

Biography of Arnt J. Helland

--Rudolph Helland, son of Arnt J.

Mr. Arnt J. Helland is the son of Mrs. Marie and Mr. Jonas A. Helland, who lived in Norway. He was born February 9th, 1855 near the town of Stavanger, Norway.

He came to America because he thought he could earn money more quickly in America than he could at his former home. He first came to Montana in 1887 where he was for some time before coming to North America. When he came from Montana to North Dakota he had to pay the fare to St. Paul because he could not get a ticket to Sanborn where he intended to stop. He came to North Dakota in November, 1892. He did not go any farther because he was too poor to get out of the state.

Mr. Helland gave the Indians milk and other food, who in return gave him some berries which they had gathered in the woods on the shore of Lake Addie. The Indians then had a big camp where Mr. Helland now has his home. They also trapped and hunted gophers which they ate. Before they made their camp there were many gophers but after a short time there were none left.

Mr. Helland took up land in Griggs County, Addie township on the northeast quarter of section 34, Range 60, Township 147 north. Mr. Helland built his first home by digging in a side hill and laying sod for the front. In the winter the snow drifted over it and they had to go through a long tunnel of snow to go in and out. The house was so snowed under that they could hear the wolves running over it at night, where they had a path across the roof. In summer the grass grew on the roof of the house. The trip to town was a long and hard journey, especially in the winter when the snow was three or four feet deep and the distance twelve miles.

The nearest neighbor was Mr. Fred A. Sinclair who lived two miles away.

The early farm machinery was a wood mower and a hay rack with a wooden frame and wheels. The team used in his work was a team of oxen. He had no grain crops because he raised sheep. The fuel used was cow chips and timber that was found around the prairie.

The greatest hardships of the early days were the prairie fires because of the broad prairies. One of these fires started where McHenry now is and traveled over the land where Mr. Helland now lives and he had to chase his sheep out in the lake to prevent their being burned. The fire burned the grass off the roof of a neighbors sod house and went over a hay stack without doing any damage because of the rapidity with which the fire sped. The men ran out and threw off the burning hay and put it out. It was said that this fire went so fast that it leaped over the Sheyenne River.

Mr. Arnt Helland was married to Miss Martha Helland in Griggs County in December, 1892.

They had eleven children, two of whom are dead. Jonas who died in France during the World War, and Hans who also was to war and died in 1923. The other children are Hjelmmer Helland, Binford, N. Dak., Fritjof

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A. Helland, Binford, N. Dak., Otto A. Helland, Binford, N. Dak., Miss
Minnie Helland, Binford, N. Dak., Seval Helland, Binford, N. Dak., Miss
Selma Helland, Binford, N. Dak., Rudolph Helland, Binford, N. Dak.
Kermit Helland, Binford, N. Dak. Walter Helland, Binford, N. Dak.

The present home of Mr. Helland is in Addie Township, Section 34,
and his address is A. J. Helland, Binford, N. Dak., R. F. D. 2, Box 8.

PIONEER BIOGRAPHY

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Arnt J. Helland, (continued)

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PIONEER BIOGRAPHY
John Helmer

The names of the pioneer's parents were Ole Helmer and Sigrid Helmer. The pioneer's name is John Helmer. He was born in Drangedal, Norway, July 30, 1876. His closest town was Kargo in Norway. The reason for the pioneer leaving home in Norway was for hard times and for a good prospect of making money here in America and the reason he came to North Dakota instead of any other state was for the free land here and its rich soil for farming. John Helmer came from Norway to Minnesota and from Minnesota to North Dakota. John Helmer and his father shipped a carload of cattle from Minnesota to Valley City. John Helmer and his father drove the cattle from Valley City across the country for 31 miles to present home of Iver Hanson's farm. John Helmer and his father took up land three miles north of Karnak in Broadview township. Their first house was a sod house. They made the roof of the house out of bark of trees by the river.

The fuel of early days was wood which they got from the river. John Helmer was not married. The name and address of the pioneer was John Helmer, Hannaford, Route #1, N. Dak.

The present home of the pioneer is three miles north of Karnak on the west side of the road. John Helmer was also a trapper.

--Alf Jonassen

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Biography of Betuel Herigstad
--Myrtle Stokka

Betuel Herigstad, son of Bear and Karen Herigstad, was born June 26, 1852, in the locality of Gjaderen, near the town of Bandness, Norway. He was united in marriage to Inger Thu in 1879. Two children were born to them before they left Norway.

In the spring of 1881, Mr. Herigstad together with his family, two of his brothers, some other families, and a few single men, immigrated to America. He has many reasons for coming to America. It was a country which offered better opportunities for making a living. The general financial depression, high taxes, and expenses in Norway were also reasons.

This group sailed on the "King Sverre" to Hull where their goods were examined to see if anything was being smuggled through. Then they went by train to Liverpool. From here they started their journey across the ocean April 18, on the "Palmyra". On the trip the propeller shaft broke. After two hours of signaling a small cattle steamer came to help them. It took them to St. John, Newfoundland. Here they waited until the ship was repaired when they again set sail. They reached New York May 20. From New York they took the train to Chicago, stayed there three days and went on to St. Paul. This trip had cost each person about fifty dollars. From St. Paul they came to Granite Falls, Minnesota where they had friends. Here they bought wagons and oxen, and they bought plows but there was just one team of oxen and a plow for every two farmers. Each man broke about seven acres that summer. The men set out in covered wagons, and some walked to look for homes. After reaching Valley City they turned north and were guided by the Sheyenne River. On June 12, 1881, they settled down on section 22, range 58, township 145, which is now Sverdrup township. The Griggs County land had been recommended to them by some men who had come here a few years before. As the land in the county did not get into market until 1882 it could not be filed until then, so the settlers kept their land by "squatting" on them until then.

During the first summer Mr. Herigstad as well as the other settlers broke up a few acres of land apiece, and spent the rest of the time in building dwellings and stables. His first home was built of sod. He had the sod house three months, then he built a log house and had the sod house for a stable.

Later in the summer he brought his family from Minnesota who had been left there since spring. Their first winter was a time of hardships, their homes were cold and they did not have much money with which to buy provisions, and their nearest market was Valley City, thirty miles away. Their provisions had to be stored in the fall as it was almost impossible to get to Valley City in winter time. They made most of the furniture for their huts. At first they had only trunks for chairs. Some made their brooms from tall grass cut in sloughs, and stuffed the pillows with down gotten from cat tails of which there were very many in early days. They cleaned their seed wheat that winter by spreading it out over the table and picked the weeds out with their fingers. A

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great many spinning wheels were brought over by the immigrants and were for many years used in the settlement. During the long winter evenings the women would be carding, spinning, and knitting. The men would many times do the carding of the wool. Just about all the stockings and mittens were home made. They made the candles. Whenever cattle were killed all the fatty parts which could not be used for food were melted and poured into several vessels half full of hot water. A number of cotton threads from six to eight inches in length were fastened to a small stick long enough to extend across the edge of the vessel used. If a large number of candles were to be made several such sticks would be dipped quickly into the fluid and then hung up till the tallow on the strings had hardened. Several dozen candles could be made by one person in a few hours.

Their main crop was wheat which was a very good grade, but they had many periods of drought when they had little or no crop. At these times only their early training in being frugal and economical saved them from giving up.

In 1883 a branch of the Northern Pacific railroad was built from Sanborn to Cooperstown. This gave the settlers a much closer market for their wheat. A market for buffalo bones was also opened up, the bones sold between ten to twenty dollars a ton. Mr. Herigstad as well as the other settlers gathered many buffalo bones.

The settlers got their wood from the river and the little coal they used they got from the nearest market. On January 12, 1888, he went to the woods after wood. While there a snowstorm came up, he could not see his way, and he just let the oxen find his way home. They found the way but just got home in time as the storm got much worse. Prairie fires were also common. Mr. Herigstad's house was destroyed in one of these and would have been destroyed another time but was saved by some plowed land which had been plowed up for some potatoes. The settlers visited with each other and had many religious services. Their first minister was sent out by the Home Missionary Society, and their first meeting was held in a little sod hut but which shortly afterwards was turned into a stable.

Mr. Herigstad's first neighbors were Frithof Greenland, Simon Ouren, Henry Johnson, and Mathias Fjelstad.

The pioneer's children are Karen Westley, 831 College Ave., Wheaton, Illinois, Bard Jerigstad, Pendant D. Orielle, Alberta, Canada, Omon Herigstad, Minot, N. Dak., Inga, Conrad, Emil, Henry, Lydia, and Sylvia all of Cooperstown, N. Dak. His grandchildren are Arla, Irene, Cyrus, Roy, John, Ella, Ruby, Howard, Ira, Robert, and Esther Westley of 831 College Ave., Wheaton, Illinois, Jean, Roger, and Elaine Herigstad of Minot, N. Dak., and Dorothy, Ardis, and Marion Herigstad of Cooperstown, N. Dak.

Biography of Betuel Herigstad
--Myrtle Stokka

Below is a letter.
Dear Brother E.:

The time has come when I can no longer refrain from greeting you with a few words. Although the hundreds and thousands of miles between us make it impossible for us to meet and talk to each other as in days gone by, yet it is well that by letters we may learn of each others doings. It appears strange when I take my pen and sit down to greet my friends and brothers in the Fatherland in this way; strange sensations surge through my mind and my thoughts wander back among you all; it is as if I were sitting among you in your own homes surrounded by your families. Not only when I am writing do these thoughts and feelings occupy my mind, but often when performing my daily tasks, while alone in the woods, while driving my team of oxen, while working in my cellar house or while wandering over the wide prairies, etc., do my thoughts wander back to you and I often feel as though it is only a bad dream that we are so far apart.

On the whole, however, I can say that I am getting along fairly well. I hope that through other of my letters you have heard of my work here in buildings my cellar house, of the oxen, and the location of the settlement, and lastly let me say, God be praised, I have been feeling well up to the present. In eight days I expect my family to arrive. I have had to be without their company the whole summer and it has been lonely at times.

I am not certain whether you are one of those who asked for advice concerning America. On the whole it seems to be a good deal easier to make a living, but there are many hardships connected with the life of a pioneer, especially at first. I should like to see you and others come over, yet consider the matter twice before you leave the Fatherland and the place where your cradle stood. It is not a small matter.

Dear brother E.:

I have just received your letter. Thanks. Nothing gives me greater joy than to receive letters from friends and brothers in the dear Fatherland. It warms the heart to realize that we are remembered by you. God bless you all. We are still getting along well. We do, however, wish that the winter was past. We are a little fearful of the cold and there is but little money among us with which to purchase the needed provisions for the winter, as during the winter months it will be rather risky to undertake with oxen the long journey over the prairies of thirty miles to the nearest market. We are praying for a mild winter in our log and sod cabins, where some of us will have to put up with the bare earth as walls and floors. A pioneer's life had many trials and difficulties which are not so easily overcome. If these were better known in the dear old Norway, it would probably act as a damper on the craze for America. We have no crop this fall, as we came here so late this spring, but must buy all our provisions until next fall, so it will be rather difficult to get through this first year.

From a pioneer in Dakota.

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Descendents of the pioneer are:

Karen Westley
831 College Avenue
Wheaton, Illinois

Bard Herigstad
Pendant D. Orielle
Alberta, Canada

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Descendents of pioneer (Cont.):

Omon Herigstad
Minot, North Dakota

Inga Herigstad
Conrad Herigstad
Emil Herigstad
Henry Herigstad
Lydia Herigstad
Sylvia Herigstad

The six last ones have the address of Cooperstown,
North Dakota.

Irene Westley
Arla Westley
Cyrus Westley
Roy Westley
John Westley
Ella Westley
Ruby Westley
Howard Westley
Ira Westley
Robert Westley
Esther Westley

The eleven last ones have the address of 831 College
Avenue, Wheaton, Illinois.

Jean Herigstad
Roger Herigstad
Eldine Herigstad

The three last ones have the address of Minot, North
Dakota

Dorothy Herigstad
Ardis Herigstad
Marion Herigstad

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1881-2

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Letter (Cont.)

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Mrs. Inga Herigstad

From interview by Hannah Lende

Mrs. Herigstad was born in Stavanger, Norway, October, 1859. She was married to Betval Herigstad in 1879. A girl was born in 1880 who is now Mrs. Karin Westley of Wheaton, Ill. April 10, 1881 Mr. and Mrs. Herigstad left Norway for America with Ole Westley and family, Carl Herigstad, Andrew Watne, Waldemar Klubben, Knut Holland, Swen Loge, Christopher Osland, Swen Lunde, Swen Lima, Ola Stakka, Lars Herigstad, Lauritz Stai, Miss A. Ogland, and Tobias Thime. On their way over the propellor broke on the ship and they were hauled in by a cattle ship to St. John, Newfoundland where they waited several days for the ship to be repaired.

Mrs. Herigstad remembers an incident on her trip from St. John. When the company arrived in Chicago, Swen Loge's little *girl* died and when they arrived in St. Paul, Minn. a boy was born to them at the depot.

Most of the company was headed for Granite Falls, Minn. A short way out of Granite Falls, the women stayed at Ole Lende's. The men bought each a yoke of oxen and a covered wagon and started for Dakota territory to hunt for land.

The men had disagreed on the time they arrived in Griggs county. To settle the disagreement they wrote in to the Scandinavian paper, Chicago. They arrived in Griggs county June 15, 1881.

In six weeks Mrs. Herigstad got word from Mr. Herigstad that he had located land on section 27, Sverdrup township,

Griggs county. The others had located land also. The women then took the train to Valley City and the men came to get them with covered wagon. Mr. Herigstad had built a small sod house for the time being. When the other women saw what Mrs. Herigstad had to live in, they went back to their wagons and cried like babies.

They lived in this sod house until the fall of 1881 when Mr. Herigstad built a log house. This land they were on was railroad land and they were not allowed to live on there. The same fall they moved to section 30, Sverdrup township and had the log house moved up there. Carl Herigstad, brother to Mr. Herigstad went to Montana this fall and worked on the railroad.

Mr. Herigstad and some of the neighbors went to Valley City for provisions each winter. In March, 1882 the Herigstads ran out of food. Mr. Herigstad and a few neighbors went to Cooper's ranch and brought home some flour, kerosene, and pork. The next day Carl Herigstad came from Montana. Andrew Watne was along with him. They walked from Valley City and were badly frozen when they reached Herigstad's.

Early the next morning one of the men noticed fire in the ceiling. A kerosene can was standing close by. They were going to open the window and shovel snow in to quench it, and just then the kerosene exploded. Mrs. Herigstad grabbed the children and ran out to the barn. While the men were trying to quench the fire, Simon Auren and Lewis Johnson came to help. Mrs. Herigstad had made pancakes just previously

and her dough was on the table. Simon Auren grabbed the dough and flour. Lewis Johnson grabbed all the silverware and white clothes. Most of their belongings burned. All of Mrs. Herigstad's things which she cherished from Norway were destroyed. The little log house burned down completely. Another log house was built right away. The burned logs were used to make the kitchen

In April, 1882 another group came from Norway, Martin Lunde, Bor Herigstad, and Nels Herigstad. They walked from Valley City. Mr. Betual Herigstad started out for Valley City in the afternoon with oxen to get their trunks etc. It was many days before he got back. The river had risen. It had been raining and was very muddy. With great difficulty Mr. Herigstad managed to cross the river.

Seven acres of land was broke in 1883. In the summer of 1883 Mr. Herigstad picked buffalo bones. He picked skeletons of twelve buffalos on his own farm and sold them at Cooperstown.

Mr. Herigstad bought a binder in 1882. The man he bought it from was invited to have chicken dinner with them. He commented on how good the chicken dinner was and told them the other place he was to be was offered sour milk.

In 1886 Mr. Herigstad helped organize the township of Sverdrup. The meeting was at Lewis Johnson's. Mr. Herigstad suggested the name of Sverdrup. It was put to vote and was named Sverdrup.

As the years passed the Herigstad's added more land to their farming. Thirteen children were born to them. Mr. Herigstad died in 1883. Mrs. Herigstad now lives with her daughters Sylvia and Lydia in Minot.

Biography of T. O. Hetager
Mildred Hetager

Ole and Taran Olson were the Parents of Thor Olson Hetager born on September 1, 1867, in the country of Norway in the county of Hallingdal, and near the city of Drammen.

He left his former home, because he thought it would be a better future for him in the United States. He came to North Dakota instead of any other state because he had relatives living there. Landing in New York by steamboat, he came to North Dakota by means of a train on September 21, 1887.

He took up his land in the township of Rosendal, Section 5. The first house on his land was a frame shack. On trips to town, he either walked or went with a team of horses. He experienced many blizzards, but no floods or prairie fires. His nearest neighbors were John Peterson and Ben Cornet. He never had any machinery or teams, because he rented out his homestead as soon as he had proved it up, and worked elsewhere.

Among the early schools was the Gallatine, Laura Amalie being the teacher. The Ness Church was one of the early churches having Rev. Quamme as the minister.

He got his fuel from the river, hauling it from there with oxen.

He was married to Rachel Skaar at Cooperstown, North Dakota in 1910.

His present residence is in Cooperstown, North Dakota.