As for my own history: I, Gordon, married the former Lil- 
lian Bushue and we lived and farmed in Bygland until 1937, 
when we moved to my present home. We have eight children: 
Dorothy, Jean, Douglas, Joyce, Colleen, Robert, Monica and 
Patrick. My wife, Lilian died in 1956. Later I married Clara 
Winchester. She had a son, Robert, who now lives in Minne-
oplis, Minnesota. I still continue my farming operation, at 
the age of 73.

BERNT J. HAGEN

In the spring of 1876 Bernt J. Hagen, an unmarried Norwe-
gian immigrant, homesteaded the Southwest Quarter of Sec-
tion 24 of Grand Forks Township. It was reported as the first 
prairie homestead north and east of East Grand Forks. In 1882 
the Reverend I. Thoralson of Grand Forks performed a mar-
riage ceremony for Bernt and Dorthea Midtmoen, a seventeen 
year old native of Norway.

Bernt and Dorthea became parents of ten children, three 
who have lived to celebrate the Centennial of the Lone Ever-
green Farm. They are Mrs. Peter, Emma, Haugen and Mrs. 
Alex. Ida, McLachlan of Grand Forks, North Dakota, and 
W. E., Julia, Freeman of Grand Forks passed away in 1972.

Adolph died when a boy; and Arthur died as a young man; 
Olaf, Thorvald, Ode and Bennett all married, had families and 
wives who survive them.

Thorvald Hagen remained on the farm until his death in 
1956. Two of his sons, Clifford and Vernon, are the only de-
cendants who continue to farm in Polk County. The Clifford 
Hagens live on the site of the original homestead. They have 
four children: Roger, the oldest son has purchased land to 
become the fourth generation of Hagen landholders. Vernon 
Hagen is an East Grand Forks resident and has farming and 
business operations in several areas of Polk County.

OLE O. HOFF

This gentleman Ole O. Hoff was formerly known as Mr. 
Olson, and whose fine farm lies two miles and a half north of 
East Grand Forks, Minnesota and adjoins that of Bernt J. 
Hagen, was born in Solor, Norway, February 4, 1854. He came 
to the United States in 1882, with no capital but his strong 
arm, clear head and courageous spirit. His passage across the 
sea was not having been paid, he was bound under a strong obli-
gation to work even that out; before he could lay up anything 
for himself or start any project of his own.

On his arrival in this country Mr. Hoff came direct to Polk 
county, where his brother, Bernt Olson, was already estab-
lished on a homestead which he had taken up in 1877. Ole's 
first year in this country was passed in the employ of Samuel 
O. Ormeson as a farm hand, doing much the same he had 
always done in Norway. When his brother Bernt took-up his 
homestead he also took-up a tree claim. This is the land which 
Ole now owns. Bernt was killed by accident on the railroad on 
his way home from Crookston, and at his death left a widow 
and a son named Bernhardt. A daughter named Teolina was 
born after her father's death. Both of these children died early of 
diphtheria.

Bernt Olson's widow, whose maiden name was Olena John-
son, took over the homestead after her husband's death, and 
for one year Ole worked on it. He then moved to the place he 
now owns and occupies, and he has since bought an additional 
160 acres in Roseau county. The widow had only a log house 
on the land when he took hold of it, and he has since built the 
prehent buildings. He raises principally wheat, oats, and bar-
ley. For thirty-three years he has been devoting much of his

Mr. and Mrs. 
John Hoff 
Golden Wedding.

time and energies to the improvement and cultivation of this 
farm, for only thirty acres were broken when he located on it 
and began to develop it. Three years after settling here, he 
made his brother Bernt's widow. They have three children, 
Olof, Emma and John, all living at home.

Mr. Hoff has been a member of the Township Board for the 
last six years, and has also been a trustee of Grand Marais 
Lutheran church. He was for many years a Republican in 
political faith and allegiance, but of late years he has been 
independent of party control and uses his judgment of men in 
disposing of his vote. He is enterprising and progressive, and 
is universally esteemed as an upight man and a very useful citi-
zen.

Ole O. Hoff died in 1924 of injuries sustained when a motor 
vehicle collided with his horse and buggy as he was returning 
to his farm home from East Grand Forks. Ole Hoff passed 
away in 1927. Bernt Olson and his wife came from Goodhue 
County in Minnesota to East Grand Forks by covered wagon. 
Also, the land in Roseau County was sold and the proceeds of 
the sale, $2,000 deposited in a bank in Roseau. He then lost the 
entire amount when the bank went bankrupt, a not uncommon 
occurrence in the early days.

The children of Ole and Olena Hoff all married and stayed 
in Polk County. The original homestead was divided and their 
sons Olof and John lived on the same farms through their 
entire lives.

Ole Hoff married Anna Thompson, the daughter of 
another pioneer couple who settled in Grand Forks Township. 
They had four children, Howard, Lyle, Ruth and Shirley, who 
between them have fourteen children. Howard is now living on 
and farming his father's part of the original homestead. Olof 
died at the age of 82. Anna Hoff is now living in East Grand 
Forks.

John Hoff married Grace Aasland of Thief River Falls, also 
the daughter of Norwegian immigrants and they had seven 
children: Orris, Stanley, Glenn, Elizabeth, Jacquesline, Paul 
and Patricia. They are all married and have twenty-two chil-
dren between them and also provided John and Grace with 
seven great-grandchildren. John passed away at the age of 
eighty, and his wife, Grace, is still living on the farm which is 
now being farmed by sons, Stanley and Glenn.

Emma Hoff married Henry Lindgren, the son of Scandi-
navian immigrants and they lived and farmed in Esther town-
ship. They had three children: Leonora, Clarence, and Evelyn, 
who died during her childhood. Leonora and Clarence married 
and between them had five children. Henry died at the age of 
92 after having spent his entire life in Polk County. Emma still 
lives in East Grand Forks, and Clarence is now farming their 
home farm.