Meta is the lone survivor in the family. She was named acting postmaster at the death of her father and served until February 2, 1926, when her brother, Henry, received a temporary appointment from President Coolidge; a regular commission and appointment by President Hoover in 1930; and again by President Roosevelt in 1940 which placed him on a permanent basis. Meta worked at the Fisher bank and at American Crystal Sugar Company in East Grand Forks until her retirement. She now resides in Fisher. Also living are twelve grandchildren, thirty-five great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren. Noel, Warner and Walton Wentzel of the Fisher area are among the twelve grandchildren.

Nielsville, Minnesota History

Nielsville — Records kept by the earliest settlers show that the Nielsville community was started near the battlefields where the Sioux and Chippewa Indians fought for supremacy in Northern Minnesota.

The settlement dates back to May of 1872 when Nels O. Paulsrud, for whom the village was named, settled in what is now Hubbard township about a mile and one-half northwest of the present Nielsville, and near the Little River battlefield. Paulsrud came to America from Norway in 1869, and together with his family, built a small cabin on his claim. An old deed reveals that the pioneer's name was really Nels (or Nils) Olson, and that the name Paulsrud was adopted later from the estate where they lived in Norway.

Other families settled in the area and a sketch written in 1888 reveals that only about 25 families settled in the entire county in 1872, with most of them along the Red and Sand Hill rivers.

A post office was established, and records show that the settlement was named Nielsville in the year of 1882. The inland village which sprang up around the post office was known as "Old Nielsville." The post office was first located on the Andrew Thompson farm one mile west of Nielsville.

Lewis S. Kolden arrived on the scene in 1883, and the post office was later transferred to the Kolden store near the Paulsrud claim. S. W. Brekke opened a blacksmith shop in 1883, and John Peterson opened a shop during the following year. Paulsrud carried the mail from Caledonia, North Dakota to the Thompson farm and later from Fisher to Old Nielsville.

Noted as a thrifty little town during those years, Nielsville was located in the southwestern corner of Polk county and on the Crookston-Moorhead branch of the Great Northern Railroad. It is situated in one of the best farming sections of the Red River Valley.

As the town grew, businesses sprang up and stores changed hands quite often. Kolden sold his store to his brother, Syver Koldén, and E. C. Onstad in 1892. They in turn sold to George Tollofson, and he and Onstad, who had built another store, moved their establishments to Nielsville when the railroad reached this point in 1896. Halvor Benson and Charles Bye also built stores on the new site.

That same fall Andrew Tronnes built the "Nielsville House" and St. Anthony and Dakota Elevator Company erected an elevator and commissioned an agent to run it. St. Petri Lutheran church, which was built near the old town, was moved to Nielsville in 1897.

The settlement grew as more establishments came into being. Halvor Benson and Charles Bye operated grocery and dry goods stores, and Kolden established a lumber yard in the new town in 1897. When Kolden entered the lumber business in Nielsville he bought out the yard of the Rosan Brothers. The lumber company changed hands a number of times and eventually was operated by John Dahl and members of the Dahl family for a number of years.

In 1897, the Rev. O. H. Brodland became the first resident pastor to serve the St. Petri Lutheran church, bringing God's message in both the Norwegian and English dialects.

The population continued to grow as more businesses opened up. Among them were livery stables operated through the years by Alfred Wegen, Benny Vigen, Louis Haugen, Ingvard Eidsmoe, and John Orvik; implements, machinery and gas station by Onstads and Peter Kunkel; harness shop, Eugene Howland; Northwestern Elevator Company with Andrew Monson as agent; butcher shops by Peder Wigen, Lars Vignes, Jacobsons, Albert Jahl, Melvin Eidsmoe, Hans Paulson, Julius Brekke, Emil Paulson, Archie Olson, and John Martinson; hotel, restaurant, and shoemaking by E. P. Ramsey; Benson Brothers, furniture, framing and funeral supplies; feed mill by Martin Sand; John Swenson, painter; blacksmith shops, J. P. Skala, S. Brekke, Palmer Sharpe, John Peterson.
Kunkel: barbershops by Henry Paulson and Sigurd Paulsrud, and a number of barbers through the years.

The State Bank of Nielsville was organized in July 18, 1904, with a capital of $10,000. The banking house was built in 1904 by Nels Muas and A. D. Stevens. It was known as the Stevens Bank until 1906 when B. B. Larson and Norman Rosholt bought it and changed its name to the State Bank of Nielsville.

L. S. Kolden was named cashier in 1911. The bank flourished until 1929 when together with most other banks in the area, it closed its doors forever.

The Royal Neighbors of America organized a chapter in Nielsville in 1923 and have been active ever since. Three charter members still living are: Mrs. Clara Brekke, Mrs. Gena Kunkel and Mrs. Olive Dahl. Mrs. Ethel Eidsmoe, member of the Nielsville Chapter at present, is State Supervisor for the Royal Neighbors of America in Colorado and Wyoming.

At one time Nielsville flourished with three stores, a millinery shop, and several cafes. There were a number of potato houses to accommodate the produce of this farming community. The first was started by Odin Bjornstad and Tommy Thompson. Later houses were operated by Danielson, Egeland and Palm, Brekke, Swanson-Brady, and Miller.

A definite change came in the 1930's and '40's with modes of travel having changed from the horse and buggy to mechanical by that time. A trip into town became a family outing combined with shopping for the necessary items and neighborly visiting.

With the increasing popularity of cars, Saturday night in Nielsville became the high point of the week. Stores remained open as long as there were customers, sometimes until 11 or 11:30 at night. The men of the community talked farming while the women took walks or sat together in cars and visited. For the children, Saturday night was a special time of games, penny candy, ice cream, and hide and seek with their friends.

The Saturday evening “trading” often amounted to an even exchange of eggs or cream for the needed dry goods or groceries. Members of the community patronized all of the stores as well as the meat market, hotels and restaurants, which were kept busy serving refreshments or ice cream cones.

At times during the summer months there were outdoor movies, but the big event of the summer was the carnival sponsored by the American Legion Post. While the rides and concessions kept the children occupied, the adults flocked to the Legion Hall where “Estil, Lars, and Louis” kept the dancers happy with their old-time music until the wee hours of the morning. The wives of the legionnaires ran a food stand near the dance hall and took turns working so that all had a chance to dance and enjoy the event.

With the progress of the years came the telephone office operated by Clara Howland, Tina Stuhaug, Amanda Grothe, Gina Gilbertson, and Alice Amsundson. A hatchery was opened up and operated by Alfred Hanson and Jorgen Boe, and more recently, a greenhouse by Roger and Darlene Ruthenberg.

Progress also brought about a decline in Nielsville. When transportation made traveling distances so easy and enjoyable, people began commuting to other towns to do their shopping, doctoring and visiting, so that one by one the business places were forced to close their doors.

The Cash Mercantile Company, built in 1920, opened November 6th, by Erick Landgaard, who with his wife operated the store for forty-two years. Since their deaths, their son Jerome, has been operating the store.

The Nielsville House, built by Andrew Tronnes in 1896 was later owned and operated by Elmer and Edna Tronnes. A new building erected recently to replace the old has been operated by the Tronnes family until 1975 when Doug Palm purchased the business and it is now known as Couse's Place.

The post office with Alfred Hanson as postmaster, one gas station managed by Wayne Bernard, a bulk oil station run by LeRoy Chandler, and a fix-it shop run by Sidney Smith now exist. The Peavey Elevators are managed by Conrad Murach with Marlys Skalet as assistant manager. Michael-Swanson-Brady Inc. of Moorhead own and operate the Nielsville Washer Plant where potatoes of the Red River Valley are processed. The plant employs a number of local residents for seasonal work in the spring and fall.

Nielsville also has a fire department with Albert Dockter as fire chief. Volunteers man the truck when answering alarms.

A new dial-direct telephone system has been in operation for some time; the town has an adequate water and sewage system and disposal of garbage has been solved with a regular garbage collection each week.

The streets are tarred and kept clean through a special program manned by people who care about their town. Flowers and garden plots are a regular "beautification project" of the local garden club, comprised of a group of women who take pride in adding beauty and color to the village.

Nielsville is not without its patriots. Through the years, and several wars, dedicated men of the community have given of their time and lives in the service of their country.

St. Petri Lutheran church is as alive and useful today, and God willing, the town, the church and the community will continue to work together for the betterment of all concerned through the years to come!

ST. PETRI LUTHERAN CHURCH

The St. Petri Congregation is listed in the church publication "Norske Lutherske Menigheter I Amerika" as being organized on October 11, 1874 with a total of 100 members that first year. Another source listed the date of organization as May 11, 1875. Since the early records were destroyed by fire, the exact date is difficult to establish. The St. Petri Congregation celebrated its Centennial on July 4, 5, 6, 1975.

The charter members as of May, 1875 were: Hans L. Gordon, Andrew L. Gordon, Lars H. Gordon, Charles L. Gordon, Anders O. Tronnes, Jorgen Johnson, Ole A. Tronnes, Johan-
nnes Jorgenson, Edward Tronnes, and Theodore Tronnes.

The decision to build a church was made in March, 1886, but the actual building did not take place until in 1887. The church was built on a site east of the Bjornstad farm on a plot of ground donated by the late Henry Simon, Sr. In 1896 the Great Northern Railway Co. laid its tracks through what became the present site of Nielsville, and two years later the church was moved to its present site. There has been added to the church a Parish Education Building in 1957; a front entrance in 1967; and a new east entrance, completed in 1975. The original church building is still the sanctuary.

Pastors who have served St. Petri are: Reverends, Bjug Aamondson Harstad, Hans Pederson Solstad, Peer Olson Stromme, Anders C. Anderson, Halvard Roalkvam, Hans Olsen Skyberg, Hans Johannessen Villevik, Johan-Theodor Bursett, Ole Hanson Brodlad, Otto Johnson Lutness, Karl Stomme, Jacob Nelson Dordal, Hans M. Finstad, Orlando A. Lee, Edward W. Johnshoy, A. B. Solberg, Dean Bakken, Robert Nedrud is the present pastor.

**NIELSVILLE AMERICAN LEGION AND AUXILIARY**

The American Legion at Nielsville was organized November 21, 1919 and given the name Hubbard Post Number 336. Some of the first officers and charter members still living are Helmer Anderson of Roseburg, Oregon; John Paulsrud, now living in Norway; Oscar Tronnes of Minneapolis; Millard Hestad, Ada and Henry Evje, Gunnar Paulsrud, and Bennie Aukland of Nielsville.

The Legion has been active over the years in sponsoring the 4-H Club, Boy Scouts, community Christmas tree in the street, summer picnics and carnivals for the community, bingo parties. They were also instrumental in furthering the memorial erected on the school grounds to commemorate the Indian battle in the area. Each year the Legion and its auxiliary arrange for a Memorial Day program preceded by a visit to the area cemeteries, where they conduct a memorial service. The present Legion officers are: Francis Spokely, Jr. Commander; Leroy Chandler, adjutant; Deforest Palm, financial officer.

The Auxiliary was formed in the early 1920's to aid in the activities of the Legion. Its present officers are: Avis Boe, president; Beatrice Sundrol, vice president; Betty Hanson, secretary and Opal Brekke, treasurer. Every year they sell the National American Legion Poppy to aid the disabled veterans.

**INDIAN HISTORY**

In 1819, on the 120th anniversary of the battle between the Chippewa and the Sioux, which had taken place near the site of old Nielsville, a marker was erected on the school grounds at Nielsville. On the marker is the inscription: BATTLE OF THE LITTLE RIVER.

Near this spot on the Little River, the Chippewa and the Sioux fought a major battle in 1819, leading to the treaty of 1825, ending tribal war in Minnesota. Prior to 1819, the Chippewa from the east, having obtained guns from the white man, were becoming stronger and stronger and pushed the Sioux farther south and west. The final battle between the two tribes was fought at the mouth of the Little River. The Little River is the small creek to the north of the school grounds and empties into the Red River just north of the Odin Bjornstad farm.

The outcome of this Battle of the Little River was that after a day of bloody fighting both tribes retreated, the Chippewa north of the Sand Hill and the Sioux to the south. In 1825 the United States Government, in order to end this tribal warfare, decided that the Chippewa were to have the land north of a line running from this point on the Red River diagonally across the state to Anoka. The Sioux were to have the land south of this line.

**NIELSVILLE BOY SCOUTS, CUB SCOUTS AND CAMP FIRE GIRLS AND GARDEN CLUB**

We have learned that the Nielsville Boy Scout troop may have been first formed in 1918 under Guy Spokely, Scout Master. Although there are no available records, we have found that some of the early members of the troop have been Otto Paulsrud, Ward Simmons (then a depot agent here) Jorgen Boe, Sherman Bakke, Vernon Hgeland and Sherman Bra
tager. Scouts were taught the various scouting skills and were taken on camping trips to such places as Lake of the Woods, Itasca and roughing it in our local wooded area by the Red River. In 1945 the Scouts were sponsored by the Lutheran brotherhood of the church.

We believe that the first Cub Scout group was organized by Mrs. Orlando Lee, then our pastor's wife, in about 1949. It existed for a time and was allowed to dissolve, only to be reorganized at a later date and is now active again.

The Camp Fire Girls were organized under the direction of a high school teacher, Lenora Issacson, in about 1931. They were an active organization who pursued their crafts, went camping and as a diversion, presented a three-act play, "The Revering of Rosalie," a story about a white child who was kidnapped by gypsies and finally was returned home. The group had a good time presenting it in neighboring towns and it was very well received. The Camp Fire Girls finally disbanded when their leader left for another school and some of the girls graduated and moved on.

The Nielsville garden club was organized January, 1957. It was named the "Garden Bugs." In December 1961, the club was discontinued. In January, 1963, a new garden club was organized with the name "Nielsville Prairie Gardeners." The club meets once a month. Their project is, in the spring, to plant flowers around the church and the flower strips up town and to keep them watered and hoed.

The highlight of the year (1975) was the preparation of the 11th District, 16th Annual Flower Show on August 15th at the Climax School with the Climax Evergreen Club and the Nielsville Prairie Gardeners Clubs, hostesses.

**SCHOOLS, 4-H CLUB AND RECREATION IN NIELSVILLE**

As the people settled in Hubbard township one of the first concerns was to establish schools for their children. The first school built was in district 5, a half-mile west and a half-mile south of Nielsville. It was built in 1876. Later a school was built two miles north of "Old Nielsville." District 7 built two miles east and one-half mile south of Nielsville. In 1905 district 19 moved a school house in from Scandia township. It was located four miles east and one mile north of Nielsville, so at this time there were five rural schools in the township. This was necessary as the children had to walk to school. In 1917 a
new school house was built in district 19 and in 1918 a new school house was built in district 17.

Shortly after Nielsville was moved to its present site, a two-room school was built in Nielsville. This included district 5. In 1918 a new grade and high school was built in Nielsville. District 23 was consolidated with Nielsville at this time. In 1971 the Nielsville school consolidated with Climax and the school at Nielsville was closed. Districts 17 and 19 also consolidated with Climax.

The 4-H Club has been active in Nielsville since it was first organized in the 1930's. The largest enrollment was in 1939 when 58 members were enrolled in 150 projects and they had 100 percent completion. At present the officers of the community 4-H Club are: Mark Landgaard, president; John Landgaard, vice president; Gary Braaten, secretary; Linda Doeden, treasurer. Their adult leader is Mrs. Jerome Landgaard. Numerous trips and awards have been won by club members over the years. The last one to win a trip was Linda Doeden, who went to the state fair on her garden project.

During the last 30 years the village has flooded an area in town to be used for a skating rink. Youngsters of all ages could be seen using it and even some of the "oldsters". A warming house was provided for their comfort and enjoyment.

**SVEN K. BRATAGER**

Swen K. Bratager was born on a gaard called Bratagereie in Hol Hallingdal, Norway, to parents Birgit Torstensdatter and Knut Swenson, March 28, 1863. He was baptized April 26, 1863. They had six other children, Ole, Thorsten, Margit, Birgit, Guri and Gro. Thorsten and Margit came to America in late 1870. Thorsten came to Belmont and Margit to Deadwood, South Dakota. Kari Olssattter Brataaker was born January 6, 1858, on the Brataaker gaard. (It should be explained here, they were both born on the same gaard, but she was the daughter of the owner and Swen's parents were working for him and one had to take the name of the farm. That was the rule all over Norway.)

Kari had a brother Ole and four sisters: Anne (Mrs. Lars Hallebrot), Birgit (Mrs. Vikan), Guri and Gunvor (Mrs. Larsen). Swen Bratager and Kari Olssattter were united in marriage June 17, 1884 in Hols (Gamle Kirk) old church where they both had also been baptized and confirmed. They came to Reynolds, North Dakota, the same year. He worked for Swen Myre and other farmers along the River in the Rosenbraaten Church vicinity. He farmed for Guro Dokken for seven years. Five children were born there: Birgit (died when one year old), Carl (died when he was four), Bertha, Carl and Bernt. In 1897 he bought lots that the farmers on the prairie had cleared for wood along the river north of the Nielsville bridge. It contained 40 acres but was in four different sections, because of the river bends. He had to clear off the stumps so he could build the house and that required muscle and he had it. It was all done without the use of dynamite.

Selmer was born in the new home December 15, that same year. His father drove thirteen and one half miles with horse and buggy to fetch the mid-wife, Mrs. Alletta Halvorson, to assist at the birth. In 1904, they added another room to the house and Bertha was very happy looking forward to the added comfort. But she died that year, age 16. The land was cleared and an orchard of apples, plums and cherries were the delight of many, not to mention the lovely flowers he grew. He did all the butchering in the neighborhood and worked for Ole Pederson across the river for several years. Mr. Pederson often made the remark when you have Bratager to work for you, he does the work of three men. It was true. He was very strong and enjoyed good health. His wife was often sick, but she worked hard side by side with him in haying and other field work. She was a kind, humble person and did a lot of knitting and quilting for the Ladies Aid at the St. Petri church, of which they were members, Selmer was the first child Rev. O. H. Broodland baptized in his ministry. Swen often talked of the great flood of the spring of 1897. Every thing was under water at their place then, but the flood came in from two sides at the Andrew Kleppe place so fast, not many of the cattle could be saved. Kleppe cried out "$50.00 to anyone who will save my bull", but the current was so strong nothing could be done. The bellowing of the cattle was heartbreaking.

Kari Bratager died March 11, 1926 and when the Depression hit, the home was lost through fore-closure. Then his health began to fail and he died January 24, 1940. Both are buried in Sundet cemetery.

**CHARLES AND ANNE BURD**

Charles Edward Burd was born at Hartleton, Pennsylvania. His ancestors came to this country in the early 1700's. His great-great grandfather was a soldier in the Continental Army. One winter day in the year of 1902, Charles told his parents he was going West to look for work. His father thought perhaps Ohio would be far enough away from home — also, they had friends and relatives living there. Beyond there, they thought the country was pretty wild, but Charles had received a letter from his brother, George, who was already out West and urged him to come and work at the Hayes Farm — Brothers who were from Charles' home town — and farmed a lot of land and hired many men. So it was decided he could try it. He worked at the Hayes Farm for about 16 years that year around. One winter he attended school at the Agricultural College in Fargo.

Life at the farm was very interesting. There were always many people around. There were visitors, students and pastors from Pennsylvania who came and spent most of the summer at the farm. The students conducted Sunday school and services on Sunday. There young folks met and planned outings, parties or dances for the coming week. There was always someone in the crowd that could play some kind of musical instrument
for music for dancing. Dances, parties, sleighrides, horseback-riding, baking and masquerade parties during the winter were held at the farmhouose, where the hired help lived. The cooks and two girls from the Sam and Jim Hayes' homes all took part in these entertainments.

When the Hayes Brothers quit farming, Charles and his brother, Lynn, rented half the acreage of the farm, which was some over 1000 acres. Tom and Halvor Skredvedt rented the other acreage. So again there was a friendly neighborhood and many good times. They farmed for eight years. In 1926, Charles married Anne Nygaard, whose parents were pioneers in the Gryglia, Minnesota area. One of her early recollections is crossing the "floating bog" on the road on her way home from Thief River Falls. In 1927, they moved to the Alma Bjornstad Farm on the North Dakota side of the Red River. They farmed here for 37 years. Both Mr. and Mrs. Burd were active in community affairs. Charles was a member of the Bingham School Board and P.T.A.

Charles and Anne are the parents of seven children: William Alexander, a graduate of Climax High School and Concordia College. He served in the United States Navy during World War II. He is an agent for Massachusetts Mutual Insurance Company. He married Joan Horvick, a graduate of St. Olaf’s. They have three children: James, Susan and David, all students in Moorhead schools.

Miles Edward, a graduate of Climax High School, served seven years in the Air Force, went to Officers’ Training School, was commissioned to First Lieutenant, and was twice decorated by President Eisenhower for services beyond the call of duty.

Barbara Anne is a graduate of Climax High School and a home economics graduate of Concordia College. She married David Kaldahl while they were students at Concordia. They own and operate Fair Hills Resort at Detroit Lakes. They have four children: Steven, a student at Augustana College, now at home; Beth, at Oak Grove High School; Lisa and Daniel in grade school at Detroit Lakes.

Charles Owen enlisted in the air force with six other young men from Nielsville, Minnesota. He married Geraldine Hillenbrand of Dayton, Ohio. They had one son, Kyle, a junior at Vandalia High School. Charles died October 22, 1969.

When Charles and Anne retired from farming, they bought the buildings and three acres of land from Betsy Dale. Charles still drives the car and checks on farming operations in the neighborhood. He died in 1976. Anne is kept busy with housework and has a large garden to care for. She is still active in A.L.C. work and belongs to the Prairie Garden Club. The children and their families come home often.

Again this year plans are being made for the family reunion on Thanksgiving Day. This year we gather at the Richard Burd home. There will be about 28 or 30 when we all get there.

CHARLES J. BYE

Mr. Bye was born in Houston County March 28, 1867. In 1871, his parents, John O. and Matha Jacobson, natives of Norway, moved to Cass County, North Dakota, where Charles remained until 1884. For five years he was assistant county treasurer of Cass county and during that same period he was manager of a musical organization at Fargo, North Dakota.

In 1891, Mr. Bye again became a resident of Minnesota, locating at Comstock, where he was employed as a bookkeeper for about four years. In the fall of 1894, he moved to Nielsville and started the mercantile business. He was appointed postmaster of Nielsville in May, 1897.

In January, 1895, Mr. Bye was united in marriage with Miss Gertie Kittleson, who was born in Fillmore county, Minnesota.

MARTINE DANIELSON

Martine Danielson was born near Gardermoen, Norway, and her parents were Ole O. Nordby and Kristine Frederika Nordby. Her mother’s maiden name was Kristine Fredrika Ursen, and she was born into a noted musical family. Her older brothers and sisters played different musical instruments. One of her brothers made a journey from Gardermoen to Seattle, Washington, where he presented a violin concert. Before he left Seattle for his return to his home near Gardermoen, Norway, he was taken sick and died in the city of Seattle. The teacher for the musical family of Ursen was the noted Ole Bull.

When Martine was one year of age, her father and mother decided to emigrate to the United States. They left their home near Gardermoen, Norway, and went to Oslo, Norway, and boarded a ship there and sailed from Oslo, Norway, to New York City, United States of America, and then boarded a train from New York City and traveled to Lanesboro, Fillmore county, Minnesota, where they made their home for many years. While they lived near Lanesboro, Martine’s father and mother were blessed with four more children. Martine’s sisters and brothers were as follows: Maren, who in later years married Julius Engelsstad; Anne who later married Andrew Monson; and her brothers, Carl and Christian Nordby. When Martine’s sisters and brothers were almost grown up, her father and mother and the family were anxious to move from their home near Lanesboro to the Red River of the North, were lots of people from the southern part of Minnesota and Wisconsin were moving to file claims on new land in the Red River Valley. Her father and mother moved to the Red River Valley and they settled near Nielsville, Minnesota, where the town is now located, where her parents lived until they passed away.

Martine, when she was 18 or 19 years of age, went to work at a hotel in the village of Caledonia, North Dakota, which was a very noted small town at the time. The steamboat was operating on the Red River of the North at that time from Winnipeg, Canada, to Georgetown, Minnesota. The Courthouse of Traill County, North Dakota, was also located in Caledonia at that time. The people on the Minnesota side also voted at Caledonia the same as the North Dakota people.

During those early times Martine met Jacob Danielson and they became very good friends and later on fell in love and got married. After Martine and Jacob were married they bought a farm near Nielsville, Minnesota, where the village is now located. They farmed for many years and were very successful in their farming, as they acquired 320 acres of very good land and also built new buildings on the farm. They also had lots of horses, cattle and farm machinery and kept everything in good shape. A few years after they were married, they were blessed with a son who passed away at an early age, but later they were blessed with another son, whom they named Orlando, who grew to manhood and was well known in and around the country and Nielsville. When Martine’s sister became sick, she had a daughter who was only 18 months old, so Martine took her sister’s daughter to their home and Martine and Jacob kept Maren’s daughter when Maren passed away, and they raised her until she was grown up. Her sister’s daughter’s name was Annie Mathilda Engelsstad, and they loved her as if she were their own daughter. Later on, Martine quit farming, as Jacob had passed away many years before, and also Orlando passed away in 1942. She then decided to move to the village of Nielsville, where she purchased a home and she resided in her home until she passed away in 1955. Martine was a very wonderful woman all her life and she had lots of wonderful friends. Blessed be her memory!

ALBERT AND ADELINE ORVIK DOCKTER

John T. Orvik was born at Shelly, Minnesota and Mother Lizzie Olson was born in Wisconsin. They were married in Wisconsin in 1908. They lived east of Shelly, Minnesota before coming to Nielsville around 1912. Clifford was born in Wisconsin and now makes his home in Red Lake Falls, Minnesota. Irene and Eloise were born on a farm east of Shelly. Irvin lives on a farm out of Shevlin, Minnesota. Etta married Royal Hansen. She passed away in 1971.

Juince was born in the house now owned by Mrs. Hazel Spokey. She married Arne Berg and lives in Minneapolis. Obert, Erma, Adeline, Leroy, Opal, and Bennie were all born
in the house now owned by John C. Skale. This is what we call the "home place". Obert, Opal (Mrs. Robert Brekke) and Adeline live in Nielsville. Erma married Vernon Venne; she passed away in 1977. Leroy lives in Faribault, Minnesota, and Bennie lives in Silver Bay, Minnesota.

I. Adeline, married Albert Dockter from Wells County in North Dakota in 1940. We have one child, Alan. He went to school in Nielsville through the eighth grade and graduated from the Halstad High School and North Dakota State University. He married Veronica Anderson of Halstad in 1962. They live in Massachusetts, where he works for Honeywell Inc. as a supervisor of production engineering. They have three sons, Todd, Bradley, and Jon. Albert is an electrician and mechanic. When first we were married, we lived short whiles in Fosston and Red Lake Falls and some towns in North Dakota. Around 1940 Albert was foreman for companies building R.E.A. power lines. We lived in Tukwila, Washington before moving back and making our home in Nielsville.

My folks had the livery barn and dray line for years. Dad was also in the hardware business with Carl Paulson; then he bought Carl's share in the business. They also had a milk route in town and sold milk products. This was done to make ends meet. Every morning and evening there was the milking of the cows, washing and sterilizing, and filling bottles, and also the delivering of the milk. In 1923 Dad became postmaster and was postmaster until the time of his death in 1940.

Mother would always call me first in the morning about 6 A.M. I was quite easy to awaken. Then the hard work began: it was for me to get the others up and this wasn't appreciated. I would always fill milk bottles and prepare breakfast before going to work at the post office. I worked for my dad at the post office. On cold mornings one had to get the coal and wood heater started. I did this at the time Dad's health was failing. He also had the job of carrying the mail between the post office and depot, and this I did for him. The evening train was due around 10 P.M., and there were nights it came after midnight. The Crookston Times came on that train. It didn't make any difference how late the train was, a fellow called "Captain Midnight" waited for that paper. I am a clerk at the post office now, and in all I have worked about 31 years. I remember rubbing clothes on a rub board; we carried water from a block away, usually two pails at a time. We finally got a well in our yard. We loved to sit on the pump stand with Mother, even if she told us we had forgotten to wash our necks and behind our ears. Mother passed away in 1971.

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**GUSTAV R. EIDSMOE**

Gustav R. Eidsmoe was born April 12, 1891, to his parents, Amund and Annie Eidsmoe. His mother was Annie Hansbraaten and they came by boat from Norway, first coming to Halstad, Minnesota to his brother Ole Eidsmoe in the spring of 1887. They settled in Polk county on a quarter of land in section 36, Hubbard township about three miles east of Nielsville, where they lived all their lives. His father passed away in 1908 and his mother in 1915. Both are buried in the St. Petri cemetery. Gust and five brothers, Ingvald, Otto, Henry, Albert and Melvin; and one sister, Mrs. George Larson (Marie) of Ersine, Minnesota.

On July 24, 1944, Gust married Elaine Bakke, the daughter of Simon and Anne Bakke. Gust worked as a carpenter and was engaged in trucking. He also operated the Eidsmoe Cafe for a number of years. Elaine attended school in Nielsville, and Climax High School. After graduating she went to the teachers training department in East Grand Forks, Minnesota and taught in a rural school. We had three children, Georgine Ann, Kathleen and Bonita, who were all born at Nielsville.

Georgine Ann married Joseph Gosparovich of Detroit, Michigan. She graduated from Climax High School and attended Auerswald University in Seattle, Washington and later worked as secretary for Knutson Accounting Office in Crookston, Minnesota and after her marriage, at the K. D. Upholstering and Furniture Company in Detroit. They have two children, Joseph and Deena, and are living in Carleton, Michigan.

Kathleen married Timothy Lahren of Fargo, North Dakota. She graduated from Climax High School and after graduation worked for Northwestern Bell and Fredricks Floral in Fargo. They have two children, Richard and Christopher and live at Moorhead, Minnesota. Bonita attended school in Nielsville and graduated from Climax High School. She attended Interstate Business College at Fargo, North Dakota and worked there for a few years. She is living in Minneapolis and is employed as senior secretary in the School of Architecture and Landscaping at the University of Minnesota. The family has been life members of St. Petri Lutheran church at Nielsville, Minnesota.

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**MELVIN EIDSMOE**

Melvin Eidsmoe was born May 17, 1904. His parents were Amund and Anna Eidsmoe of Nielsville, Minnesota. Her parents were Olaus and Julia Engelstad of Nielsville, Minnesota. Melvin and I are both native born in Nielsville farms three miles apart. We were both educated in grades in Nielsville.
had high school there and Melvin graduated from North West School of Agriculture in Crookston. We were married June 3, 1936. We operated the meat market for six years and left for Tacoma, Washington for defense work. We lived there one year and moved to Los Angeles. At Nielsville we had two girls, Arlene Jeanette and Luverne Harriet. In Los Angeles, Myles was born.

We lived in Los Angeles for three years, returning to Fargo for three years, where Melvin was in construction work. We moved back to Nielsville in June of 1949 and operated the cafe until July 1972, when Melvin retired and we moved to Longmont, Colorado, where we are at present. My (hers) is State Supervisor of Colorado and Wyoming for Royal Neighbors of America Fraternal Insurance Society.

Our children are all married and all have families. Arlene married John Annden from Beltrami. Arlene graduated from Concordia College and taught first grade in Washington School in Crookston for two years and has taught third grade and kindergarten in Herman since then. They have two children, Mitchell and Lisa. John is principal. Luverne married James Vettel from Caledonia, North Dakota. Luverne trained as x-ray technician — attended the University of Minnesota for this training. They have four children, Timothy, Christopher, Pamela and Jeffrey. James is a farmer. He raises beef cattle. Myles married Marian Moe from Beltrami. He graduated from Moorhead State College. They are living in Kent, Washington. He is an underwriter for Hartford Insurance Company in Seattle. They lived in Titusville, Florida and transferred to the Seattle office. They have three children: Terrence, Catherine and Patricia.

LARS AND TORA EIDSBAKKEN

My great-grandparents, Lars and Tora Eidsbakken, immigrated to North America in 1879, settling first in Halstad, they later moved to Nielsville in Polk county, farming there until their death.

Lars, who was born in Bang in Valdres, Norway, passed away in December 1913. His wife, Tora, was born in October of 1839. She predeceased her husband in January 1905. Kari, their only child, was married to John Eidsmoe, and the young folks arrived in North America with the Eidsbakken's in 1879 and followed them to Nielsville, where they also farmed all of their life.

John and Kari Eidsmoe had five children, Inga, Oscar, Olendo, Laura and Almen. Inga (my mother) married Ole Roen (originally from Koppang in Norway) in June of 1915 in St. Petri church in Nielsville, and they made their home about three miles east of the village, farming. The years of the first World War were difficult for the farmers. Father grew potatoes and sugar beets, and years later I heard him say that potatoes at one time sold for 6¢ a bushel. With farming goes also crop failures, which hit my parents the same as it did other farmers of the area, and to supplement their incomes, my three uncles, Olendo, Oscar and Almen Eidsmoe went together with my father, threshing grain for the farmers of Polk county.

ENDER AND OLIVE ELLINGSO

Ender Ellingson, a farmer near Haugesand in Norway, married Olive Hansa. Four sons were born to them. San (Syvert), Ole (Olaus), Hans and Elling.

Sam Howland and his brothers were born in Skudeanos, Avoldness (Praistegjeld) Norway near Haugesand. Sam came to America in 1875 to Audubon, Minnesota. Later he came to Traill county and took a homestead in Elm River township and also worked on the Grandin Farms. A few years later Ole
and Hans came to America, but Elling stayed on the old home place. Elling married a widow and had one son Edward who came to America and settled near Grygla, Minnesota. Ole Howland married Martha Arnason and they first lived near Caledonia, North Dakota. Their first son Engvold was born there. They later moved to Stephen, Minnesota.

Hans Howland and Karen Vinge homesteaded about three miles north of Caledonia, on what now belongs to Alvin Foss. They also had one more farm located near Caledonia. Hans and Karen had eleven sons: one died at birth, as did a daughter.

Hans was a very ambitious man, as were many of the Norwegian settlers, who came to America. In the fall, after harvesting, the boys would do all the chores and care for the farm. They cut cords of wood for the winter's use. Then Hans would take up his job of selling all kinds of household articles, materials, lace, thread, buttons, etc. to all the farmers in the community. With horse and buggy, traveling was slow and he would be gone for weeks at a time. During the long cold winters, Hans was also a good tailor and made all the boys their suits, trousers and coats. Imagine having to sew for ten boys and yourself. Christmas preparations were started weeks in advance. Baking, butchering, cleaning, sewing, cording wool and spinning it into yarn and knitting kept everyone busy.

HANS CHRISTIAN (HANSON) AND BETSY KARINE (WOLLAN) HAUGEN

Hans Christian Hanson was born in Sondre Land, Norway, May 24, 1863, and was confirmed in Hoff (Hov) Church. He was the oldest child of Hans Hanson and Karen Olsdatter. His sisters were: Oleanna Johanssen, Andrine Berg, Kristine Braaten, and Marie Karstad.

Hans left his home for United States in 1883 and came to his uncle, Ole Hanson, who lived north of Shelly, having settled there in 1877. Hans worked at various farm places around Shelly, and attended school there, and at Caledonia, North Dakota, during the winter. During these years he carefully saved his earnings so he could buy the 160-acre farm two miles south and a half mile west of Nielsville from Mikkel and Betsy Kolstad in 1891.

Halstad seemed to be the nearest town for trading, and business, also friends; so Hans made frequent visits there. In the early spring of 1889, Hans visited at the home of Jacob Furuset, who was noted blacksmith, and a friend from Norway. His wife, Marie was a confirmation classmate of Hans. It was here Hans met Betsy Wollan, who was working at Crookston, and had come with Elise Edseth to visit. Betsy became Hans' hired girl, and later, on July 8, 1892, they were married at Inherred Church, north of Starbuck, Minnesota, where Betsy, daughter of Andreas and Iverine (Moum) Wollan had been baptized and confirmed. Hans and Betsy became members of St. Petri Lutheran Church, at Nielsville, at the time. Hans served as "Klokker" for many years and also deacon and trustee. Betsy was an active member of the "Kvindeforening" (Ladies Aid). They had ten children, Ida, deceased; Kora, Amanda Viden; Hilda, Wiggan; Martha, Leitner; Selma, deceased; Alice Moen; Henry, now deceased, married to Marian Hamre; Belle Imsdahl; and Joseph, married Mildred Beatty.

Hans Christian Hanson became a citizen of the United States in 1896 when he changed his name to Hans Christian Haugen, to avoid confusion of his mail as there was another Hans C. Hanson in the community.

Hans' parents, Hans and Karen Haugen, and his niece Caroline (Calla) Haugen came from Norway in the spring of 1897, and stayed with Hans and Betsy until they had a home built near Shelly. Hans' sisters, Kristine Braaten, and Marie Karstad and their families came from Norway in the spring of 1909.

Hans C. Haugen passed away June 11, 1947, on the farm near Shelly where he had retired in 1938.

Mrs Betsy Haugen passed away on March 16, 1954.

HENRY C. HAUGEN

Henry Clifford Haugen was born to Hans C. and Betsy K. Haugen on the farm near Nielsville which is now owned and operated by Phillip Hamre. Henry married Marian Hamre, Phillip's sister, who was born June 10, 1918 in Scandia Township. They were married on October 30, 1938 in Scandia Lutheran Church in Beltrami. Marian was the oldest of the Benjamin Hamre family in Scandia Township. Henry farmed the home place until the fall of 1957 when he and his family moved to the West Coast. After living in Canby, Oregon and Tacoma, Washington, he bought a grade-A Dairy farm in Buckley, Washington which he operated until his retirement in 1971. He passed away in November 1973 of a massive heart attack. His widow still lives in Buckley near the farm. She is employed at a school for the mentally retarded in Buckley.

Henry and Marian have three offspring, all born in Crookston, Minnesota: Beryl Jon, Marilyn Ruth and Burton Henry. The oldest, a daughter, Beryl was born September 10, 1945. After high school graduation in 1963, she attended Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma and Lutheran Bible Institute in Seattle. She met her husband Daniel Rieke at L.B.I. They were married in Glendale Evangelical Lutheran Church in Seattle on August 18, 1967. Beryl was a parish secretary and church organist until Daniel finished college. She is still in demand as an organist wherever they live. They have lived in Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, Johnson City, Tennessee, Ames and Dubuque, Iowa, and presently are living in Minneapolis.


Daniel was ordained into the American Lutheran Church ministry in June 1975 and has accepted a call to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroun, Africa.

The second, a daughter Marilyn, was born February 6, 1947. She graduated from high school in 1965 after which she attended Lutheran Bible Institute in Seattle and Seattle Pacific College. After working two years making maps for a map company in Tacoma, she married her high school sweetheart, Garry Collins. They were married July 19, 1969 in Mountain
View Lutheran Church in Puyallup, Washington. Gary is employed in the road construction department of the Weyerhaeuser Logging Company’s White River Branch in Enumclaw, Washington. They live in their new home on two and a half wooded acres near Enumclaw.

They have two sons, both born in Enumclaw: Stuart Lee, born June 25, 1971 and Randall Scott, born October 6, 1973.

The third and youngest, a son, Burton was born November 22, 1948. After graduation from high school in 1966 he worked at Boeing Aircraft Co., in Renton until he was drafted in 1968.

After serving in the U.S. Army in the Viet Nam war he purchased Henry’s dairy farm. He married a Buckley girl, Carolyn Hahto on December 5, 1973, in Trinity Lutheran Church in Enumclaw. She was a medical secretary in a hospital in Tacoma. They have a daughter Melanie Renae, born September 15, 1975 in Puyallup, Washington.

**EUGENE HOWLAND**

Eugene and Gusta lived on a farm near Nielsville, Minnesota, later moving into town. They lived upstairs over the harness shop which they owned. Eugene fixed and made harnesses, repaired shoes and canvases. He also made and did picture framing. Eugene was also manager of the Bartlett Oil Company for a number of years. They were members of St. Petri church. Gusta was an active member of the Ladies Aid.

Eugene and Gusta built an addition to the harness shop, part of which they used as a kitchen and the other was rented out: first for the Halstad Telephone Company for a telephone office; later it was rented out for a post office.

Eugene and Gusta had ten children, some dying in infancy.

Clara was married to Albert Eidsmoe. They operated a cafe in Nielsville for 26 years. Clara also worked as a telephone operator and post mistress. Albert at one time worked at the Benson store in Halvor Benson. They had three children: Julius, Lyle, and Orah Mae, all of whom are married and live in California.

Hilda married Helmer Anderson of Halstad, Minnesota, who was at that time employed in the bank at Nielsville under L. S. Kolden. Hilda also worked as a telephone operator and a post mistress. They had one daughter, Audriene. They all live at Roseburg, Oregon, now.

Alfred married Ruth Benke of Halstad, Minnesota. They lived for a time on a farm in Wonewoc, Wisconsin. Then for headmen on the farm, they moved to Cudaby, Wisconsin. Ruth is employed as a teacher and Alfred as a custodian in another school. They have two children, both married.

Jane lives in Greenfield, Wisconsin and Robert in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

James Howland and Marie Densey live in Graham, Washington. He has a 30 acre ranch, and raises cows. He is also employed by the S. P. Railroad. Marie is employed at a working home. They have three children: David, Darrel and Judy. Darrel and Judy are married. David and Darrel are both in the Air Force.

Joseph Howland and Jane live in Englewood, California. He is employed by a car-transport company. They have four children: Travis, Darrel, Kathleen and Kristi, all of whom are married and live in California.

Grace Howland married Nels Skallen and lives in Nielsville, Minnesota.

**HARLEY HOWLAND**

Harley Howland was born December 14, 1915 the son of Mr. and Mrs. Wiener Howland of Nielsville, Minnesota. His father, Wiener Howland, was manager of the P.V. Elevator in Nielsville for many years.

Harley learned the grain business at an early age. He attended school in Nielsville and Climax, Minnesota.

My maiden name was Bertrice Sheridan. I was born in Flint, Michigan, and at the age of four I came west with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sheridan, and my two sisters Blanche and Doris and brother Charles, Jr. to the Nielsville area, where my folks bought a farm home. There were three more brothers born at Nielsville: Glenn, Leslie and Donald.

I attended school in a one room school house known as "The Roningen School". Later I went to high school in Nielsville, then attended beauty school in Fargo.

Harley and I were married on October 12, 1939. We lived for awhile at Nielsville, Minnesota, where our first son Harley Jr. was born on December 8, 1940. In 1942 we moved to Georgetown, Minnesota, where Harley managed the P.V. Elevator. In 1945 we moved to Erskine, Minnesota, where Harley operated the G.T.A. Elevator. I owned and operated the Howland Beauty Shop in Erskine, so we became acquainted with many lovely people. It was a very active town. Every summer we had a "Water Carnival" and everyone took part. During the fall and winter we followed our "winning basketball" teams from town to town. While in Erskine, Harley served as president of the school board, and we were members of the Lutheran Church there.

In April 1951 our son, David was born.

In 1953 Harley was promoted to superintendent of G.T.A. Line Elevator, and we moved to Moorhead, Minnesota, where we still make our home.

Both of our sons are graduates of Moorhead State College. Harley Jr. is married to the former Carolyn Ohe from Rothsay, Minnesota. They have two sons, Harley III and Daniel Sheridan Howland. They live in Moorhead. David is married to the former Kitty Sue Strand from Moorhead. They have two daughters, Jennifer and Rebecca. They live in Huron, South Dakota.

Since moving to Moorhead I have developed my interest in art. I teach several classes in Beginning Oils, at Northern School Supply, Fargo, North Dakota and have many paintings in area business places. This past year my sister, Doris Braaten, of Nielsville, assisted me in the painting of a mural 15 feet long and six feet high. It is entitled “Century of Progress” 1875-1975. It shows farming from the day of the oxen to the present time. It can be seen at the new Production Credit Building in Moorhead.

Harley is still working for G.T.A. He has a hobby of repairing and collecting old clocks.

We are active members of Our Savior’s Lutheran church in Moorhead.

**WIENER HOWLAND**

Wiener Howland was born near Caledonia, North Dakota in 1888. He was the son of Hans Howland and Carolyn Vinge Howland. He had ten brothers and one sister. Wiener’s dad was a farmer. He was also a peddler and sold all kinds of household articles, material, buttons, lace, thread, etc. He was also a very fine tailor, making all the clothes for his family. He bought his materials to sell from the Big Steamboat that came up the Red River in those days.

Wiener grew to manhood in the Caledonia area. In 1912 he married Mathilda Hanson. She was born in 1888, the daughter of Ole Hanson and Sari Kristine Hanson. Her father, Ole Hanson, was born in Norway, where he was a shoe maker by trade. He came to America in 1868. Mathilda had two brothers and two sisters. She grew up on the family farm near Shelly, Minnesota and worked for a time in a millinery shop at Halstad, Minnesota before her marriage.

Wiener and Mathilda had a small family wedding at her farm home on October 5, 1912. After the wedding they left by train for Edmonton, Canada, where Wiener worked as a hotel clerk. After a year in Canada, they returned to Nielsville and bought a home where they lived for the next fifty years.

Wiener manager the P. V. Elevator in Nielsville for thirty-seven years. He also bought a farm south of Nielsville which they farmed for many years.

There were four children born to the Howlands. Carol was born December 18, 1913; Harley was born December 15, 1915; Morris was born July 25, 1920 and Duane was born October 25, 1924.

Wiener bought his first car in 1917. It was a Ford touring car and it cost them $350.00.

Every summer the Howland family would take a vacation trip to Detroit Lakes, Minnesota where they would go fishing, swimming and just enjoy the lake area. Mathilda tells about
those first trips. The roads were not yet gravelled and the tracks were narrow. They would get an early start, and plan to have their noon meal in Moorhead and then shop for a short time before going on the rest of the way. What a contrast to later years when the roads were paved and the trip could be made in little more than two hours. The Howlands were members of the St. Petri Lutheran church in Nielsville.

Wiener passed away in 1962 and Mathilda moved to Moorhead in 1963.

Their children are married. Carol is Mrs. Otto Nielson of Minneapolis. Harley and family live in Moorhead. Morris and family live in Ortonville and Duane and family live in Moorhead.

Mathilda lives in Moorhead and has eight grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

LEWIS S. KOLDEN

Mr. Kolden was born on a rented farm in Lom, Norway on August 28, 1857. The farm was in the district Lillihamar Guldbransdal valley. The farms were small; so, Mr. Kolden’s parents, Syvor and Livo, decided to take their children, three sons and two daughters, to America, where they hoped to do more for them. They came on a steamship and spent only nine days on the trip from Liverpool to New York. Since they had relatives in Wisconsin, this is where they went.

Mr. Kolden was employed at Sparta, Wisconsin, for seven years by Newton Druggists. From there he went to Ada where he worked for two years at the L. Ramstad Pharmacy. From Ada he moved to the area of the first Nielsville, which he helped establish, having been enlisted by Nels O. Paulsrud in this move.

In 1883 Kolden brought lumber from Fargo to the old Nielsville landing on the steamboat Alsop to build the first store. When the store was completed, the post office was transferred from the Andrew Thompson farm house to Kolden’s store. He was postmaster for nine years.

From 1892 until 1897 he farmed in the neighborhood before he entered the lumber business. He became a banker in 1911, serving as cashier and vice president of the State Bank of Nielsville for 17 years.

Mrs. Kolden was born in the community from which her husband came. She came to America as a young girl with a sister. Her parents were Christian and Kari Dahlbak. Mrs. Kolden met her future husband in Wisconsin. In October, 1883, she came to Fargo and boarded a steamboat which stopped at the landing west of old Nielsville. There waiting for her was Mr. Kolden.

The couple were married in Caledonia, North Dakota, on October 26, 1883, by Henry Shuttleworth, the officiating justice. From there they walked to what would be their home for many years. The couple had one child, Lucy, who married David Payne, the first depot agent in Nielsville. The Koldens had six granddaughters and six grandsons. After they retired they moved to Leonard, Minnesota to be near their only daughter.

There were many interesting incidents in the lives of these pioneers. Their home was open to anyone who needed a helping hand. In 1913 a basket social was held at the Kolden farm. Mr. Kolden became head of the first organ for the Nielsville church.

Mr. Kolden’s mother is buried in the cemetery between Nielsville and Shelly. The Koldens have been deceased for many years but their daughter passed away in July 1974.

B. J. KOLSTAD

Mr. Börre J. Kolstad was born in Norway in the locality of Hedemarken, August 20, 1854. He came to the United States when he was eight years old with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Johannes B. Kolstad and his brothers, Lars, Mikkel, Evan and sister Bertha. The family settled in the La Crosse, Wisconsin, area in 1862. Börre Kolstad worked at various jobs as a young man and for some time was a cook in the logging and lumber camps of northern Minnesota.

In 1881 Börre married Gønner Hansen and settled on the farm land one and one-half miles directly south of Nielsville, Minnesota. Börre Kolstad received his homestead rights to the farm (two quarters of land) on May 12, 1885. A short time after, his brothers, Mikkel and Evan, acquired the two quarters just to the south. The parents made their home with Börre and his wife until their death. They were buried at the Nielsville St. Petri Lutheran cemetery. Six children were born to Börre and Gønner Kolstad. Three died in childhood and Mable (Mrs. Knute Evje), Melvin and Carlson lived to a good age. In 1890, the mother, Gønner, passed away; she and the three young children are all buried in the family plot in the St. Petri Lutheran cemetery. Then in 1912, Börre Kolstad married Ellen Swenson, who had recently come to the Red River Valley vicinity from Trondheim, Norway, where she was born January 10, 1858. They had a family of six children: Clara (Mrs. Martin Grothe), George, Martin, Blanche (Mrs. A. Thompson), Sally and Josephine.

Our daily living and activities centered around our church and school. Each Sunday we all had breakfast together, did the dishes and the chores and took care of the animals. Then, readied in our Sunday best, we were on our way to church services. Mother and Dad always were at hand to give help where and when needed when they could. Dad was a delegate to church conventions and meetings a number of times. He was clerk of the school board at Nielsville, Minnesota for a number of years and was active in the village council.

We bought a home in Halstad, Minnesota about the year 1916, and lived there several years after Dad passed away. Dad died January 25, 1925. The house was purchased by the Oparande sister.

When we moved to our new home in Halstad, we drove with horse and buggy, a distance of about 15 miles from the farm. In a few years we bought our first automobile, a Dodge, four-door, which had the insulated glass curtains, which were snapped on in a hurry when the rains came. The first time we drove to Moorhead, Dad told of the time when he first settled on the farm: he walked that long way, about 50 to 60 miles, which took from very early morning until late at night. When he did arrive in Moorhead, there was not a room available at the hotel, but he got a cot put in the hallway for the night.

In Moorhead. Dad purchased some lumber, staples: food such as flour, sugar, salt, rice, meal for breakfast food, etc. Dad built a make-shift raft at the Red River front, loaded his purchases on it and floated down the river to our farm. He said he had some difficulty in staying afloat while the steam boat passed by. Now the Red River of the North either has too much water in the spring and over floods its banks or is just a trickle, depending on the season. The railroad and highway run between the two quarters of our farm. The first train passed by in the year of 1897. This helped all the farmers to get staples of food, machinery and building materials more easily.

When Dad first began farming he had only a steer and a horse to pull the crude machinery, but he always kept up with the times in good equipment as time went on. The papers by
which Dad acquired the rights of ownership by homestead rights were signed by Grover Cleveland, and remained in our family until about 1960, when Adrian (Bud) Chandler purchased it from brother George.

We were a large family, and all were born on the farmstead; all were baptized in the St. Petri church at Neillsville, all confirmed at the same church except Sally and Josephine, who were confirmed at Halstad, Minnesota. So we all had good religious training, always had plenty to eat; good fun, good memories, and a good heritage.

**IVER A. LEE**

Iver Anderson Lee was born in Hedalen, Valders, Norway, and immigrated to America at the age of 23 years. For ten years he lived at Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin, where two of his brothers settled. In 1890 he married Karen Syverson from Kongsvinger, Norway, and they lived in Hautton, North Dakota, for ten years. Then after farming in Portland, North Dakota, for ten years, the family moved to Neillsville, Wisconsin. This was an all-day journey so the family and the furniture went in a wagon drawn by horses but Mathilda and her mother left the next morning in a one-seated buggy drawn by a pony. After ten years here, Iver died in 1920 at the age of 63. Karen died in 1924 at the age of 58. Six children were born to them:

Kari (Carrie) — Mrs. John Tronnes, deceased (3-17-1891 to 8-13-1947). They had six children: Irvet; Terry; Francis; Lyle; Irene; Mrs. Kenneth Berry; and Gene. There were fourteen grandchildren: Nancy, Steven, Gary, Randall, Corrine, Lori, Tracey, Ronald, Connie, Karen, Debby, Kathy, Ann, Theresa; and six great-grandchildren: Shaney, Jeremy, Tara, Leah, Chad, Matthew.

Andrew died October 16, 1962.

Signe, Mrs. Emil Paulson, died June 13, 1964. Signe had one son, Chester, and one granddaughter, DeAnn.

Edgar is a retired farmer living on his farm, Restful Acres, on the Red River, at Neillsville, Wisconsin. He spent his winters in Brownsville, Texas, for many years.

Mathilda, Mrs. Louis Voigt, Danville, Illinois, has three children: Barbara, Mrs. Richard Mueller; Allan; and Eva, Mrs. Louis Fields. She has eleven grandchildren: David, Diane, Debra, Dan, Linda, Valerie, Kari, Erik, Kim, Shareen, Tim.

Lillian and Mathilda both graduated from Moorhead Teachers College. Lillian was a teacher at Pelican Rapids and Neillsville, Minnesota, for a number of years. Mathilda worked at Sears, Roebuck and Co. for twenty-three years.

Lee Brothers were members of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association for many years, and in 1957 were honored as premier seed growers for their long record in certified seed production. Iver Lee served many years on the State and Local Government in their community. This honor was shared with only four other growers over the entire state of Minnesota. Both are members of the C-400 Club of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota.

Iver, Andrew and Edgar are all recorded officers of St. Petri Lutheran Church of Neillsville, Minnesota, and were also on the Town Board. The others were also active in church and PTA. Signe was Sunday School Secretary and Treasurer for many years.

**WILBUR AND MURIEL McCAYLE**

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur McCauley, with their son, Ronald, and daughter, Loretta, moved to Neillsville, Minnesota, on July 1, 1954. He came to manage the Peavey Elevator. They were originally from Park River, North Dakota, but moved to Neillsville from Merrifield, North Dakota, where he held a similar position. Mrs. McCauley taught the upper four grades at Bingham Consolidated School in Traill County, in Dakota the first year. The following year she taught first grade in the Climax School, where she continued to teach until she retired in the spring of 1971, after 27 years of teaching. Mr. McCauley retired from the Peavey Company in July, 1792. They still make their home in Neillsville.

Ronald and Loretta both graduated from the Climax High School. Ronald has worked for the State of Minnesota as a grain sampler for 14 years and now resides in Cottage Grove. He is married and has three daughters and a son. Loretta received her degree in nursing from the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks and has been working at Miller's Hospital in St. Paul since her graduation. In 1973, she married Norman Johnson from St. Paul, where they reside.

**ANDREW A. MOEN**

Andrew A. Moen was born March 6, 1869, in Begnadalen, Valdris, Norway. He was baptized and confirmed in the Bang Lutheran Church in Valdris. At the age of 16, he came with his family and settled in Adams, Greene County, Wisconsin. In 1895 he came to Polk County, walking from Beltrami to his Uncle and Aunt's farm, Mr. and Mrs. Ole J. Skale. He worked as a carpenter and general farm laborer. On February 8, 1898, he was united in marriage to Hanna Klubergerud.

Hanna Klubberud was born May 8, 1871, in Dane County, Wisconsin. Later the family moved to Mitchell County, Iowa. In 1877 the family moved to Portland, Traill County, North Dakota. The family walked from Caledonia to Portland, a distance of about 35 miles. Hannah received her education in the Portland schools and graduated from Brufflat Academy. She taught school for several years in North Dakota and later in Minnesota schools. She taught two terms at the Sharpe School near Shelly and also at the Prairie Queen School near Nielsville. In 1894, Hannah with her parents, came to Neillsville and bought the farm now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hans Moen. After her marriage to Andrew Moen they lived in this area until 1906, when they bought the farm from her parents.

Andrew and Hannah had two sons: Anton, who died at the age of nine; and Hans who lives on the family farm. They also had an adopted son, Nels, who passed away in April of 1966 at the age of 65.

Hans Moen, born August 4, 1911, of parents Andrew and Hannah Moen. Hans received his education in the Neillsville Public Schools, graduating in 1930. On August 11, 1940, he was united in marriage to Alice Haugen, daughter of Hans and Betsy Haugen. They have resided on the present farm since that time, with the exception of two years when they farmed the Haugen Farm south of Neillsville. Hans and Alice have two daughters, Barbara and Karen. Barbara is a graduate of Hal-
HANS THORVALD OLAUSON

Hans Thorvald Olauson was born September 20, 1857, in Drammen, Norway. His father’s name was Olaus, born in Drammen. His mother’s name was Gurine, born in Tudaal, Telemarken, Norway. Hans was nine years old when his father passed away; consequently it became Hans’ task to help his mother provide for the family. He had three sisters, Andrine, who was married and remained in Norway; Helene, who was married to John Evje, and left Norway for America a few years earlier than Hans; the third sister, Stina Simonson, and her two children came with Hans and his mother to New York, where Martin Simonson met them and there they boarded the train for Ada, Minnesota in 1882.

Martin Simonson, Stina’s husband, was a seaman and sailed between Europe and South America before he came to United States.

Conrad Evje met them in Ada and they lived with him in Norman county for awhile and with other friends, where Hans and his mother helped with the work. After five years Hans bought a farm, the northwest quarter in section 21 in Hubbard township, Polk county, where he farmed.

Hans’ wife was Bertha Skifton, who was born December 7, 1861, in Selland, near Stavanger, Norway. She was three years old when she came to America with her parents, Jonas and Britta Skifton, and settled in Rushford, Minnesota. Hans and Bertha were married in Chester, Iowa, July 12, 1893. After their marriage they went to Nielsville, Minnesota where they engaged in farming. They were lifelong members of St. Petri Lutheran church at Nielsville. The church was first built in Old Nielsville about one and one-half miles northeast of the present site. Hans was one of the members who helped move the church to the present site in Nielsville. He was trustee and deacon for many years there. Bertha was a member of the Ladies Aid as it was called at that time. Hans passed away July 16, 1940, at the age 82 years. Bertha died May 2, 1930, at the age of 68 years. They were buried in St. Petri cemetery near Nielsville.

Four children were born to them: Gusta, Josephine, Oscar and Henry. Gusta, the older daughter, spent most of her time as housekeeper at home, besides teaching parochial school and release time school for many years. Josephine taught in village schools and for several years taught in the public schools of Detroit, Michigan. Oscar worked on the farm until 1924 when he went to Chicago, Illinois, to work for the Western Electric Company. He married Clara Carthew in Chicago, Illinois, November, 1930. She died in March, 1938. After his wife’s death, Oscar returned to Nielsville to work on the farm with his brother until his sudden death from a heart attack in April, 1968. Henry spent all his time on the farm. In 1940 and 1943, more land was purchased and he continued farming until his retirement in 1973. The Olausons sold the farm in July, 1973. After retiring, Henry and his sisters moved to Moorhead, Minnesota to live.

EGEBRETH C. ONSTAD

Egebret C. Onstad was born in Gudbrandsdalen, Norway in 1865. He emigrated to the United States at the age of 16 and came to the Crookston-Nielsville vicinity in Polk county, where he worked at various jobs. Mr. Onstad married Olive Myland, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Even O. Myland, Traill county pioneers of Belmont, North Dakota, in 1892. She was born at Blooming Prairie, Minnesota in 1870. After their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Onstad lived at Old Nielsville, located about one and one-half miles north-west of the present site of Nielsville.

Three children were born to the Onstads: Elmer in 1895, and Myrtle in 1897, both born at Old Nielsville; and Evelyn born at Esmond, North Dakota, in 1903.

Mr. and Mrs. Onstad owned a hardware goods store in Old Nielsville, and the goods were shipped by boat on the Red River to Fisher Landing or other nearby landing points, and then hauled by wagon and horses to town.

When the Great Northern Railroad was built into Polk county, Old Nielsville was moved to the present site, and the store and house were moved into town. The old store was later sold and a new store built in 1899. Besides the hardware goods, there were furniture, stoves, farm machinery, and windmills sold. About 1910, a gasoline burner, used to heat a soldering iron, exploded and demolished the store. It was rebuilt the same year. Mr. Onstad owned one of the first cars in the community — a “case” car.
Later, the store was sold, and Onstad and son (Elmer) built a garage and went into car repair, also selling cars and tractors. An electric power plant was installed in part of the garage, and electricity was furnished to the Nielsville homes and business places that were wired for electricity.

Visiting friends and family gatherings were usually on Sunday afternoons and holidays. Church and school picnics were annual events in the summer. Sunday afternoons, during the summer season, there were scenes of baseball games between the neighboring towns teams, and these always drew large crowds.

All the Onstad children attended grade school at Nielsville. Elmer Onstad went to Hanson Auto and Tractor School in Fargo, North Dakota, and was rural mail carrier at Nielsville for many years, using cars on the route. On muddy, or snow blocked roads he had to use horses and buggy, or sled with a bus built over it. Teams had to be changed at midway of the mail route of about 28 miles.

Elmer married Lilian Lee, an elementary school teacher, of Nielsville. They had a daughter, JoAnn, who attended Milwaukee High School. She married Clark Luckman of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and they had one son, Lee. Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Onstad moved from Nielsville to Chicago, and to Milwaukee, where he worked for, and retired from the Hadish Company.

Myrtle Onstad attended Crookston High School, and Inter-state Business College at Fargo, North Dakota. She was bookkeeper at State Bank of Nielsville, and later at Amenia Seed and Grain Company of Amenia, North Dakota. She married Parnell Smey, a barber from Amenia. They later farmed at Hickson, North Dakota. He passed away in 1965. Mr. and Mrs. Smey had two daughters, Phyllis and Marilyn. Phyllis, a teacher, married Elloth McLeod of Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, and their children are Brian, Mitchell, Joel, Brenda and Rhonda. Marilyn, a legal secretary, married Melvin Smith of Wheatland, North Dakota, their children are Shery and Sandra. Mrs. Smith passed away in 1971.

Engebret Onstad passed away in 1954, and Mrs. Onstad in 1919.

OBER ORVIK

Obert John Orvik, Nielsville, Minnesota, was born November 16, 1915, to John T. and Lizzie Orvik. He attended grade school and high school at Nielsville.

Obert was always interested in music, used to play guitar and sing for programs locally. He married Carol Aalgaard April 1, 1939, daughter of Rudolph and Selma Aalgaard, formerly of Halstad, in the Shelly vicinity. To them, two sons and one daughter were born. John, Darlene and Larry. John attended grade school in Nielsville, graduated from Halstad High School and he enlisted in the navy in 1958, for three years. He took up electronics schooling and was stationed at Bermuda most of the time. He married Judy Wirkkumen of Gackle, North Dakota. They have two children, one son Richard and one daughter, Cathy.

John works for American Telephone and Telegraph, at a tower out of Casselton, North Dakota. They reside in Casselton.

Darlene went to grade school in Nielsville, then went two years to high school at Halstad. Darlene married Roger Rutherford. They have two daughters, Sandra and Debra. They reside in Nielsville. Sandra and Debra attend high school at Climax. Roger is employed at the University of Minnesota Technical College in Crookston in the agronomy department. Larry is an eighth grader at the Climax school. He went three years to the grade school at Nielsville.

ANTON AND MATHEA PAULSrud

Anton Paulsrud and Mathea Hanstad were both born in Gudbrandsdal, Norway. He was born at Tretten on November 14, 1864 and she in Ringebu on December 20, 1879. Their early education consisted of attending local schools only every other day as the school was crowded and the teacher taught only half of the grades every day. Because Anton was the oldest son in a family of eight children, he was the main provider of the home farm. However, he realized at an early age that it would be impossible for that large family to make even a mediocre living from the small farm of less than twenty tillable acres.

As he already had a brother and a cousin in the United States, he decided at the age of 20 to go to the United States also. The first part of the trip to Lillehammer was made by horse-drawn carriage. From there he went by train to Oslo and by boat to England. After crossing England by train he left from Liverpool by ship and landed in Montreal, Canada. His destination was Nielsville, Minnesota, but as there was no railroad there he went to Ada, Minnesota. From there it was a two days walk to Nielsville, where his cousin, Nels Paulsrud, gave him a job on his farm. Nels had been elected sheriff of Polk county a short time before this and eventually Nielsville was named after him.

Anton worked for Nels several years and then decided to try his luck out West. He helped build a railroad in Washington and worked in the harvest fields in the Sacramento Valley of California. Later he started working east again, helping in the harvest fields of North Dakota and coming back to Minnesota, where he continued to work in the United States for eight years. He then decided to return to Norway. There he met Mathea Hanstad and they were married. With the money he had saved in the United States he bought the farm, Jahr. Within ten years Anton and Mathea had eight sons. Again Anton had to make the decision that his small farm held no future for his eight sons.

Again Anton sold Jahr and he came to America. Their first plans had been to settle in Canada, but ties in Minnesota drew them back to Nielsville, where Anton bought a farm of 140 acres on the Red River for $5000. One of the sons, Gunnar, is still living on the home farm. The oldest son, John sold his farm in North Dakota and retired in Lillehamer, Norway. Two sons, Arnar and Sigurd, are deceased. Three sons, Magnes, Asmund and Ivar live in California and the youngest son, Ottar, lives in Nielsville. Anton lived to be 95 and Mathea lived to be 88 years old.

BELVA PAULSON

Born in Hubbard township on January 29, 1908, of parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peder Paulson, Belva was raised on a farm together with three sisters. Confirmed in the St. Petri Lutheran church, the children attended grade and high school at Nielsville. She stayed with her grandfather for a while, later working in Crookston. Then she left for Minneapolis, where she had various jobs, owned a grocery store for a while, then fortunately got a job in a hotel, which was most satisfactory, and where she worked until retirement.

Belva, always being interested in music, while in Minneapolis Belva had the opportunity to study at McPhail School of
Music. She also attended churches of many denominations, even a spiritualist. It was interesting but did not suffice. In one of Billy Graham's crusades she was converted to Christ, which has been the biggest miracle in her life, and one which words cannot describe. When her mother became ill, she decided to go back home, and is now retired and living in her mother's home.

**DAVID AND LUCY PAYNE**

The first railroad station agent of Nielsville was my father, David Payne, a young Canadian, who learned telegraphy while staying with relatives at Edinburg, North Dakota.

A native of Brucefield, Ontario, Canada, where he was born May 10, 1879, he came to the United States at sixteen years of age.

From Edinburg he traveled to Nielsville to assume the position of its first depot agent, following the Great Northern Railroad line built there in 1896. His first office was at a lumber company; later he used a box car until the station was built.

Romance followed when he met Lucy Kolden, only child of Lewis and Mary Kolden, pioneer settlers there, first in "old" Nielsville and later in the new railroad town.

Born July 12, 1885 at Nielsville, Lucy was married to David when she was nineteen years old and he was six years her senior.

The Paynes moved from Nielsville to Holt, where he operated a lumber yard for a number of years. When a bank was started at Leonard, Minnesota, my father became affiliated there and built a large home to accommodate his growing family, which included twelve children.

There was a love of learning in our family and education was important. There were some hard times during the Depression, but through good times and bad our family was closely knit and helped each other. Consequently, many goals were met.

David and Lucy lived out their lives at Leonard and enjoyed the love of their twelve children, many grandchildren and good friends. He died in 1945 and she died July 25, 1974.

Their children include: Lillian Barnes, Sun City, Arizona; Edna Lien, Fargo, North Dakota; Ester Carlson, Watsonville, California; Thelma (Anderson) Deemer, Grand Forks, North Dakota; Howard and David Payne Jr., both deceased; John, Fresno, California; Emily Isackson, Leonard, William, deceased; Robert, Silver Bay, Minnesota, Dr. Richard, Virginia and Betty Baker, Palos Verdes, California.

**OLE AND ANNE RONINGEN**

Not far from a century ago a fifteen year old boy named Ole set out from his home in Telemarken, Norway to become an adopted citizen of the United States. He had no money for passage, but arrangement had been made by Finger Enger, bonanza farmer of Hatton, North Dakota, to pay the fare. In return Ole was to work out the debt at the Enger farms.

According to Norwegian custom the eldest son would inherit the family home and also its name, Slaate. Ole, who was a second son, was therefore known as Svening's son, or Sveningson. When he came to America he selected as his last name Roningen, meaning runner or stolen as referred to with certain plants. His name then became Ole Sveningson Roningen.

Ole remained at the Enger farms quite a number of years working to acquire enough money and equipment to begin farming by homesteading. While in North Dakota he married Anne Hildahl, who had also previously emigrated from Norway, having come from Lunde in Telemarken.

Anne had spent several years working in hotels and restaurants in Chicago and in Minneapolis. During this time she returned once to Norway to bring back her ailing mother to care for, and also her eleven year old brother, Tosten. She spoke of the amusement of sailors on board ship at the antics of the lively youngster. One of them gave him an orange — something he had never seen before. He promptly ate it, peeling and all, and then remarked that the middle part was pretty good, but the outside was "stek" (strong). Anne also recounted experiences she had when for several summers during her early teens she had been a "sæter jente" (mountain herd girl).

After the mother died and Tosten at sixteen enlisted in the United States Army, Anne came to Hatton where she later became the bride of Ole Roningen.

The couple with their first born son, Sam, came to Minnesota in the spring of 1894. They crossed the Red River on a ferry operated by Gabriel Egeland. They had paid six hundred dollars for homestead right to a quarter section of land five miles east of the present site of Nielsville. Here they lived most of the rest of their lives. While undoubtedly they sometimes experienced homesickness for their native land, they were
Ole Roningan Family: L to R: Ole, Sam, Anne, Alfred and Andrew.

proud to be United States citizens. To them hard work and thrift were an acceptable, and indeed desirable way of life. Ole died in 1926, and Anne survived him by seventeen years.

The first generation of Roningan children born in this country were Sam, Alfred, Andrew, Oley, and Mary. Sam, who is a veteran of World War I and served a year and a half in France, lives near Fisher. He has three daughters; Ione (Mrs. James Lillegaard) of Bagley, is a teacher. There are four sons in that family. Lorraine (Mrs. John Nelson) of Dallas, Texas is an anesthetist. They have one son and three daughters. Shirley (Mrs. Earl Lundquist) of Janesville, Minnesota, is a public health nurse. They have two daughters in their family. Sam’s wife, Sophie, died in 1971.

Alfred and his wife, Esther, with their daughter, Adelaide, live east of Nielsville on the farm known previously as the Hil-lebo place. There are three sons. Glen is employed by the Atomic Energy Commission at Elk River. Stanley farms in the Nielsville area. He and his wife Karen live on the farm formerly owned by the late John and Gertrude Skalet. Karen is a teacher. Morris, the youngest son, is a soil scientist for the Bureau of Reclamation. He and his wife Loretta and their daughter and three sons at present are living in Grand Forks.

Andrew, the third son of Ole and Anne Roningan, became afflicted with a progressively disabling illness in his early twenties. He died in 1970. For many years he made his home at the farm of Oley and Agnes and was cared for by them.

Oley and his wife Agnes lived for many years on the farm known in earlier times as the Amund Eidsmo place. Their lives were taken by a tornado in August, 1975. Their son Vernon is at present in Switzerland doing a period of two years of work with the United Nations. He and his family plan to return to Washington D.C. in 1976. He is employed there by the Tax Commission. His wife Jane works in tutoring and special education. They have a son, Nels Oley, and a daughter, Jeanne Marie.

Mary and her husband, Howard Mullen, lived for many years on the farm originally known as the Anton Horte place, east of Nielsville. Since 1965 they have spent most of their time at their farm west of Deer River, Minnesota, where Mary was a teacher until her retirement in 1974. Howard still does some refrigeration work. They have a daughter, Frances (Mrs. LeRoy Pederson), who also lives at Deer River and operates a kennel there. The Pedersons have one son, Leland.

There are probably few people in the Nielsville area who remember the cemetery at the southwest corner of the Mullen farm. Nine burials were made there at about the time Anton Horte lived on the place. Through the years the wooden crosses disintegrated, and eventually the land was tilled. Some years ago the road by there was rebuilt when a soil bank was provided for the Sand Hill River, and most of the graves are now beneath that road.

JOEL SKALET

Joel Skalet and Myrtle Johnson were married on March 20, 1940. Joel and his brother, John, were sons of Christian Skalet and Gurine Helland. Christian emigrated from Valdres, Norway, in 1873, settling in Fillmore county, where he was engaged in farming and carpenter work. In 1878 he came by ozen and covered wagon in a caravan to the Nielsville area.

Gurine Helland came to America in 1904 at the age of 18 and first worked on a farm near Crookston. The family settled on a farm at Beltrami, Minnesota. Bertun, the father, worked on the railroad. Other members in the family were Bennie, Eddie, Thomas, Thea, Anna, Lettie and Ida.

Myrtle was the daughter of Oscar and Annie Johnson. She has one brother, Alvin. She was born in Ervin township near the Highland church in Cummings, North Dakota. Her father was one of eleven children of Erick Johnson. When the Erick Johnson family first came from Spring Grove, Minnesota, they lived in a sod house on the Myrland farm. Later they took a pre-emption in Ervin township. When they left the sod house, Mrs. Johnson had one hen which later hatched eleven chickens. This was the start of her flock of chickens, which turned out to be a successful enterprise. Every year she raised around 400 chicks from setting hens. The Ervin No. 1 Country School house was built on their land and during stormy weather, pupils, unable to get to their homes, stayed at the Johnson home.

Myrtle’s other grandparents were Johan and Karen Pederson, who came to America in 1884. They first lived in a dugout in the coulee at “Old Nielsville,” where Mr. Pederson had his blacksmith shop. He moved his shop to New Nielsville, where he also operated a hardware store. His children were: Annie and Inger (twins), Peder, Julia, Tillie, Jeanette, Clara, Sophie, Clifford and Carl.

After Joel and Myrtle were married, they farmed in Scandia township, where they built a home in 1947. In 1948, they had a great disappointment when the Sand Hill overflowed its banks, flooding the farmland. Water reached up into the first story floor and the basement crumbled. In the fall of 1948, they moved their house into Nielsville into the place where the old livery barn had been located.

They have two children: Karen an L.P.A., who graduated from Wahpeton School of Science. She married Bernard Polledstad Jr. and has four children: Desree, Robyn, Bernard III and Bradley. They live in Devils Lake, North Dakota.

Keith, a Viet Nam veteran, graduated from the engineer department at Wahpeton and is manager of Quality Control in Titusville, Florida. He married Brenda Melby, an R.N., and they have one daughter, Gail.

The Joel Skalets spend the winters in Florida visiting Keith and Brenda.
JOHN SKALET

John, more commonly known as Jack, is Joel's brother and son of Christian and Gurine Skalet. He was born April 29, 1905. He never married. During World War II he went to Bremerton, Washington to work, but after two weeks he found the rain climate too much to cope with, so he returned home. He worked at various jobs in the Nielsville community making his home with his parents. He was janitor at school for many years before retirement. He is presently caretaker at both St. Petri and Sundet Cemeteries, keeping both cemeteries in an excellent condition.

Mr. and Mrs. Christian Skalet.

NELS SKALET

Grace Howland married Nels Skalet. They first lived in town for about two years, moving later to the farm of his mother about one-half mile from town. We lived in a log house for about 25 years, buying the farm in 1949. The log house is still standing on the farm. We had cows, pigs and chickens besides farming. Nels also worked in the potato warehouse during the winter months. I wonder how men would like working for 15 cents an hour and try to bring up five children today? Working together side by side, we hauled hogs and stacked, shocked grain and corn, picked and hauled potatoes, threshed the grain, made huge straw piles and hauled grain, etc. using horses and old Fordson tractors. We had no car, so the whole family walked; whether taking our butter and eggs etc. to town to trade for other groceries; or going to school and church in fair and fowl weather. Grace began to help with finances by taking in sewing and also making lefse, which she still does.

Both Grace and Nels are members of the St. Petri church. Grace served as Sunday school teacher for twenty years, was also on the board of education and held a number of other offices in the A.L.C.W.

Mydell Skalet married Sody Menke. They are farming near Beltrami, Minnesota. Janis Skalet married Wallace Thompson at Caledonia, North Dakota, Wallace is a house mover. They have four children: Roger, Janet, Leslie and Michelle. Roger and Carla live at Jamestown, North Dakota. They have one daughter, Kari. Janet and Walter Wicka live in Hillsboro, North Dakota. They have one boy, David and a girl, Cindy. Walter is a semi-truck driver. Leslie and Michelle are at home.

Leatrice Skalet married Kenneth Sondrol of Buxton, North Dakota. They are farming and also work in the potato washer during the winter months. They have four children: Merlin, Rodney, Dale and Ginelle. Merlin married Karen Abrams and they live in Grand Forks, North Dakota. He is employed at a semi-trailer transport company. Rodney works as a farm hand. Dale and Ginelle are in high school. Marlys Skalet married Doris Blokey and they are living on a farm, but will soon move to town. He works for the Peavy Elevator. They have four children: Jody, Robert, Barbara and Terry, all at home. Lawrence Skalet married Mary Sundseth. They have one son, Matthew Grey. Lawrence has a transmission ship in Fargo. All the children were graduates from Climax High School, except Lawrence, who graduated from Halstad High School, and vocational school in Thief River Falls. He has also worked as a welder at the Fargo Foundry and the Fargo Tank and Steel, and also at the electrical shop in Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

The Mr. and Mrs. Gunlik Spokely family of the early days in Nielsville, Minnesota.

ALBERT SPOKELY

Of the twelve children born to Mr. and Mrs. Gunlik Spokely, Albert was the third in order of birth. His brothers were Adolph and Julius, twins, and Alexander. His sisters were Julia, Mollie, Theresa, Annie and Sophie. Julie, Mollie and Theresa died in their early twenties, all within a period of five years, from tuberculosis. The only surviving member of the family is Sophie, who resides in a nursing home at Crookston, Minnesota in 1975 at the age of eighty-nine.

For a short time Albert had a saloon at Climax, Minnesota, and at Thief River Falls, Minnesota. At Thief River Falls he also filed for a claim at Highlandning, a short distance from Thief River Falls on which his wife and two small sons lived until the claim was proved up.

He sold the saloon at Thief River Falls and moved to Belmont, North Dakota, where he bought the Robert Ray farm. From there he moved to Nielsville, Minnesota, and bought a farm a mile south of town.

As the years passed he bought more acreage and eventually did extensive farming in the area; specializing in wheat and potatoes; also diversified farming.

On October 9, 1897, he married Johanna Myrland, whose parents lived across the river in North Dakota from his father, Gunlik Spokely's farm.

To this union were born five children. The oldest, Gregor, died at nine months. Guy and Earl were born at Climax, Minnesota; Delight at Thief Falls, Minnesota; and Lyla at Belmont, North Dakota.

Guy had Ford Dealerships at Canby, Minnesota, Brookings, South Dakota, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, before going to Detroit, Michigan to be with the Ford Motor Company. Guy married Marjorie Urquhart from Huron, South Dakota. They had one son, David Guy, who has been in Washington, D.C., with N.A.S.A. since getting his two degrees in engineering from Stanford University. David has a daughter and a son.

Guy and Marjorie reside at Ojai, California, in retirement.

Earl married Emma Benson, a teacher, from Hartford,
South Dakota, where they now reside and are retired. Earl is a Civil Engineer graduate of the University of Minnesota.

Lyra attended Huron College at Huron, South Dakota, and was a private secretary before her marriage. Lyra married Fred Wiemor, who was branch manager of National Films in Los Angeles, in the advertising section of the movie industry for that company. They have two sons and one daughter. Leon lives in Phoenix and Corrine and Steven in the San Diego and Los Angeles area. They have five grandchildren. Lyra and Fred are retired and live at San Marcos, California, a half hour's drive from San Diego.

Delight, a graduate of Moorhead State University, and a teacher for a number of years, married Kenneth Tehven, an implement dealer from Hillsboro, North Dakota, where they lived for several years, until moving to Moorhead, Minnesota, where Mrs. Tehven also taught English until his death in 1969. Delight lives in Moorhead and is retired.

Mrs. Albert Spokely died at the age of sixty-two in 1936, after being seriously afflicted with neuritis for a number of years.

Albert Spokely passed away at the age of seventy-two in 1946.

**GULIK SPOKELY**

Gulik Spokely was born in Fryesdal, Norway, June 12, 1842. His wife, Gunvor Heia, was born in Vinje, Norway, in 1847.

Gulik came to the United States in 1860 locating in Houston county, Minnesota, and there worked as a farm laborer.

Gunvor Heia came to the United States in 1861, also going to Houston county, Minnesota.

In 1870, Gulik and Gunvor were married in Houston county.

In 1871, the young couple came to Polk county, Minnesota by ox-cart.

Mr. Spokely squatted on a quarter section of land in a section not yet surveyed. The law was that such land had to be taken up on a pre-emption claim at $1.25 an acre, but he preferred to take his as a homestead, and he succeeded in doing so.

For two years they lived in a dug-out on the hillside, and he worked for other settlers as they had very little money. At the end of two years he put up a one-room log cabin and in that cabin they lived till 1913, when a new, quite roomy dwelling was built. Later on, this was replaced by another house, which still is on the Spokely farm. A large barn was built before the large home, taking the place of the log cabin. The first large house was home to all their twelve children.

When they were still living in the one-room log cabin, Jim Hill, the railroad builder, and a companion came while they were inspecting sites for the new railroad. They shared their meager supper and breakfast with Jim Hill and his companion. It was necessary for them to sleep on the floor in the one-room cabin as there were no extra beds. No stranger was ever turned away from their door. Room and board was offered to anyone who came. It was not always a pleasant task for Mrs. Spokely to clean up after certain strangers had gone, as it was quite frequent that the strangers also had little creatures living on their bodies and in their hair.

However, Mrs. Spokely was a very kind and tolerant woman and always said, "Where there is heart room, there is house room." On stormy, wintry nights a lighted candle was left on the window sill to guide any lost wayfarer.

In the large woods on their farm on the banks of the Red River there were numerous deer, bear, rabbits, wild berries, and the river was teeming with fish, goldeye and over twenty-pound catfish, etc. On the prairie there were numerous buffalo, from whose hides Mrs. Spokely made coats, robes, and coverings for beds, besides having the flesh of the animals to eat. Honey was also found in hollow tree trunks, their only supply of sweets until they were able to buy sugar from the Hudson's Bay steamships that eventually came down the Red River from Winnipeg and established trading posts. The "Trading Post" which was nearest to them is what is now Caledonia, North Dakota.

Friendly Indians called on them the first Christmas Day.

They lived in the dug-out, enroute farther south, seeming to know it was a special day.

Their first grain crop was hauled to Alexandria, Minnesota, by ox-cart.

Later on, Mr. Spokely bought eighty acres of railroad land adjoining his homestead with a rebate provision of $2.50 an acre when he should have sixty acres plowed, and an allowance of fifty cents more for every acre exceeded in grain.

He broke up most of his land with his team of oxen.

He sold cord wood to the prairie settlers, worked in the north lumber woods, and was employed on the Red River boats going to Winnipeg and back.

Mr. and Mrs. Spokely took a great interest in school and church matters. They were one of the organizers of the Conference Church at Noby.

Mrs. Spokely's mother, Haechi Heia, took a homestead south of the Spokely farm after being a drummer in the Civil War, for which he received a $15 pension a month for a number of years. That farm is now known as the Anton Paulsrud farm, bought by him in 1907. About a mile north of the Spokely farm another brother of Mrs. Spokely settled, using the name of Paul Simon.

Mr. and Mrs. Spokely celebrated their golden wedding in 1920 with a large crowd, surprising them at their farm home.

Mr. Spokely died at the age of eighty-four and Mrs. Spokely was eighty-six. Neither one was ill or bedridden before their sudden deaths.

**OSCAR VIGNESS**

Oscar Vigness was born February 6, 1892, at the home of his parents, east of Nielsville in Polk county. He was baptized at St. Petri Lutheran church in Nielsville and attended Prairie Queen school two and one-half miles from his home. In October, 1906, Oscar was confirmed in the Norwegian language at St. Petri Lutheran church. In 1930, Oscar married Olga Skalen. They bought a farm three miles east and one mile north of Nielsville. They had two daughters and two sons: Betty, Jean, Palmer and Leo. Mrs. Vigness was a member of St. Petri Ladies Aid. She received a life-time pin. On January 7, 1973, Oscar Vigness passed away at the age of 80 years at Riverview Hospital in Crookston. Mrs. Vigness passed away March 8, 1974, at the Americana Nursing Home at Moorhead, Minnesota. They were preceded in death by their son Leo. Both Mr. and Mrs. Vigness were buried at St. Petri cemetery two miles south of Nielsville.

Betty Elaine Vigness was born at Crookston on December 23, 1930. She was the third granddaughter of Borre and Bronda Vigness. Baptized on March 30, 1931, in 1937 she attended the little country school in district 19. In September, 1945, Betty was confirmed by Rev. Fristad at St. Petri Lutheran church in Nielsville. On May 25, 1949, she graduated from Climax High school, one of 38 seniors.

On June 30, 1950, Betty married Ervin Haugstad at the Lutheran church in Moorhead, Minnesota. They have a daughter, Kristine, and three sons: Kevin, Kim and Kurt. They made their home at Caledonia on a farm and in 1954 moved to Nielsville. Later they built a new home there. Ervin farmed with his father and Betty worked at Jiffy Fry at Crookston and Minnesota. In 1973, Betty and Ervin were divorced. Ervin remained living in Nielsville with his mother and Betty lives in her home at Nielsville with their three sons. Kristine lives in Fargo, North Dakota and works at the North West Computer Center located in First National Bank of Fargo. Kevin attends Climax High School and also works part-time at Red Owl of Crookston. Kim attends Climax High School and is a sophomore there. Kurt is a sixth grader at the Climax school.

Betty's sister, Mrs. Earl (Jean) Thorson, lives at Cavalier, North Dakota. Her husband manages a Farmer Union Oil Station. They have a son David and a daughter Diane. Both are married.

Palmer Vigness lives at Grand Forks, North Dakota. He works as a plasterer. He is married to the former Jean Stromstad and has three sons and one daughter, Brent, Bryan, Jeffrey and Mary Beth, all at home.
Mrs. Ole Roning spinning wool.

P. M. Finkenbinder with trophy winning Chester White Swine.

Thomas Logan and Sons. Harvest 1905.

House of J. Hawkins south end of Ash St. Flood 1900.

This Espe Loader, built by A. C. Espe Crookston Manufacturing Company, was one of the first mechanized machines that modernized sugar beet harvest in the area. The tractor used about two gallons of 10.2¢ fuel per hour, loading seven tons of beets in six minutes. Picture taken 1940.

Townships