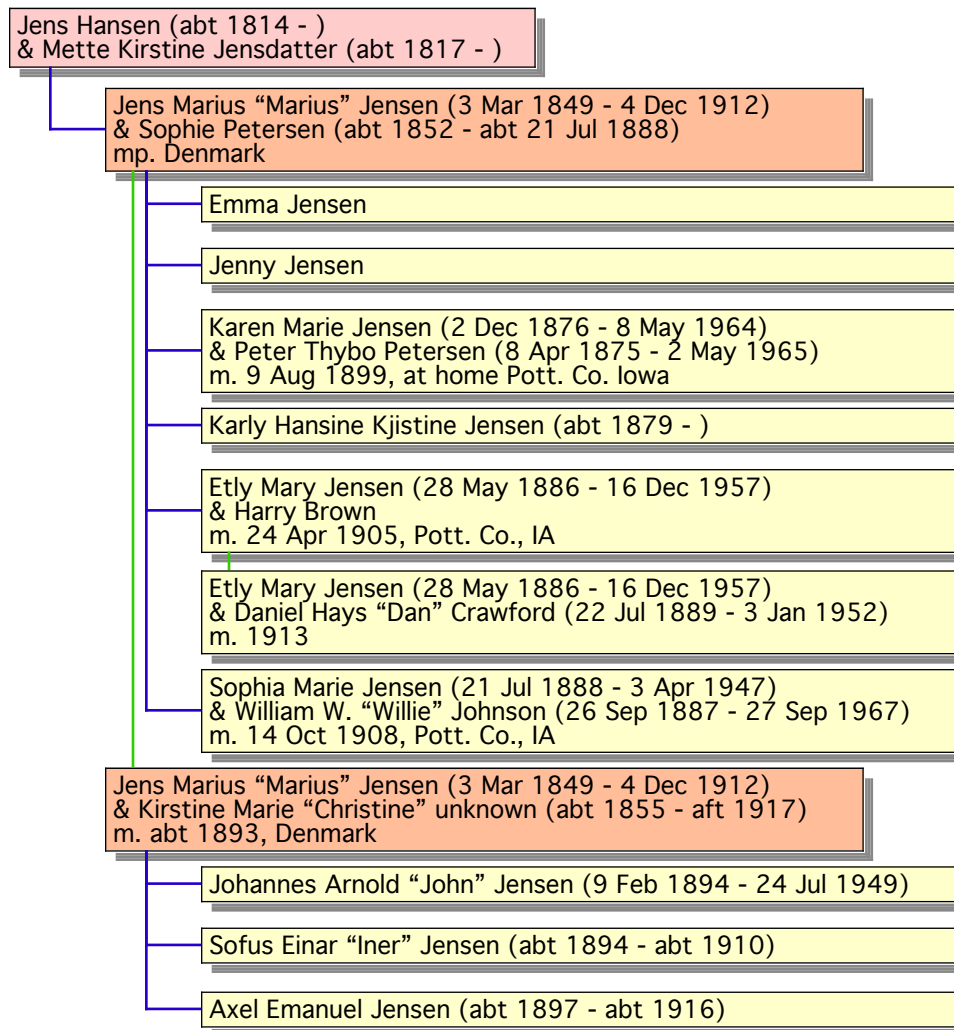
all immigrated to the Missouri Valley area from Vejle Amt.

Peter T.'s parents and his two surviving sisters, Theresa and Abalone, emigrated in the late spring of 1893 on the steamship *Thingvalla* from Klaring Sogn near Barrit. Peter's only brother, Hans Carl, immigrated around 1894.

Theresa Petersen soon died. Peter T.'s parents, brother and surviving sister, Abalone, all settled in Pottawattamie County southeast of Missouri Valley.

Karen Marie (Jensen) Petersen's Relatives:

As the following chart shows, Karen Marie (Jensen) Petersen's father was also married twice, with children from both marriages.



Karen Marie Jensen's father, stepmother, two sisters and three half-brothers also immigrated to the Missouri Valley area from Vejle Sogn. Three sisters, Emma, Jenny and Karly, remained in Denmark.

Karen's father, Marius Jensen, immigrated to Missouri Valley in May 1899 from the city of Vejle. Karen's younger sister, Sophia Marie, immigrated with Karen

around 1899. Karen's sister, Etly, immigrated to Missouri Valley in May 1900 from Nebsager Sogn near Barrit. Karen's stepmother and three stepbrothers immigrated from Barritt to Honey Creek, Iowa, in June 1903.

The Petersen – Schroder Connection:

My Uncle Victor Petersen's father's siblings, Hans Carl and Abalone Petersen, married Schroder siblings. Carl Petersen married Anna Magdalena Schroder and Lona Petersen married John Schroder, the children of John Schroder and Anna Nielsen of Boomer Township. Anna and John Schroder's younger brother, Henry, was the father of Thelma (Schroder) Larson Jensen, who was married to my mother's brother, Vernon Larson, for over 40 years.

Thus my Uncle Victor and my Aunt Thelma shared the nine first cousins listed below, all of whom remained in the northwestern Pottawattamie County area. See more about the Schroder relatives of Victor Petersen in my *Emigration from Dronninglund Parish to Boomer Township* document, from which the following lists are taken.

- **John Schroder Jr.** (17 Jan 1880 – 17 May 1969) married **Abalone Johanne Petrea "Lona" Petersen** (7 Oct 1882 – 7 Oct 1963) in Pottawattamie County on 7 Jan 1903. John and Lona Schroder lived on a farm a mile northeast of Honey Creek in Rockford Township, Section 25.

The four children of John and Lona (Petersen) Schroder are listed below. Two of the children, Carl and Vernie, married siblings, the children of Louis John Larsen and Mary C. Nelson of Rockford Township.

- **Carl William Schroder** (16 Oct 1903 – 4 May 1991) married **Pearl Larsen** (31 Dec 1903 – 4 Sep 1977) in Pottawattamie County on 18 Feb 1925.
- **Viola Rose Schroder** (12 May 1905 – 6 Jan 2003) married **James Edward Kermeen** (8 Nov 1904 – 18 Oct 1984) in Pottawattamie County on 3 Mar 1926.
- **Vernie Marie Schroder** (10 Jan 1908 – 14 Dec 1997) married **Frank Larsen** (4 Mar 1905 – 18 Dec 1954) in Pottawattamie County on 22 Feb 1928.
After Frank Larsen's death, Vernie married **Clarence Ryan** (27 Aug 1907- 7 Sep 1983) in Denver, Colorado, on 8 Dec 1968. Clarence Ryan was the widower of my mother's first cousin, Florence (Johnson) Ryan.
- **Irene Christiana Schroder** (3 Mar 1912 – 11 Jan 1999) married **Ralph Henry Axtell** (26 Oct 1909 – 12 Oct 1986) in Pottawattamie County on 25 Feb 1931.

- **Anna Magdalena Schroder** (29 Jun 1883 – 26 Apr 1969) married **Hans Carl "Carl" Petersen** (29 Jul 1878 – 5 Oct 1954) in Pottawattamie County on 4 May 1904.

Carl and Anna Petersen lived on a farm northeast of Honey Creek in Rockford Township, Section 24.

The five children of Carl and Anna (Schroder) Petersen are listed below.

- **Freda Rose Petersen** (13 Apr 1905) married **William Magnus Price** (2 Nov 1901 – 24 Mar 1984) in Pottawattamie County on 24 Feb 1926.

- **Henry Ernest Petersen** (30 Oct 1908 – 4 Apr 1988) married **Irene Iva Peters** (9 Jun 1909 – 14 Sep 1972) in Pottawattamie County on 26 Feb 1930.
- **Helen MaryEllen Petersen** (19 Sep 1910 – 9 Oct 1985) married **Franklin Rayburn** (17 Mar 1912 – 4 Mar 1963) in Pottawattamie County on 3 Jun 1931.
- **Fred Carl Petersen** (14 May 1913 – 24 Dec 1970) married **Mary Jane Hough** (14 Jun 1920 – 25 Jul 1986) in Pottawattamie County on 4 Aug 1938.
- **Elmer Leroy Petersen** (5 Sep 1919 -) married **Lorene Peters** (12 Mar 1922 -) on 16 Jan 1943.

Victor and Helen Petersen:

Victor Petersen and my aunt, Helen Larson, married at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township on August 28, 1935, with Rev. Cornelius Hansen officiating. Victor was 23 and Helen 20 when they married. My Uncle Oscar Torneten and his wife, my Aunt Ethel, were attendants.

After Victor and Helen married, they lived from August 1935 to February 1936 with Victor's brother, Sophus, on Sophus' first farm northwest of Crescent. Victor and Helen lived in an improvised bedroom on the first floor of a new house that Victor's father had built.

On March 1, 1936, Vic and Helen rented the old Grote farm in Hardin Township from Bill Hillers. The farmhouse was just across the road from the Torneten home place where Uncle Oscar and Aunt Ethel were living. Their next move several years later was to a tenant house on Shugart property in Garner Township on old highway 6 east of Council Bluffs.

Victor Petersen was one of my relatives who demonstrated an entrepreneurial aptitude. Around 1941 Uncle Vic bought his first farm, in northeastern Boomer Township. Early in 1944 Vic bought the W. A. Ward farm, whose farmstead was across the road and down in a valley just to the east of his first Boomer farm. (W.A. Ward had been killed in a tractor accident back in 1931 and ownership of the Ward farm had passed to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.)

Aunt Helen didn't have long to enjoy the large farmhouse on the Ward farm. In November 1944 the Victor Petersen family moved to Neola, as Vic had bought the John Deere dealership in Neola from Alvin Barrier. (Vic and some associates eventually acquired the John Deere dealership in Council Bluffs also.) The Victor Petersen family lived for a year on the same block as the dealership, and then moved to a larger house on a small acreage on the north edge of Neola.

In 1954 the Victor Petersen family moved to the west end of Council Bluffs.

In 1956 Vic returned to farming, this time on a farm he bought from the Carbuhn family east and south of Walnut. Vic specialized in raising Charolais cattle on his Walnut farm. He called his cattle operation "White Cloud Charolais".

Due to heart problems, Vic spent many years in semiretirement. In 1970 Vic and Helen moved to Lake Panorama in Guthrie County and their daughter and son-in-law, LaVonne and Gail Sidebottom, took over their farm. Also around 1970 Vic and Helen began spending their winters in Mesa, Arizona.

In 1982 Vic and Helen moved from Lake Panorama and became year-round residents of Mesa, Arizona.

While in Arizona, Vic pursued real estate interests. He is thought to have owned the first commercial building constructed in the city of Fountain Hills northeast of Phoenix.

On February 28, 1993 Vic had a heart attack, from which he apparently recovered. However, after returning from the hospital Vic developed temporal arteritis, and then complications from the prednisone prescribed for his arteritis.

Consequently in 1994 Vic and Helen Petersen returned from Arizona and moved to the Bethany Heights retirement community in Council Bluffs.

In August 2006 my Uncle Vic died suddenly at the age of 94 after surgery in a Council Bluffs hospital. He and Aunt Helen had been married for over 70 years.

In April 2009 Aunt Helen moved from their Bethany Heights apartment where she and Vic had lived since 1994 to a room at the nearby Bethany nursing home. During her four years and four months in Bethany Home, Aunt Helen gradually weakened. Her eyesight and hearing deteriorated further, and near the end she began suffering from dementia. My good and kind Aunt Helen died in Bethany home at 6 a.m. on August 20, 2013.

Victor and Helen Petersen are interred in St. Paul's Lutheran Church cemetery in Boomer Township.

As of 2013, Victor and Helen Petersen's daughter, LaVonne, lived in Avoca, Iowa. Their daughter, Carol, was living in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Both Aunt Helen and Uncle Victor had a deep spiritual component. Uncle Victor has written eloquently about his experiences associated with joining St. Paul's Lutheran Church in rural Neola back when he and Helen lived in Boomer Township around 1942.

Aunt Helen was also an eloquent writer, as the following poem attests. (The poem's setting is the edge of Mogollon Rim between Heber-Overgaard and Payson, Arizona, a route I have traveled many times.)

Forest Road

Dear God,
I feel so very small
When I behold
Thy majesty in all
The lovely mountains
And the Arizona skies.
Then I forget
The wherefores and the whys
Of problems that
Befall this common clay
And humbly thank Thee

For this day.

By Helen Petersen
October 30, 1972
(on return to Mesa)

End of the public portion of *Victor & Helen (Larson) Petersen Family*.

**The following three-page private portion, written for Victor and Helen's descendants,
sketches the lives of Victor and Helen's children.**

Private Portion - *Victor & Helen (Larson) Petersen Family*

End of the Private Portion - *Victor & Helen (Larson) Petersen Family*

**End of the *Victor & Helen (Larson) Petersen Family* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.**

Vernon & Thelma (Schroder) Larson Family

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- **Vernon Edwin Larson** (18 Oct 1919 – 13 Jun 2003) was the eighth child of my grandparents, Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like his siblings, Uncle Vernon was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school, graduating from the 8th grade.

In 1935 Vernon was confirmed at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township, about four miles north of the Andrew Larson farm.

Unlike his sisters Florence, Leona, Ethel and Helen, Vernon did not attend Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs. Rather, he attended the closer and smaller Underwood High School. After graduating from Underwood High School in 1937, Vernon began farming in Hazel Dell Township.

When Vernon Larson was 19, he married **Thelma Schroder** who lived in the Loveland, Iowa area.

About Thelma Schroder's family:

Thelma Mae Schroder was the third of nine children born to **Henry August Schroder** and **Jessie Mae Shadden**, who were both natives of Pottawattamie County.

Thelma Schroder's father, **Henry Schroder**, was the fifth of seven children born to John Schroder and Anna Matilda Nielsen who farmed in southwestern Boomer Township. Henry Schroder took up farming and remained at home until he married.

For more about the John and Anna Schroder family, see "Early History of the John and Anna (Nielsen) Schroder Family" which immediately follows this section.

Thelma Schroder's mother, **Jessie Mae Shadden**, was the first of seven children born to Arthur D. Shadden and Isophene B. Price who lived in various locations in rural Pottawattamie County near Council Bluffs before moving to Council Bluffs and then to Omaha.

Henry Schroder and Jessie Shadden married in 1916 in Logan, Harrison County. The Henry Schroder family was living in Hazel Dell Township in 1918, in the Wessington, South Dakota area in 1920, in Boomer Township in 1925, in Lewis Township in 1930 and in Rockford Township in 1940. Before 1945 they moved to a small farm in Rockford Township a mile north of Loveland where they were living when Henry died in 1954.

Thelma (Schroder) Larson's parents, Henry Schroder (11 Sep 1892 – 16 Oct 1954) and his wife, Jessie Schroder (7 Sep 1897 – 3 Jul 1958), are interred in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The nine children of Henry and Jessie Schroder are listed below.

- **August Arthur Schroder** (16 Mar 1917 – 1 Jul 1952) served in Europe with the

Army Air Force during World War II.

While in England, August married **Doris Golland** (21 Jun 1925 – 7 Nov 2003), whom he brought back to the United States as a war bride. Later Doris's family emigrated from England to the Missouri Valley, Iowa area.

August Schroder died at age 35 in a commercial fishing accident in Alaska. Later Doris married Harry Berry from Missouri Valley, Iowa.

August and Doris Schroder had two children:

▲ **Gayle Ann Schroder.**

▲ **Galen Bradford Schroder.**

- **Freddie Ernest Schroder** (26 Dec 1918 – 1 May 1993) married **Arda May Walter** (23 May 1923 -), the daughter of William S. Walter and Amanda Krieger who farmed in Rockford Township.

Around 1957 Freddie and Arda Schroder bought the old William Price Jr. place in Boomer Township, which Arda still owned as of 2009.

Freddie and Arda Schroder had three children:

▲ **Dennis Eugene Schroder** married Jean Kathryn Tews and farmed in Boomer Township.

▲ **Terry Lee Schroder** (12 Sep 1946 – 9 Aug 1964).

▲ **Becky Jean Schroder** married Dennis Olson.

- **Thelma Mae Schroder** (10 Dec 1920 – 20 Jan 2002) was my aunt by her marriage to my Uncle Vernon.

Vernon and Thelma Larson had four children. They also took in and later adopted a neighborhood teenager, Donald Thompson.

▲ **Barbara Jane Larson** married James Edward Hoyt.

▲ **Ronald Vernon "Ron" Larson** (15 Jul 1943 – 23 May 2012) married Carolyn Kephart.

▲ **Donald William Thompson** married Helen Maxine Dideriksen. Donald and Helen later divorced.

- **Maxine June Schroder** (9 May 1923 – 12 Aug 2011) married **William Chester "Bill" Freeman** (27 Mar 1921 – 27 Apr 2010) and lived in Valentine in Cherry County, Nebraska.

William Freeman held a variety of occupations and retired from the United States Postal Service. He also served for a time as the sheriff of Cherry County, Nebraska, and the police chief of Valentine, Nebraska.

William and Maxine Freeman had two children:

▲ **Henry William Freeman** married Elaine Ida Kuhnel.

▲ **Janice Maxine "Jan" Freeman.**

- **Everett Dallas Schroder** (10 Feb 1926 – 16 May 1993) married **Beverly Jean Kady** (10 Oct 1928 -) in 1948. Everett was a World War II veteran, having enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944 at age 18.

Everett Schroder was blinded in a hunting accident in 1950. Everett and Beverly divorced in 1954, and in 1956 Everett married **Patricia Barger** (13 Mar 1934 -) at Pierre, South Dakota.

Everett Schroder and his second wife ran the Dew Drop Inn in Loveland, Iowa, for forty years.

Everett and Beverly (Kady) Schroder had one child:

▲ **Bruce Edwin Schroder.**

Everett and Patricia (Barger) Schroder had three children:

▲ **Everett Dallas Schroder Jr.**

▲ **Kim Schroder.**

▲ **Keith James Schroder.**

- **Vern Henry Schroder** (22 Nov 1927 – 9 Nov 1951) was killed in a bridge construction accident southeast of Minden, Iowa, at age 23. He was unmarried and left no survivors.
- **Rudolph Richard Schroder** (23 Apr 1934 – 11 Dec 2007) served at Luke Air Force Base near Phoenix, Arizona, as a young man.

In 1954 while stationed at Luke Air Force Base, Richard married **Rosella Hager** from Fargo, North Dakota. Richard and Rosella Schroder lived in the Phoenix, Arizona area.

Richard and Rosella Schroder had two known children:

▲ **Drew Allen Schroder.**

▲ **Troy Richard Schroder.**

- **Elmer Chester Schroder** (3 Mar 1932 – 2 Nov 2013) married **Marilyn K. Madsen** (19 Aug 1936 – 4 Jan 2003). Elmer and Marilyn Schroder lived in the Minden, Iowa area.

Elmer and Marilyn Schroder had four children:

▲ **Georgia Mae Schroder** (27 Nov 1953 – 27 Nov 1953).

▲ **Kathy Joan Schroder.**

▲ **Jean Karen Schroder.**

▲ **Todd Michael Schroder** (9 Feb 1963 – 9 Sep 2007).

- **Betty Lou Schroder** (2 Nov 1940 -) married **Melvern C. Wohlers** in 1959. Melvern was the son of Edwin F. C. Wohlers and Lucille Hammitt who ran

the bar in Beebeetown, Iowa, for a number of years.

Betty and Melvern Wohlers subsequently divorced and Betty married **Terry Carmichael**.

Later Betty married **Richard Danker** (18 Jan 1937 -) from Missouri Valley. Richard was the son of Orville G. and Emma Danker.

Richard and Betty Danker moved to the Omaha area after being flooded out of their home west of Missouri Valley, Iowa, during the massive 2011 Missouri River flood.

Melvorn and Betty Wohlers had three children:

- ▲ **Scott Edward Wohlers.**
- ▲ **Rita Sue Wohlers.**
- ▲ **Mark Carl Wohlers.**

Early History of the John and Anna (Nielsen) Schroder Family:

About John Schroder:

John Schroder immigrated from Schleswig-Holstein around 1870. According to Danish Brotherhood records, John was born in the Rendsburg area. Rendsburg is in northern Germany about 20 miles west of the city of Kiel.

I don't know who John Schroder's parents were. A John Schroder family history I have seen says that John did not have relatives in the area. However, for reasons I'll explain at the end of this section, I currently have an open mind on this matter.

Before marrying Anna Nielsen, John Schroder had a relationship with Margaret Peters, the eldest daughter of William and Margaret (Armstrong) Peters of central Boomer Township. John and Margaret had twin daughters, Annie and Elizabeth, who were born and died in February 1877 and are interred in the Grange Cemetery.

About Anna Nielsen:

Anna Matilda Nielsen was born in Dronninglund Sogn north of Aalborg, Denmark. Anna's parents were Lars Nielsen, a native of Albæk Sogn, and Maren Christensen, a native of Dronninglund. Anna was the oldest of ten known children.

Anna Nielsen immigrated to Council Bluffs in 1872 at age 9 or 10 with her maternal grandparents, Christen Skaksen and Ane Margrethe Christensdatter. Also in the party were an aunt and uncle and two cousins, who then disappear from my records.

After immigrating, Anna Schroder and her grandparents settled on a farm in southwestern Boomer Township in 1872. Christian Bondo, the previous owner of this farm, sold the Skaksens this farm when he moved to northeastern Hazel Dell Township in 1872.

The Skaksen party, with whom Anna Nielsen immigrated in 1872, was from Dronninglund, in northern Denmark north of Aalborg. Other Dronninglund immigrants who came to southwestern Boomer Township included the following:

- Carrie Jensen, later the wife of Christian Bondo mentioned above.
- The Acton family, whom Carrie immigrated with in 1967, and whose farm later became the Julius and Dale Schroder farm.
- Mace Christiansen who married the widow of John Sanderson of Boomer Township and whose farm later became the Otto and Emil Lehmkuhl farm.
- The Jens Christensen family, who settled in Section 20 and whose farm later became the Ronald Vorthmann farm.
- Both wives of Peter T. Christiansen of Boomer Township, Section 9 were also from Dronninglund, the first being a cousin of Anna Nielsen's mother and the second being the sister of Mace Christiansen.

For more about the emigration from Dronninglund to Boomer Township, see my *Emigration from Dronninglund Parish to Boomer Township* document.

About John and Anna Schroder:

John Schroder married Anna Matilda Nielsen Weidner, age 16, in 1878. (I don't know where the name "Weidner" came from.)

In the 1880 census, John and Anna Schroder were living with her Skaksen grandparents and in the 1885 census they were living near her grandparents. Her grandparents then disappear from my records.

By the time the 1885 Pottawattamie County platbook was produced, ownership of the Skaksen farm had been transferred to John Schroder.

The seven children of John and Anna Schroder, of whom all lived into adulthood, married, and had children, are listed below. All of their spouses were from the Boomer - Hazel Dell Township area. All seven children stayed in the area except for Rose Marie.

The two oldest Schroder children married Petersen siblings, the aunt and uncle of my late uncle, Victor T. Petersen. For a list of their children, see the **Helen (Larson) Petersen Family Sketch** earlier in this document.

- John Schroder Jr. married Abalone Johanne Petrea "Lona" Petersen.
- Anna Magdalena Schroder married Hans Carl "Carl" Petersen.
- William Ernest Schroder married Margaret Amelia Hansen.
- Rose Marie Schroder married John Thomas Page.
- As noted earlier, Henry August Schroder married Jessie May Shadden.

The two youngest Schroder children married cousins, Ethel Price and Grace Christiansen, grandchildren of Peter T. Christiansen who was mentioned earlier.

- Julius Peter Schroder married Ethel Irene Price.

■ Charles Chester Schroder married Grace Margaret Christiansen.

In 1882 Anna (Nielsen) Schroder's mother, Maren Christensdatter, immigrated along with three of Ann's siblings, Martine, Johanne and Louise. A brother, Charlie, also immigrated. I believe Anna's relatives lived in Council Bluffs, Omaha and elsewhere in Nebraska.

John Schroder died in 1916 at age 61. His widow, Anna, survived her husband by 37 years.

Anna Schroder died in a Council Bluffs hospital at age 91. She had lived on the same farm for over 80 years.

In 1953, after Anna Schroder's death, the Schroder farm was sold to Clyde Peters, one of the eight Peters children, all boys, who were raised on the next farm to the north.

Schroder/Schroeder Mysteries:

The following Schroder/Schroeder individuals, all from Schleswig-Holstein, lived in northwestern Pottawattamie County within a five-mile proximity of each other. It is known that Claus Schroeder and Catherine (Schroeder) Feller were siblings. Circumstantial evidence suggests other relationships among the following, especially that Maria (Schroeder) Juergens may possibly have been a sister of Claus and Catherine.

- **John Schroder Sr.** (1855 – 1916), the subject of this section.
- **Maria C. Schroeder** (1857 – 1889), who was the wife of Peter Juergens and the mother of Dave Juergens of Boomer Township. Maria's mother, Magdalena, was the third wife of Chris Oamek.
- **Claus Schroeder** (1844 – 1896), who lived in extreme northwestern Hazel Dell Township.
- **Catherine Schroeder** (1850 – 1922), the wife of Hans Feller Sr. of northwestern Boomer Township.
- **Hans Schroeder** (abt 1816 – 26 Oct 1895), who farmed north of Crescent and raised the youngest son of Chris Oamek.
- **Peter Schroeder** (17 Mar 1842 – 1905), who farmed in central Boomer Township before moving to Nebraska in the 1880s.

End of the Early History of the John and Anna (Nielsen) Schroder Family

Vernon and Thelma Larson:

Thelma Schroder and my uncle, Vernon Larson, married at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs on July 26, 1939. Vernon was 20 and Thelma 18 when they married. After marrying, Vernon and Thelma lived with his parents for a few months.

Thelma and Vernon then rented a house about a mile to the east from a neighbor, Ray Hutchison. It was in this rental house that their oldest child, Barbara, was born. I have copied the following from the *Ethel (Larson) Torneten Family Sketch* earlier in this history.

Of interest: I believe that in 1940 Aunt Ethel and Uncle Oscar saved the live of my newborn cousin, Barbara Jane Larson. At the time Barbara's parents, my Uncle Vernon and Aunt Thelma, were newlyweds age 20 and 19 respectively. They were living in a rental home east of the Hazel Dell Township Hall. Their home had no modern conveniences – no water, electricity, phone, central heating.

Barbara was born prematurely at home on a subzero January night to very scared parents. Barbara weighed a mere 2.5 pounds at birth.

When Thelma went into labor, Uncle Vernon went to the home of neighbors, Andrew and Dorothy Ring, who had a telephone. By the time the doctor and Uncle Oscar and Aunt Ethel responded, Barbara had been born. Oscar and Ethel received cursory and discouraging instructions from the doctor such as "If she lives until morning ...". Oscar carried Thelma and Ethel carried Barbara to their car and off they drove to the Torneten farm home. For the next few months Thelma and Barbara lived with Oscar and Ethel while Oscar kept the furnace stoked and Ethel helped care for Barbara, initially feeding her with a medicine dropper.

A few months after Barbara was born, Vernon and Thelma moved to the former Charley Christensen place in Dane Hollow about a mile west over the hill from where Vernon was born. From there, they moved a half mile north to the Chris K. Christensen place.

Of interest: Charley and Chris K. Christensen, whose farms Vernon acquired, were brothers. Charley lived on their parent's farm, and Chris K. on his in-law's farm. For more information about their families, see the

Vernon bought both the Chris K. Christensen farm and the Charley Christensen farm (in 1947). Vernon and Thelma's son and grandson, Ron and Ron Jr., both later lived on the Charley Christensen place. Their son and grandson, Gary and Rick, both later lived on the Chris K. Christensen farm.

Around the late 1940s Vernon and Thelma bought the Page home place in southern Boomer Township. The Page house burned while one of Thelma's brothers was living in it. Vernon and Thelma built a new house on the Page place and lived in this house until sometime around the late 1970s.

Uncle Vernon was a hard-working and astute farmer and businessman. However, like many successful entrepreneurs, he had an enterprise that failed.

Around 1960 Vernon bought what had once been the Droge Grain Elevator at 1000 9th Avenue in Council Bluffs, which Vernon operated as the Larson Grain Company. Vernon hired someone named John S. Sorenson as manager. Under John Sorenson's management, corn disappeared from the elevator. Once federal authorities arrived and padlocked the facility in mid 1962 John Sorenson disappeared.

Vernon and Thelma's final home was a house they built around the late 1970s on Bean Ridge above the farmstead where Vernon was born. After Aunt Thelma died, this house was remodeled and became the residence of Vernon and Thelma's grandson, Rick, and his family.

Starting from scratch, Uncle Vernon achieved a great deal of material success. In the 1950 Pottawattamie County plat, Vernon owns 240 acres of land in Hazel Dell Township and 74 acres in Boomer Township. Vernon owned a corn sheller and trucks and for many years supplied corncobs to a plant in Omaha which produced the chemical furfural.

Vernon stored corncobs on the county road in Hazel Dell Township, at a location Vernon called "Corn Cob Corner". This is near the home where Gary and Sandy Larson built their house.

Vernon and Thelma Larson divorced after over forty years of marriage. Thelma remained in the farm home in Hazel Dell Township while Vernon bought a house in Council Bluffs.

When Vernon was about 65, he suffered a massive aneurysm. Vernon never fully recovered from his aneurysm, although he remained active and lived in his Council Bluffs home until the last few years of his life, when he went to live with his son, Ron.

Vernon Larson died in his sleep at age 83 at Ron's home in Dane Hollow in Hazel Dell Township.

Vernon and Thelma Larson are interred in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

As of 2012, Vernon and Thelma's son, Gary, Ron's son, Trent, and Gary's son, Rick, were all farming in Hazel Dell Township. Their farms include all of the land previously owned by their Larsen/Larson ancestors.

After Vernon and Thelma Larson divorced, Thelma married **Maynard Jensen** at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Boomer Township on June 14, 1986. Thelma and Maynard lived in her house behind the Hazel Dell Township Hall.

About Maynard Jensen:

Maynard Henry Jensen (6 Mar 1920 – 29 Jan 1998) was born and raised in Hazel Dell Township to Henry John Jensen (12 Jun 1890 – 30 Mar 1938) and Tena Nelson (Sep 1889 – 15 Mar 1931).

Maynard had two siblings, LaRue (17 Dec 1916 – 7 Oct 1990) and Lucille (17 Dec 1916 – 1918), his twin who died in infancy.

Maynard Jensen served in the Army Air Force during World War II and lived in Council Bluffs before marrying my Aunt Thelma.

Maynard married Gladys Sorensen (24 May 1922 – Dec 1981), the daughter of Chris and Mary Sorensen of Hazel Dell Township. Maynard and Gladys had two sons, Gary (23 Jun 1942 – Dec 1980) and Dennis (6 Jul 1947 – 5 Mar 1967). Dennis was killed in Viet Nam at the age of 19.

Maynard Jensen had a brief second marriage to Ruby (Massie) Jacobsen Armstrong (6 Feb 1922 – Dec 1985), who had previously been married to Lester Armstrong who farmed in Lewis Township southeast of Council Bluffs.

Death was no stranger to Maynard Jensen. His mother died when Maynard was 11 and his father when Maynard was 18. One of his two siblings died as a baby. Maynard lost one child at age 19 and the other at 39. Maynard's first wife died at 59 and his second at 63.

Of interest: Maynard Jensen lost another family member prematurely. His brother-in-law was killed at age 27 in World War II. The following is taken from my *St. Paul's Boomer-Neola World War II Veterans* document:

LaRue Jensen married Frederick A. "Bud" Baraks of Coal Valley, Illinois. Bud Baraks was the youngest of seven children, and the only son, of August Baraks, a coal miner, and his wife, Elizabeth Wilhouse.

Bud Baraks enlisted in the United States Army in February 1943. When he enlisted, his surname was recorded as "Barracks" and evidently this error was never corrected in military records.

Corporal Frederick A. Barracks of the 449th Military Police was killed in action in the European Theater on April 4, 1945. He is interred in the Saint Avold Military Cemetery in northeastern France with the surname "Barracks". He left behind his widow, LaRue, and two children. LaRue (Jensen) Baraks is interred in the Rock Island National Cemetery in Illinois.

Maynard Jensen was diagnosed with cancer about 1996. During his illness he remained at home with his devoted wife, Thelma, who cared for him until his death.

As of 2016, Vernon and Thelma's daughter, Barbara, lived in Glendale, Arizona. Their son, Ronald, was deceased. Their son, Gary, lived on the old Andrew Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township, and their daughter, Pattie, lived in Marietta, Georgia. Their adopted son, Donald Thompson, lived near Pacific Junction, Iowa.

End of the public portion of the Vernon & Thelma (Schroder) Larson Family.

The following six-page private portion, written for Vernon and Thelma's descendants, sketches the lives of Vernon and Thelma's children.

Private Portion - Vernon & Thelma (Schroder) Larson Family

**End of the Private Portion - Vernon & Thelma (Schroder) Larson
Family**

End of the *Vernon & Thelma (Schroder) Family* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.

Norvin & Alice (Larson) Oamek Family

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Reviewed by Jeri (Oamek) Kolacny Sep 2012.

- **Alice Elaine Larson** (1 Sep 1923 – 24 Jun 1954) was the ninth and youngest child of my grandparents, Andrew A. and Maggie Larson. Like her siblings, Aunt Alice was born in the little house on the Andrew A. Larson farm in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs and attended the nearby Hazel Dell #5 rural school.

After graduating from 8th grade, Alice attended Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs. She did not graduate, and married just after she turned 18.

Alice was acquainted with a young man named **Norvin Oamek**, whose parents lived in Hazel Dell Township a few miles west of the Andrew Larson farm.

About Norvin Oamek's family:

My uncle, Norvin Clarence Oamek, was the son of **Clarence Edward Oamek** and **Theda M. Hatton** who farmed in western Hazel Dell Township.

Clarence Oamek (26 May 1899 – 11 Oct 1971) was born on the Oamek home place in Hazel Dell Township to Joseph Oamek and Anna C. Rief.

Theda Hatton was born in Orange, Texas, to Jeptha Johnson "Jepp" Hatton (abt 1875 – 14 Nov 1953) and Martha Amanda "Mandy" Burgess (1880 – 1955). The Hatton family apparently lived in New Mexico and Colorado before returning to the Orange, Texas area in the 1920s.

As a young man, Clarence Oamek went to the Haxtun area in Prowers County in southeastern Colorado where his father owned some land. While in Colorado, Clarence and Theda met. They married in Colorado in 1921 and their first child, Norvin Clarence, was born in Lamar, Prowers County in 1922.

After a few years in Colorado, Clarence and Theda Oamek and their baby, Norvin, moved back to Hazel Dell Township.

Their second child, Orville, was born on the Cook place in Hazel Dell Township.

Soon they moved to a farm near the Oamek home place, where his father, Joe, lived. They remained on this farm until moving to Council Bluffs around 1957.

While living in Council Bluffs Clarence worked as a watchman for the Union Pacific Railroad, retiring shortly before he died.

The three children of Clarence and Theda Oamek are listed below.

- **Norvin Clarence Oamek** (25 Nov 1922 – 28 Oct 2007) was my uncle by his marriage to my Aunt Alice.

Norvin Oamek was born in Lamar, Colorado, where his grandfather Oamek had bought land, but grew up in western Hazel Dell Township near the ancestral Oamek farm.

Norvin attended Hazel Dell #4 school, also known as the Oamek School,

where one of his teachers was his future sister-in-law, Helen Larson. In fact, Helen stayed with Norvin's family during 1934-35 the year she taught at the Hazel Dell #4 school.

After graduating from the 8th grade, Norvin attended Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs. I believe Norvin graduated in 1940 at the age of 17.

After graduating from high school, Norvin worked in shipyards in the Beaumont, Texas area near his grandparents Hatton for about two years.

Norvin and Alice Oamek had two children:

- ▲ **Joanne Elaine Oamek** married Dale G. Butterbaugh. After Joanne and Dale divorced, Joanne married Dean Dreesman (24 Jan 1937 – 13 Oct 1997). After Joanne and Dean divorced, Joanne married Steven "Steve" Jacobs.
- ▲ **Geraldine Marie "Jeri" Oamek** married Nels Conrad "Conrad" Bramberg (10 Jan 1940 – 13 Apr 2008). After Jeri and Conrad divorced, Jeri married Roger Keith Lucas (8 Apr 1937 – 24 Nov 2003). After Jeri and Roger divorced, Jeri married Gordon S. Kolacny (20 Aug 1925 – 13 Jan 2009).

After Alice died, Norvin married Marcella R. "Mickey" Gates. Norvin and Mickey Oamek had one child:

▲ **Jeannine Rene Oamek**

- **Orville Kenneth "Buzz" Oamek** (21 Nov 1927 – 21 May 2011) was born on the Cook place in Hazel Dell Township.

Orville Oamek married **Joyce C. Hodge** (24 Dec 1932 -) in Orange, Texas, in 1950. Joyce was the daughter of Marion Hodge and Bessie Marie Ettleman of the Glenwood, Iowa area. Like his older brother, Norvin, Orville was a fireman for the city of Council Bluffs.

Orville and Joyce Oamek had three children:

- ▲ **Connie Joyce Oamek** married Paul L. Hedren.
- ▲ **Pamela Sue Oamek** married Mark Pickinpaugh.
- ▲ **Kenneth Wayne Oamek** married Debra L. Wagner and then married Sandy Berndt.
- **Dorothy Jean Oamek** (14 Nov 1929 -) was born in Hazel Dell Township on the Clarence Oamek farm, which was near the old Chris Oamek home place.

Dorothy Oamek married **Rolland Charles Wright** (26 Aug 1916 – 1997) in 1951. Rolland Wright was the son of Charles Henry Wright and Ethel May Bardsley who bought the Chris Oamek home place in Hazel Dell Township around 1950 when Joe Oamek retired to Council Bluffs.

Rolland and Dorothy Oamek lived on the old Chris Oamek home place until 1984 when they moved to Council Bluffs.

Rolland and Dorothy Wright had three children:

- ▲ **Sandra Kay Wright**
- ▲ **Patricia Ann Wright** married Alan Lee Pieper.
- ▲ **James Rolland Wright**

Norvin Oamek's parents, Clarence Oamek (26 May 1899 – 11 Oct 1971) and Theda Oamek (30 Sep 1904 – 4 Sep 1985), are interred in the Hazel Dell Cemetery.

About Chris Oamek:

Norvin Oamek's great-grandfather, Chris Oamek, was one of the more-colorful individuals in my history. Chris Oamek is the subject of a family history book, *Johann Christofer Omieg (1814 – 1901) and His Descendants* published by a descendant, Robert W. Layton, in 1999 and in revised form in 2004.

It is possible that Chris Oamek is unique in that everyone in the United States born with the surname of either "Oamek" or "Omieg" may be a descendant.

Chris Oamek had three wives and at least three spellings of his surname. We believe that in Germany he generally spelled his surname "Omieg", after immigrating he used "Omieg", and sometime after settling in Hazel Dell Township the family finally settled on the spelling "Oamek". To add to the confusion, his youngest son used the spelling "Omig".

Chris Oamek, known in his early life as Johann Christofer Omieg was born in Hohenfelde, Mecklenburg, Germany around August 1814 to Matthias Heinerich Oehmike and Margaretha Elisabeth Masch. The village of Hohenfelde is about ten miles west of Rostock and a few miles south of the Baltic Sea in north Germany.

Chris's first wife, Sophia Dorothea Wilhelmine "Minnie" Wiedeman, was born somewhere in Mecklenburg on August 9, 1815. We don't know when Chris and Minnie married.

At some point, probably in the 1840s, Chris moved from near Rostock in Mecklenburg to north of Hamburg in the province of Holstein. Holstein was under the purview of the King of Denmark until 1864.

Chris and Minnie had four children born in the old country, at least some of them born in or near the town of Barmstedt, about 30 miles north of Hamburg.

Chris immigrated to the United States sometime between 1852 and 1857. Minnie followed with their four children on the *SS Hammonia* in September 1857.

Of Interest: The original *SS Hammonia* on which Minnie immigrated in 1857 was built around 1854. Although outfitted with a steam engine, it appears to have been a fully-rigged sailing ship.

Two family histories give different stories of what Chris did after immigrating. I believe that for much of the first years he drove a freight wagon between the Missouri River and the Denver area in Colorado, since one history says he made 22 round trips to Denver.

After immigrating, Minnie may have lived a short while in Nebraska, but she and their four children settled in Clay County near Vermillion in southeastern South Dakota. She remained in Clay County, dying there on April 15, 1899.

When the Dakota Territory Legislature first met in 1862, an early item on the agenda was granting a divorce to Minnie Omeg. This divorce decree was the third act of the first session of the Dakota Territory Legislature.

Although Minnie Omeg remained in South Dakota until her death, three of her children, already married, moved with their families to the Pacific Northwest in the late 1870s. Thus there are many Omeg descendants now living in Oregon and Washington.

Starting in the 1860s, Chris Omeg acquired land in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, north of Council Bluffs. Chris's land was in Hazel Dell and Crescent Townships. We believe he settled in west central Hazel Dell Township in 1864.

On December 3, 1866, Chris Omeg married Mary (Straub) Sigea, a widow with two young children. It is said that Indians killed Mary's first husband, Charles Sigea, in 1861 near Denver.

Chris and Mary had five children who survived infancy, but Mary sadly died on January 1, 1876, leaving a two-week-old baby, Edward.

Edward was raised by neighbors, Hans and Christena Schroeder. After reaching adulthood, Edward moved to Omaha where he used the surname "Omig". However, Edward had only daughters so the "Omig" spelling is lost.

Three of the remaining four children of Chris and Mary Oamek, namely Caroline, George and Joseph, married and stayed on farms in the Crescent/Hazel Dell area. Chris and Mary's son, Frank Oamek, moved to northern Nebraska where he also farmed.

Having been divorced by his first wife in 1862 and then widowed in 1876, Chris tried marriage one more time, marrying a widow, Magdalena Schroeder, on August 22, 1878. We don't know whether Chris and Magdalena divorced or separated, but Magdalena eventually moved in with her son-in-law, Peter Juergens, who lived in Boomer Township just west of the Grange Cemetery.

Chris Oamek died in Pottawattamie County on March 8, 1901 and is buried in Reel's Cemetery in Boomer Township with his second wife, Mary (Straub) Sigea Oamek, and their infant child who died in 1871. According to the Omaha Bee for October 10, 1902, Chris's will failed to mention his son, Edward, and left his daughter, Carrie, the grand sum of \$1.

Chris Oamek's son, Joe, was the father of Clarence Oamek and the grandfather of Robert Christiansen's uncle, Norvin Oamek.

Norvin and Alice Oamek:

Norvin Oamek and my aunt, Alice Larson, married in Omaha, Nebraska, on October 27, 1941. They were both 18 when they married.

After marrying, Norvin and Alice Oamek first lived in Orange, Texas where

Norvin worked in the Levingston shipyard. Later they lived in the Fremont/Wahoo, Nebraska area while Norvin worked for the Meade ordnance plant. While in Nebraska, their first child was born in September 1942. For a time, probably in 1943, Norvin worked for his brother-in-law, Victor Petersen, in Boomer Township.

Around the end of 1943, Norvin and Alice moved to 320 North Second Street in Council Bluffs and Norvin took the Council Bluffs fireman exam. Near the beginning of 1944, their second child was born. About this time Norvin began working as a Council Bluffs fireman, thus losing his agricultural deferment.

Norvin joined the United States Navy around June of 1944, serving on the U.S.S. *Bowie*, a destroyer in the Pacific. While Norvin was in the navy, Alice and her two daughters lived in a second floor apartment over the Continental Keller store on Broadway in Council Bluffs.

After World War II, Norvin returned to his city fireman job. Norvin and Alice lived for a time in GI Court, veterans housing near Playland Park at 35th and Broadway on the extreme west end of Council Bluffs.

Around 1948 Norvin and Alice moved to 906 8th Avenue, where the Oamek family remained until the 1960s.

Alice (Larson) Oamek died of leukemia at age 30 after an illness of several months. As she left her home in the late spring of 1954 to return to the hospital to die, Aunt Alice remarked to Aunt Helen "At least I got to see the roses bloom".

Alice Oamek is interred in the Hazel Dell Cemetery in Hazel Dell Township north of Council Bluffs. Norvin Oamek was cremated with his ashes placed in the Hazel Dell Cemetery.

After Alice (Larson) Oamek's early death, Norvin began seeing Marcella "Mickey" Gates, a friend of Vernon and Thelma Larson.

About Mickey Gates:

Marcella R. "Mickey" Gates (8 May 1926 – 5 Jan 2013) was born in Omaha to Alvin E. and Bessie Gates. Mickey had one brother, Charles Richard Gates, and three half-siblings from her mother's second marriage to Dave Martin, namely Oreen, Eugene and Terry.

Of interest: Mickey Gates brother, Charles Richard Gates, was an early suspect in the 1977 shotgun murder of a retired Council Bluffs policeman, John Schweer. Rather than developing the case against Charles Gates, the county attorney framed two black Omaha teenagers, Curtis McGhee Jr. and Terry Herrington, who were sentenced to life in prison. After twenty-five years in the penitentiary, the circumstances under which McGhee and Herrington were convicted came to light, and McGhee and Herrington were released. The United States Supreme Court eventually heard the McGhee-Herrington case, albeit on narrow technical grounds. A few months before the Supreme Court was to rule, Pottawattamie County settled with McGhee and Herrington for \$12,000,000.

Mickey Gates had an earlier marriage to Floyd Bogle in Pottawattamie County in 1951. Mickey was working at the Walgreen's drug store in downtown Council Bluffs when she and Norvin began dating.

Norvin and Mickey Gates:

Norvin Oamek and Mickey Gates married in Papillion, Nebraska, in 1955.

Some time after 1964 Norvin and Mickey Oamek moved to 2310 South 12th Street where they were still living when Norvin died in 2007. Norvin retired as a captain in the Council Bluffs Fire Department in the 1970s.

In 2008 Mickey Oamek briefly moved to the Manor retirement home in Papillion, Nebraska, but as of 2009 she was living again at 2310 South 12th Street.

Norvin and Mickey Oamek had one child:

▲ Jeannine Rene "Jean" Oamek

As of 2012, Norvin and Alice's daughter, JoAnne, was living in the countryside near Elk Horn, Iowa. Their daughter, Jeri, was living in Loveland, Colorado. Norvin and Mickey's daughter, Jeannine, was living in Omaha, Nebraska.

End of the public portion of *Norvin and Alice (Larson) Oamek Family*.

The following three-page private portion, written for Norvin and Alice's descendants, sketches the lives of Norvin and Alice's children.

Private Portion - *Norvin and Alice (Larson) Oamek Family*

End of the Private Portion - *Norvin and Alice (Larson) Oamek Family*

**End of the *Norvin & Alice (Larson) Oamek Family* section
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.**

Chapter 4 Appendix - The Larson Sisters Schooling and Teaching

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I believe all nine of Andrew and Maggie Larson's children graduated from the eighth grade at the one-room Hazel Dell #5 school, also known as Center School, about a mile and a half southwest of the Larson farm.

In 2001 Aunt Ethel remembered some of her teachers. She had good memories of most of them:

- **Ella Neville** (used corporal punishment – some students called her “Ella Devil”)
- **Bina Bromley**
- **Martha Currie**
- **Helen Heckman**

In 2003 Aunt Helen remembered her teachers:

- **Bina Bromley**
- **Martha Currie** (put Aunt Helen ahead two years)
- **Helen Heckman** (taught for one year)
- **Hilda Voss** (8th grade teacher; a good teacher; was dating Bill Christians)

I have identified the Hazel Dell #5 teachers by year for a few years:

1919-20, 1920-21 & 1921-22: **Bina Bromley**.

1924-25 & 1925-26: **Martha Currie**, never married.

1926-27: probably **Helen Heckman**, married Joe Copeland.

1927-28: **Hilda Voss**, married Bill Christians and then Lawrence Loux.

1929-30 & 1930-31: **Leona Larson**, my mother, married Alvin Christiansen

1931-1932 and/or 1932-1933: **Helen Voss**, married Soren Sorensen.

Here is some information about Aunt Ethel and Aunt Helen's known elementary school teachers. All except Bina Bromley appear in my St.Paul's database.

- **Helen Cecelia "Ella" Neville** (18 Aug 1894 – 19 Feb 1970) was born in Pottawattamie County, Iowa to Henry William Neville and Bridget Josephine Buckley, farmers in Neola and Norwalk Townships who eventually moved to South Dakota.

Ella married William E. Behm around 1927 and was living in Clay Township, Harrison County in 1930. By 1952 William and Ella had moved to Council Bluffs.

- **Bina Bromley** was born in Nebraska around 1897 to Joseph W. Bromley and Emma F. Spring.

Bina was listed as a clerk at Brandeis Department Store in Omaha in 1920 and was attending Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls in 1924-1925. In the fall of 1925

she was teaching 7th and 8th grade in a school in the Storm Lake, Iowa area. I have no record of her after 1925.

- **Martha E. Currie** (27 Oct 1905 – 1 Jun 1999) was the daughter of Dave V. Currie and Susie McCann of Crescent Township.

Martha Currie never married and continued teaching, mostly in Council Bluffs, until she retired. By 1936 she was teaching at the Second Avenue School in Council Bluffs. In 1964 she was teaching at the Washington School in Council Bluffs. Martha Currie is interred with her parents and bachelor brother, Stuart, in the Hazel Dell Cemetery.

- **Helen Heckman** (abt 1904 – 11 Feb 1944) was the daughter of Asher William Heckman and Myrtle Hackett of Oakland, Iowa.

Helen Heckman graduated from Oakland High School in 1923 at taught at Hazel Dell #5, McClelland, and in the Oakland area. In 1935 she married Joe Copeland. She died prematurely in Ankeny, Iowa in 1944, leaving two young daughters, and is interred in the Oakland Cemetery.

- **Hilda D. Voss** (11 Oct 1908 – 3 Jul 2003) was the daughter of Fredrick Voss and Margaret Rebehn of northern Boomer Township.

Hilda married Bill Christians, one of the 18 children of Theodore Christians and Anna Margaretha Wohlers, on June 12, 1929. After Bill's death in 1972, she married Lawrence Loux. She died in Webster City, Iowa but is interred in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The Voss sisters: Hilda Voss also had two sisters, Nellie and Helen, who were schoolteachers in northern Hazel Dell Township.

Hilda Voss's older sister **Nellie** (30 Aug 1901 May 1966) taught my aunt, Evelyn (Larson) Sherbondy, at the Parish School (Hazel Dell #2). Nellie married Howard Smith, a farmer in southern Boomer Township, about 1926. Howard died in 1932, leaving two children. Around 1943 Nellie married David Mackland of southern Boomer Township and David and Nellie moved to Missouri Valley.

Hilda Voss's younger sister, **Helen** (16 Jan 1911 – Mar 1997) taught my uncle and aunt, Vernon and Alice Larson, at Center School (Hazel Dell #5). Helen Voss married Soren P. Sorenson in 1935. Soren and Helen lived in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he was a mechanist for Collins Radio.

The Larson girls as teachers:

Four of the seven Larson sisters, Florence, Leona, Ethel, and Helen, taught in one-room rural schools in Pottawattamie County until they married. At the time, rural teachers had to be 18 and a graduate of a high school normal program. However, during World War II, 17 year olds such as Mildred (Kadel) Lehmkuhl were sometimes hired to teach.

Florence, Leona, Ethel and Helen all put away their teaching shingle when they married. However, The Larson sister's double cousin, Evelyn (Larson) Sherbondy, who had taught for a year before marrying, later taught for many years while raising a large family.

Here is what I know about the Larson sisters' teaching venues:

Florence: (10 years, fall 1925 to spring 1935)

- Hazel Dell #8 (Frost/Nixon school, 3 years): fall 1925 - spring 1928.
- Hazel Dell #1 (Denmark school, five or six years) fall 1928 – spring 1933 or spring 1934.
- Boomer #7 (one or two years) fall 1933 or fall 1934 – spring 1935.

Leona (six years, fall 1927 to spring 1933):

- Hazel Dell #4 (Oamek School) 1927-29, boarded with Howard and Dollie Smith.
- Hazel Dell #5 (Center School) 1929-31, boarded at home.

The fifteen students listed in Leona's school souvenir in 1930-1931 were:

- Evelyn and Kenneth Christensen, children of Charley Christensen and Laura Nielsen.
- Ivan Collins, son of Frank Collins and Ida Jensen and first cousin of Maynard Jensen.
- Dorothy and Harry Jensen, children of George W. Jensen and Sigrid Berg and first cousins of Maynard Jensen. (Dorothy and Harry were the two oldest of George and Sigrid's 11 children.)
- George Larsen. I don't have a confirmed identification. This might be George Carl Larsen, the son of Harry Larsen and Agnes Hansen and the nephew of John Christian Larsen and Nellie Thorpe.
- Howard and Laverne Johnson, children of Willie Johnson and Sophie Jensen and first cousins of Victor Petersen.
- Fern Johnson, daughter of Robert Johnson and Irene Melton.
- Leona's siblings, Vernon and Alice Larson.
- Edward and Mary Margaret Leonard, children of Edward Thomas Leonard Sr. and Anna Elizabeth Sweeney. The Leonard grandparents lived on the hill just southwest of Andrew and Maggie Larsen.
- Eileen and Lynel Vallier, children of David Vallier and Mary Smith.

The Hazel Dell Township school board in 1930-1931 consisted of:

- J. A. Hansen, President. John Alexander Hansen was active in the RLDS church and had daughters Leona, who married Lynn Handlen and Ruth, who married Harl Hough.
- H. P. Hansen Secretary. H. P. Hansen was my bachelor great-uncle Pete. His nieces said he helped them get teaching jobs during the Great Depression.
- George T. Ford, Treasurer.

- District 5 directors were Morris Clausen and Charles T. Christensen.
- Pony Creek School in Lewis Township 1931-33, boarded with Roy and Inez Saunders. Pony Creek School was the Lewis Township #5 school, located in Section 15. It was an old brick school, and may have been torn down and replaced with a frame building later. Dale and Wanda Clausen bought the frame Pony Creek School in 1955 and converted it into a residence. Dale and Wanda subsequently divorced and Wanda is deceased but Dale may still be living there in 2012. At the time Roy Saunders rented a large farm, and the Saunders house was probably about a half mile west of the school.

Ethel (four years, fall 1930 to spring 1934):

- Hazel Dell #3 (Oakdale School) 1930/34, boarded with Peter Olsen, Jr. and his wife, Annie. Directors were Charley Madsen and Scott Hemmingsen. See my *Hazel Dell School #3 in 1930-1934* history for a list of students, more information, and a few photos.

Helen (one year, fall 1934 to spring 1935):

- Hazel Dell #4 (Oamek School) 1934/35, boarded with Norvin Oamek's parents, Clarence and Theda Oamek.

The ten students of Helen who appear on a photograph from that year were:

- Vernie and Betty Christensen, children of Raymond Christensen and Lela Hunt.
- Helen and Ruth Jensen, daughters of Carl P. Jensen and Carrie Larsen.
- Norvin and Orville Oamek, sons of Clarence Oamek and Theda Hatton.
- Faye and David McIntosh Jr., children of David McIntosh and Opal Fountain.
- Derald Ratigan, son of Lawrence Ratigan and Sarah Diggle.
- Gladys Sorensen, daughter of Chris and Mary Sorensen.

The Old Maid's Club.

Several of the Larson sisters belonged to the "Old Maid's Club", an informal group of young women from the area, most of whom were teachers. In 2001, Aunt Ethel remembered the following eight members of this club. All were neighbors of the Larson girls in Hazel Dell Township except for Lavon Warford from Garner Township who married a neighbor, Max Hough.

- **Leona Larson** married Alvin Christiansen from Boomer Township.
- **Ethel Larson** married Oscar Torneten from Hardin Township.

Leona (Larson) Christiansen and Ethel (Larson) Torneten were children of Andrew and Maggie (Hansen) Larson.

- **Ruth Hough** married Kenny Alcorn from Hazel Dell Township.
- **June Hough** married Earl Jensen from Hazel Dell Township.

Ruth (Hough) Alcorn and June (Hough) Jensen were children of Oscar and Mabel (Driver) Hough.

- **Ruth Hansen** married Harl Hough from Hazel Dell Township.
- **Leona Hansen** married Lynn Handlen from Hazel Dell Township.

Ruth (Hansen) Hough and Leona (Hansen) Handlen were children of John A. and Annie (Rasmussen) Hansen.

- **Erma Hough** married William Dingman from Garner Township.
- **Lavonne Warford**, from Garner Township, married Max Hough.

Erma (Hough) Dingman and Max Hough were children of Charles and Margaretta (Osborn) Hough.

The Larson Sisters Travel.

Before they became encumbered with husbands and then children, the Larson sisters enjoyed traveling, especially in the summer when the four who were schoolteachers had free time.

- c. 1927 I believe Lillian was the first to venture beyond Council Bluffs, traveling with her friend, Gladys Braden, from Council Bluffs to Brush, Colorado, where she and Gladys both got jobs at the EbenEzer Lutheran Sanitarium. I suspect the Braden family's recent move from the Macedonia area to Berthoud, Colorado helped motivate this adventure.
- 1928 Florence and Leona took a train or bus to Brush to visit Lillian. Then they traveled to Estes Park and other scenic areas of the Front Range of Colorado, at times hitch-hiking. Returning to Iowa, their bus broke down during a rainstorm on an unpaved road in southern Nebraska.
- 1930 Florence drove Leona and Ethel to Colorado to visit Lillian and to sightsee. Ethel had to ride in the rumble seat.
- 1931 Florence, Leona and Ethel visited the Washington, DC area traveling with three young neighbor women, Erma Hough and sisters Leona and Ruth Hansen, and Uncle Vic Petersen's sisters, Agnes and Helga.
- 1933 Florence took Helen to see the Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago.

Other trips for which I don't have dates yet:

A trip to the Black Hills.

End of *Chapter 4 Appendix – The Larson Sisters Schooling and Teaching.*

End of Chapter 4 - *Andrew A. Larson and Karen Margrethe Hansen Family*
of the *Larsen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History.*