

Biography of John Watne
--Roy Watne

The names of the pioneer's parents are Jonas and Jorgena Watne. The name of the pioneer is John Watne. He was born on June 10, 1865. He was born in Norway near Stavanger. Mr. Watne left his home because he would not take military training. He then came to North Dakota because he thought it was the best place.

There was a storm on the ocean when he came to America. The pioneer came to North Dakota in 1888. His first experience was digging wells and working on the Cooper Ranch. Mr. Watne bought his land located in Bald Hill Township. The first house was frame.

When they went to town they drove with oxen which went very slow. The pioneer's neighbors were Lars Watne, and Edward Michaelis. The machinery used was plow, harrow, mower, and binder. The teams were oxen. The pioneer's crops were mostly blue stem wheat which threshed twenty bushels to the acre. The fuel was wood gotten from the Sheyenne River which they bought. They had very many storms in the winter. There were also many fires. They always had to have a fire break.

John Watne was married to Maria Holland in the year of 1902. They were married near Cooperstown. The children of the pioneer are Walter, Cooperstown; Ernest, Cooperstown; Erma, Minneapolis; Alice, Maynard, Otto, Roy, Esther, and Johnney of Hannaford.

The present home of John Watne is in Bald Hill Township, Section 20. It is four miles northwest of Hannaford.

Johanne Watne

From interview by Hannah Lende

Johanne Watne was born June 10, 1865 near Stavanger, Norway. His parents were Jonas and Marie Watne. In the spring of 1888 he came to America with his parents and brothers and sisters. They came from Philadelphia by train direct to Cooperstown. Everything was black in they country. A prairie fire had gone through there in the fall of 1887.

The family stayed at Andrew Watne's in Sverdrup township. Johanne Watne got a job for \$1 a day digging wells all around. The next year he was carpenter and built granaries. Later Mr. Watne worked for Mr. R. C. Cooper. There was very much rain in the year 1890 but the men get their harvesting done. It was so wet they had to haul the grain in the granary. While they were doing this a blizzard came up. There was one foot of snow on the ground. Each time the men went out to get a load they would freeze, so cold it was. A group of men had come from Wisconsin to work and wasn't prepared for this cold weather and almost froze to death.

At one time Mr. Watne was hauling some grain seed out in the field to the crew. Soon he heard a funny noise and thought sure it was the Indians having a war dance. He was tempted to turn around but soon found out to his relief it was just a group of prairie chickens. Indians went through the territory in the spring of the year and camped until fall when they would go back to their settlement.

Mr. Watne remembers being out in a dust storm while working for Mr. Cooper. It was around 1890 or later. He was hauling out seed for the crew in the field. A severe dust storm came and Mr. Watne got lost. The only thing for him to do was to let the mules take him home. Mr. Watne also stayed home and helped his folks in Sverdrup township.

In 1900 Mr. Watne bought his first machinery which consisted of a wagon, plough and drill and started farming on his own on section 7, township 145, range 59. There was land already broke and Mr. Watne broke sixty more acres. In 1901 he put 100 acres into crop which yielded about twenty bushels to the acre.

Mr. Watne was married to Marie Holland in 1903 in Griggs county. Nine children were born to this family. Mr. and Mrs. Watne are still living on the same homestead.

PIONEER BIOGRAPHY

John Watne *by Roy Watne*

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- His first experience was digging wells and working on the Cooper Ranch.
- Mr. Watne bought his land located in Bald Hill Township. The first house was frame.
- When they went to town they drove with oxen which went very slow. The pioneer's neighbors were Lars Watne, and Edward Michaelis. The machinery used was plow, harrow, mower, and binder. The teams were oxen. The pioneer's crops were mostly blue stem wheat which threshed twenty bushels to the acre.
- The fuel was wood gotten from the Sheyenne River which they bought. They had very many storms in the winter. There were also many fires. They always had to have a fire break.
- John Watne was married to Maria Holland in the year of 1902. They were married near Cooperstown.
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