

Rasmussen Volume, Chapter 6 - the Marion Rasmussen Family

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Marion Rasmussen and His Wives, Katherine Steffensen and Marie Jensen

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- **Marion Rasmussen**, the sixth child of my great-grandparents Lars Christian Rasmussen and Karen Marie Andersen, was born in Boomer Township in 1885 and lived in Boomer Township and Council Bluffs his entire life.

As a young adult, Marion lived with his parents on the Rasmussen home place in Boomer Township, just west of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and assisted with the family's farming operation. By 1920 the Rasmussen holdings consisted of 200 acres with Marion's father, Lars, having title to 120 acres and Marion the remaining 80 acres.

The Rasmussen family was one of the first families in the St. Paul's community to acquire an automobile. This led to a tragic accident in 1913 when a neighbor, Swen Nelson, was killed by his runaway team of horses that had been startled by the Rasmussen's automobile.

In 1920 the Rasmussens sold their land in Boomer Township on contract to the Tom C. Peterson family, and around March 1 Marion and his parents moved to Council Bluffs. I believe Tom C. Peterson's oldest son, Viggo Bondo Peterson, moved onto the Rasmussen farm with his bride, Christena Petersen.

As the following charts show, my great-uncle Marion was married twice.

Marion Rasmussen and His Two Wives

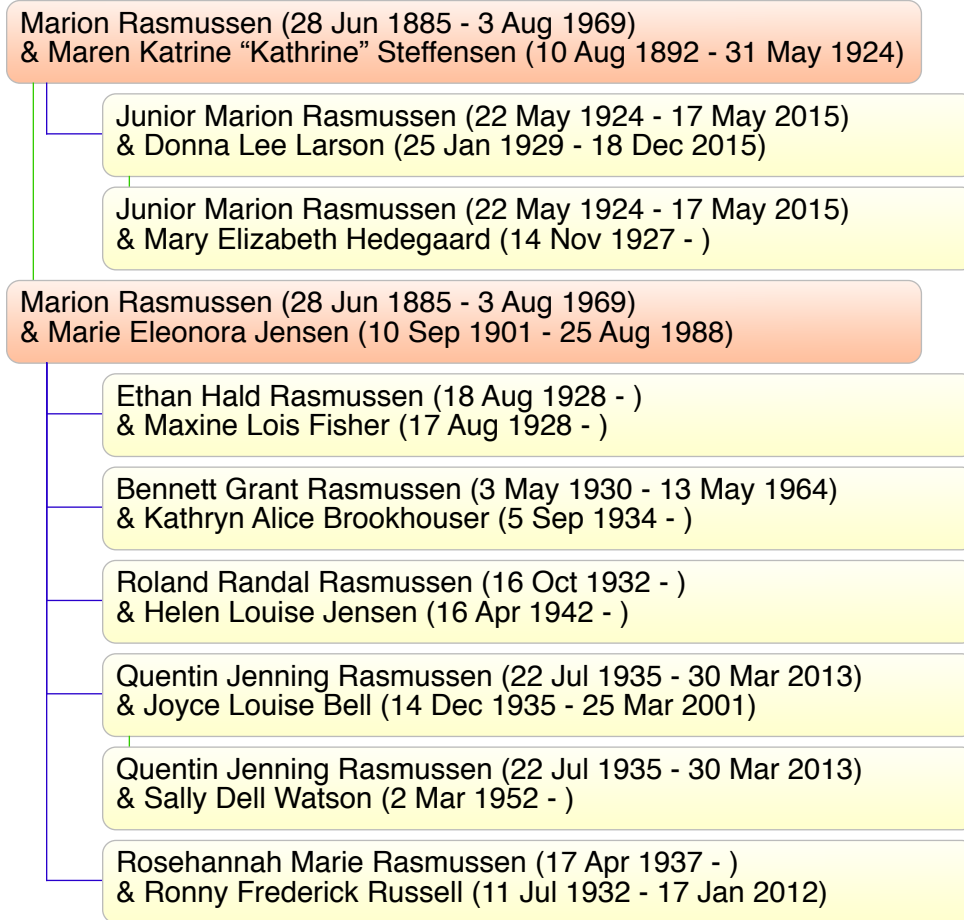
Marion Rasmussen

b. 28 Jun 1885, Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
d. 3 Aug 1969, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
bur. 6 Aug 1969, St. Paul's Luth. Cem., Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
& Maren Katrine "Kathrine" Steffensen
b. 10 Aug 1892, Bartlett, Cook or DuPage Co., IL or Elgin, IL
d. 31 May 1924, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
brp. St. Paul's Luth. Cem., Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
m. 5 Jan 1921, Our Savior's Luth. Ch., Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA

Marion Rasmussen

b. 28 Jun 1885, Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
d. 3 Aug 1969, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
bur. 6 Aug 1969, St. Paul's Luth. Cem., Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
& Marie Eleonora Jensen
b. 10 Sep 1901, Rostrup, Gadbjerg Sogn, Vejle Amt, Denmark
d. 25 Aug 1988, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
bur. 28 Aug 1988, St. Paul's Luth. Cem., Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
m. 10 Sep 1925, Our Savior's Luth. Ch., Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA

The Wives and Children of Marion Rasmussen



Marion Rasmussen in Council Bluffs, 1920-1927.

Upon leaving Boomer Township for Council Bluffs in 1920, the Rasmussen family moved into a house at 625 West Washington Avenue. Marion bought a four-unit apartment house just to the east but continued to live with his parents.

Marion Rasmussen married **Kathrine "Katrine" Steffensen** in Council Bluffs in 1921.

About Katrine Steffensen:

Maren Katrine "Katrine" Steffensen, my great-uncle Marion Rasmussen's first wife, was the daughter of Peder K. Steffensen and Martha Marie Thomsen, natives of Thisted county in western Jutland.

Peder and Martha Marie Steffensen immigrated to Illinois with their four oldest children in 1890. Their immigration record suggests that they were living in Flade Sogn before leaving Denmark. Flade Sogn is about ten miles, as the crow flies, southeast of the city of Thisted.

Five more children were born to Peder and Martha Marie Steffensen in the years

between 1892 and 1904, while the family was living in northern Illinois northwest of Chicago.

In 1900 the family was living in Grafton Township, McHenry County, west of Crystal Lake. I have been unable to locate the family in the 1910 census.

Between 1904 and 1920 the Peder Steffensen family moved to Clinton, in Rock County, Wisconsin, east of Beloit. By 1920 only the oldest and youngest children, Steffen "Chris" and Alma, remained at home. Alma came to Council Bluffs and married Albert "Bert" Christensen in 1922. After Peder Steffensen died in 1928 and his widow in 1934 their oldest child, Chris, married.

Katrine was born in 1892, perhaps in the Bartlett area in northern Illinois, the oldest of the five children born in the United States. Katrine lived in Clinton in southern Wisconsin before coming to Council Bluffs where she and her sister, Tora, worked as domestics for William A. Maurer at 831 Second Avenue. After Katrine married and left the Maurer household in 1921, Tora remained in the Maurer household and died in Council Bluffs in April 1923. Tora is interred with her parents in the Clinton, Wisconsin Cemetery.

Sadly, Katrine died in 1924, nine days after the birth of their only child, Junior Marion.

After Marion Rasmussen's first wife, Katrine, died in 1924, Marion found a young woman named **Marie Jensen** to care for his infant son, Junior. Marion Rasmussen and Marie Jensen married in Council Bluffs in 1925.

About Marie Jensen:

Marie Eleonora Jensen, my great-uncle Marion Rasmussen's second wife, was the daughter of Marius Jensen and Johanne Petrine Mogensen and was born in Rostrup, Gadbjerg Sogn, Vejle Amt, Denmark in 1901. Gadbjerg is about ten miles northwest of the city of Vejle.

Marie immigrated to Weston, Iowa when she was twenty years old. In Weston Marie kept house for her uncle, Christian Peter Jensen. Christian Peter Jensen's wife died in 1922 and Christian Peter died on June 14, 1924. I suspect that soon after Christian Peter's death, Marie began working for Marion Rasmussen.

While living in Council Bluffs, Marion explored several occupations. He studied auto mechanics, worked as a clerk in a furniture store and as a carpenter and in one city directory is listed as a real estate agent.

While in Council Bluffs, Marion was also on the board of Our Savior's Lutheran Church when the difficult decision was made to build a new church building. The original Our Savior's church, at 829 Avenue A, was constructed around 1877 for \$670 and was still standing in 2013. It was located a few blocks west of the Rasmussen home and near the original area of Danish settlement in Council Bluffs. The new church at Bluffs and Story Streets about a half -mile south of downtown was built in 1926-1927 for around \$43,000. It was constructed on the edge of Danetown, the Danish neighborhood on the south side of Council Bluffs.

Marion Rasmussen in Boomer Township, 1927-1952.

In 1927, Marion, Marie and their young son, Junior, along with Marion's parents, Lars Christian and Karen, moved back to the Rasmussen farm. Marion's parents remained in the Marion Rasmussen household until their deaths. Marion's parents died on the Rasmussen farm, Karen in 1928 and Lars Christian in 1934.

Marion marked his return to the Rasmussen farm by purchasing state of the art farm machinery, including a formidable tractor. Since Lars was no longer able to help with the farming, Marion sometimes employed hired help. In 1930 Lu Raney was the hired man.

During the next 24 years on the Rasmussen farm, Marion and Marie became the parents of five additional children, all born at home

I remember my great-uncle Marion as a progressive and hardworking individual whose farming included a dairy operation.

During these years in Boomer Township Uncle Marion sometimes served as the St. Paul's sexton. The sexton's responsibilities included ringing the church bell, an exciting time for me when I was a small child. I was also impressed that Uncle Marion had a hunchback, as did Quasimodo, the legendary bell ringer at Notre Dame in Parish. However, Uncle Marion was infinitely better looking than Quasimodo!

As his sons grew older, Marion and his sons did custom work for other farmers, such as baling hay and threshing oats. When my father was overwhelmed with work during World War II, he called on Uncle Marion and his boys for help.

Marion's older sons, Junior and Ethan, both farmed near the Rasmussen home place for a few years after marrying.

Marion Rasmussen in Council Bluffs, 1952-1969.

In 1952 Marion and Marie sold the Rasmussen home place to Coleman Fisher Jr., whose sister, Maxine, was married to the Rasmussen's son, Ethan. Marion and Marie moved back to Council Bluffs and bought the Iowana Motel on Highway 6, now known as McPherson Avenue, in northeastern Council Bluffs.

Marion and Marie were married for nearly 44 years before his death in 1969 at the age of 84. Marie continued working at the family's Iowana Motel until shortly before her death in 1988 at the age of 86.

Of interest: All five of Marion Rasmussen's sons had military experience.

- Junior Rasmussen served in the United States Army around the end of World War II.
- Ethan and Bennett Rasmussen served in the Iowa National Guard.
- Roland Rasmussen served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War.
- Quentin Rasmussen served in the Reserves.

Of interest: I have three family connections to Marion Rasmussen's daughters-in-law:

- To Donna Lee Larson, Junior Rasmussen's first wife: Donna Lee Larson's grandfather, Lars Peter Larson, was the half-brother of my maternal grandfather, Andrew Larson.
- To Maxine Fisher, Ethan Rasmussen's wife: Maxine Fisher's niece, Sandy Ring, married my maternal cousin, Gary Larson.
- To Helen Jensen, Roland Rasmussen's wife: Helen Jensen's grandfather, Chris Jensen, was the first cousin of my paternal grandfather, James P. Christiansen.

Of interest: Lars and Karen Rasmussen had five daughters and then a son while their son, Marion, had five sons and then a daughter.

Marion Rasmussen, both of his wives, and his son, Junior, are interred in the St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Boomer Township. His son, Bennett, is interred in Ridgewood Cemetery in Council Bluffs. His son, Quentin, donated his body for use in medical studies and research.

The six children of Marion Rasmussen are listed in the following section. Because almost all of Marion Rasmussen grandchildren and three of his children are still living, I have sometimes omitted data such as birthdates.

End of the *Marion Rasmussen and His Wives, Katherine Steffensen and Marie Jensen* section of the *Rasmussen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.

The Children of Marion Rasmussen

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As the following chart shows, Junior Marion Rasmussen was married twice. There were no children from his first marriage.

Junior Marion Rasmussen

b. 22 May 1924, at home, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
d. 17 May 2015, at home, Bethany Heights, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
brp. St. Paul's Cem, Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
& Donna Lee Larson
b. 25 Jan 1929, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
d. 18 Dec 2015, at daughter's home, Persia, Harrison Co., IA
m. 28 Feb 1949, St. Paul's Luth. Ch., Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA

Junior Marion Rasmussen

b. 22 May 1924, at home, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
d. 17 May 2015, at home, Bethany Heights, Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA
brp. St. Paul's Cem, Boomer T., Pott. Co., IA
& Mary Elizabeth Hedegaard
b. 14 Nov 1927, Norwalk T., Pott. Co., IA
m. 19 May 1956, Our Savior's Luth. Ch., Council Bluffs, Pott. Co., IA

- **Junior Marion Rasmussen** (22 May 1924 – 17 May 2015) was born to Marion and Katrine (Steffensen) Rasmussen at 625 West Washington Avenue in Council Bluffs. Junior's birth mother died nine days later of complications of childbirth and in 1925 my great uncle Marion married his hired girl, Marie Jensen.

In 1927 Junior moved to the Rasmussen home place in Boomer Township with his parents and grandparents. Junior was confirmed at St. Paul's in 1938 and graduated from Beebeetown, Iowa High School in 1943.

Junior joined the United States Army in 1945 and trained at Fort Riley, Kansas. Junior crossed the Atlantic on the USS Lejeune (AP-74), a troopship formerly the Germany ship TS Windhuk. The Lejeune encountered a large storm and Junior became acutely seasick. A fellow soldier, Merle Merritt, helped care for Junior. Junior and Merle Merritt became lifelong friends. Junior's son, Merle, is named for Merrill Merritt.

The Lejeune landed in Bremerhaven, Germany just before Christmas 1945 and Junior and Merle were sent to Marburg in central Germany. In Marburg Junior and Merle were assigned to the 78th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop of the 78th Infantry Division and sent to serve with the army of occupation in Berlin, which was in eastern Germany surrounded by the Russian sector.

Junior served as one of the four-man crew of an M8 armored car patrolling the Berlin streets at night.

In May 1946, the 78th Infantry Division left Berlin and Junior was assigned to the new 16th Constabulary Squadron.

Junior has told me that while in Berlin, under the tutelage of a German welder, he developed his welding skills by welding armor plate found in a German tank factory to the bottom of scout cars.

Before Junior left Berlin to return to the United States to be discharged, he was given a ten-day leave to visit his stepmother Marie's family in Denmark.

As a young man, Junior farmed in Boomer Township and worked in a machine shop and hardware store in Underwood, Iowa. For most of his working life, Junior was a welder in the Omaha area working for Paxton-Vierling, a steel fabricator.

Junior Rasmussen married **Donna Lee Larson** in 1949.

About Donna Lee Larson: Donna Lee Larson was born in 1929 to Floyd Larson and Irene Anderson, neighbors of the Rasmussens in Boomer Township, and was my maternal second cousin. Donna Lee died in 2015.

Junior and Donna Lee Rasmussen did not have children, and their marriage ended in divorce.

Junior Rasmussen then married **Mary Hedegaard** in 1956.

About Mary Hedegaard: Mary Elizabeth Hedegaard was born in 1927 to Martin Hedegaard and Katie Iversen of the St. Paul's community. Mary graduated from Underwood, Iowa High School in 1945 and then began training at Jennie Edmundson Hospital in Council Bluffs to be a Registered Nurse. Mary married James C. Urban in St. Louis in 1947. Mary and James Urban had one child, whom Junior Rasmussen later adopted.

After Junior Rasmussen and Mary Hedegaard married, they initially lived in Council Bluffs. In December 1961, Junior and Mary and their family moved to an acreage known as the Cook place in southwest Hazel Dell Township near the Hazel Dell Methodist Church and Cemetery. In 1991 they retired to 7 Kenmare Circle in Council Bluffs, where they lived near Junior's brother, Ethan. In late 2010 Junior and Mary moved to the Bethany Heights retirement home in Council Bluffs.

In 2015 Junior Rasmussen was diagnosed with lung cancer. He died at home a few weeks later.

Junior loved to tell stories. A collection of his stories entitled *Stories Told by Junior Marion Rasmussen*, recorded and then typed by Elaine (Bondo) Hoyer, is at the Genealogy Center of the Museum of Danish America in Elk Horn, Iowa.

The four children of Junior and Mary Rasmussen are listed below.

- ▲ **Linda Leigh Rasmussen.**
- ▲ **Merle Martin Rasmussen.**
- ▲ **Wesley William Rasmussen.**
- ▲ **Kirk Kristian Rasmussen.**

- **Ethan Hald Rasmussen**, the first child of Marion and Marie Rasmussen, was born in 1928, confirmed at St. Paul's in 1943, and graduated from Beebeetown High School in 1946.

Ethan Rasmussen married **Maxine Fisher** in 1948.

About Maxine Fisher: Maxine Lois Fisher was born in 1928 to Coleman Fisher Sr. and Emma O'Neill who lived in the St. Paul's area.

After Ethan Rasmussen and Maxine Fisher married, Ethan farmed for nine years, living on three farms in Boomer Township west of St. Paul's and one farm in Harrison County.

First Ethan and Maxine lived for one year in Section 34 in the hollow southeast of the Boomer #8 school. John Mackland had bought most of this farm in 1870. Between 1902 and 1913 it was acquired by Lars Peter Larson and remained in the Larson family until after 1967.

For the next three years Ethan and Maxine lived on the Brunow place to the west in Section 33. Fritz Brunow, a Danish immigrant, had bought this farm before 1885 and it remained in the Brunow family until after 1950.

Next Ethan and Maxine lived for three years in Section 33 a mile to the south of the Brunow place. This farm was the Thomas French home place, later owned by Thomas French's daughter, Maggie (French) Wager. Leona (Wager) Madison, a granddaughter of Thomas French owned the French home place during Ethan and Maxine's tenure. Between 1967 and 1971 Jack and Joan Hester from Persia, Iowa bought this farm.

Of interest: Completely unrelated to my family history, Jack and Joan Hester both served in the Iowa legislature at the same time, one in the state senate and one in the state house. They thought themselves to be the only husband / wife team with this distinction at that time.

Finally Ethan and Maxine lived for two years south of Logan on the Paul Mc___ place.

After Ethan quit farming, Ethan and Maxine moved to Council Bluffs where Ethan worked for the Iowa Nebraska Dairy Association.

As of 2015 Ethan and Maxine Rasmussen were living in Council Bluffs.

The two children of Ethan and Maxine Rasmussen are listed below.

- ▲ **Douglas Bruce Rasmussen.**
- ▲ **Sidney Brian Rasmussen.**

- **Bennett Grant Rasmussen** (3 May 1930 – 13 May 1964), the second child of Marion and Marie Rasmussen, was confirmed at St. Paul's in 1945 and graduated from Beebeetown High School in 1948.

Bennett Rasmussen married **Kathryn Brookhouser** in 1951.

About Kathryn Brookhouser: Kathryn Alice Brookhouser was born in Council Bluffs in 1934 to Leonard and Gladys Brookhouser.

Bennett Rasmussen died of cancer at the age of 34.

The two children of Bennett and Kathryn Rasmussen are listed below.

- ▲ **Kevin Grant Rasmussen.**
- ▲ **Kimberly Gay Rasmussen.**

- **Roland Randal Rasmussen** the third child of Marion and Marie Rasmussen, was born in 1932, confirmed at St. Paul's in 1947 and graduated from Beebeetown High School in 1950.

Roland Rasmussen married **Helen Jensen** in 1960.

About Helen Jensen: Helen Louise Jensen was born in 1942 to Milton Jensen and Lillie Larsen who lived in Boomer Township before moving to Council Bluffs in the early 1940s.

As of 2011 Roland and Helen Rasmussen were living in rural Pacific Junction, Iowa south of Council Bluffs. Their home, a historical stone house, was the residence of my maternal great-uncle and aunt, N. C. A. "Chris" and Annie Johnson, over a century ago.

The two children of Roland and Helen Rasmussen are listed below.

- ▲ **Susan Louise Rasmussen.**
- ▲ **David James Rasmussen.**

- **Quentin Jennings Rasmussen** (22 Jul 1935 – 30 Mar 2013), the fourth child of Marion and Marie Rasmussen, was confirmed at St. Paul's in 1949, and graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs.

Quentin Rasmussen married **Joyce Bell** in 1954.

About Joyce Bell: Joyce Louise Bell was born in Council Bluffs in 1935 and raised by an uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hollender.

Quentin and Joyce Rasmussen later divorced.

The two children of Quentin and Joyce Rasmussen are listed below.

- ▲ **Stephanie Lynn Rasmussen.**
- ▲ **Laura Kristine Rasmussen** (24 Apr 1967 – 14 Apr 2009).

Quentin Rasmussen married **Sally Dell (Watson) Struebing** in 1983.

About Sally Dell Watson: Sally Dell Watson was born in Belleville, Illinois in

1952.

Quentin Rasmussen lived in Council Bluffs, and then in Omaha, Nebraska, where he died in 2013 at the age of 77.

The one child of Sally Dell Watson by her first marriage is listed below.

▲ **Rachel Shoshanna Struebing.**

- **Rosehannah Marie "Rose" Rasmussen**, the fifth child of Marion and Marie Rasmussen, was born in 1937, confirmed at St. Paul's in 1952, and graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs.

Rosehannah married **Ronny Russell** in 1955.

About Ronny Russell: Ronny Frederick Russell (11 Jul 1932 – 17 Jan 2012) was born to Ralph and Bernice Russell and raised in Council Bluffs.

In 2011 Ronny and Rose Russell were living in Council Bluffs on McPherson Avenue at the site of her parents' Iowana Motel.

The two children of Rosehannah and Ronny Russell are listed below.

▲ **Matthew Wade Russell.**

▲ **Todd Joshua Russell.**

End of the *Children of Marion Rasmussen* section
of the *Rasmussen* volume of *Robert Christiansen's Family History*.

End of the *Marion Rasmussen* chapter
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