

Dr. Leon Jacobsen

All of us in the Sims-Almont area have always been proud of our community's many accomplishments, both past and present, but we are especially proud of the many Almont High School graduates who have gone on to excel in their chosen work, whether it be Medicine, Religion and Missionary work, Education, Law, Business or any other field of endeavor. Many have earned respect statewide and nationwide for their efforts and, at least, one has received worldwide recognition. That same one, Dr. Leon Jacobsen, was also awarded the prestigious North Dakota Rough Rider's Award.

Leon Orris Jacobson, the son of John and Rachael, was born in Sims, attended rural school there and graduated from Almont High School in 1928. He studied at the North Dakota Agricultural College (now NDSU) for two years and then, because of lack of funds to continue his schooling, returned to Sims to teach in the one room school he had attended as a child. He soon returned to Fargo to continue his schooling and graduated from NDAC in 1935 with plans to continue in the field of medicine. He went on to the University of Chicago Medical School and received his M.D. in 1939.

With World War II on the horizon, the University of Chicago was selected as the location for the super secret Manhattan Project, from which came the first atomic bomb. Shortly after his graduation Dr. Leon was recruited by the Project to study the effects of radio-active materials on the human body and was soon designated as Director of Health for the entire project. He and his staff of 400 professional and technical people first tested and studied the health of all workers who came in contact with nuclear materials, then later he was promoted to Director of Biology and Medicine, giving him responsibility for the health care and surveillance of all the workers on the Project. In the course of this work he and his colleagues were able to adapt much war-time research to efforts to fight diseases. He became a leading researcher in the development of bone marrow transplants

and chemo-therapy treatment for leukemia, Hodgkins Disease and other cancers.

Dr. Jacobsen spent his entire career at the University of Chicago where among other accomplishments he was: Dean of the Division of Biological Sciences; Chairman of the Department of Medicine; Founder of the Argonne Hospital; Professor of the Department of Medicine, and Professor of Biological Medical Sciences. He earned many other titles and awards, but they would fill a book!

After he retired from the University, he continued lecturing all across the United States and in many foreign lands.

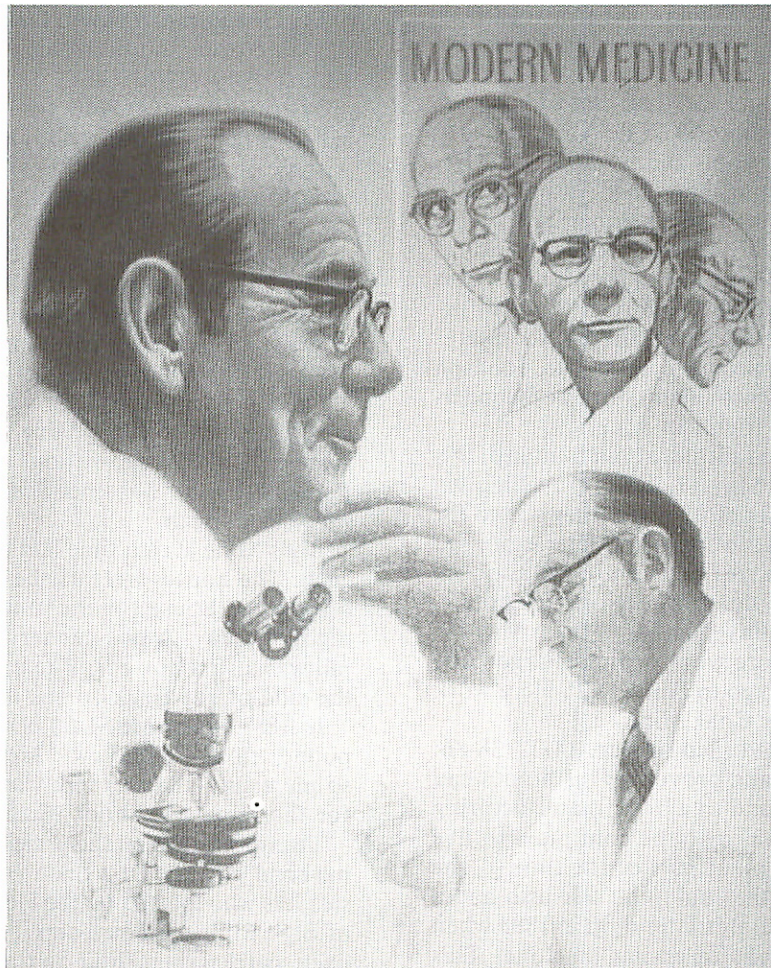
In 1976 the State of North Dakota selected Dr. Leon Orris Jacobson as being worthy of its Rough Rider's Award, given only to native North Dakotans who have earned national and/or international recognition for their accomplishments. As a recipient of this honor, his picture now hangs in the North Dakota State Capitol.

Dr. Leon was very proud of his Norwegian heritage and especially proud that in 1990 King Olav of Norway presented him with the Norwegian Medal of Merit, and Knighted him! He made several trips to Norway both to lecture and for pleasure and each time he went he remembered to send us a post card.

Leon and I were friends all our lives. We grew up as neighbors in Sims, attended school together there and in Almont, played

together, and when we grew up, sang together. He had a great bass voice and was a member of our first male quartet. He never failed to visit us when he came back home to Sims, and as I mentioned above, always dropped us a card when traveling in foreign lands, especially Norway! We kept in touch all through the years and as we both got older, we heard from him even more often. We were his main contact with the old home community which he loved and never forgot.

Leon Jacobsen died on September 20, 1992. He was a notable North Dakotan!



Dr. Leon Jacobsen from painting hanging in State Capitol. Rough Rider Hall of Fame.

§ Historical Data §

“Historical Data” was one of the projects of the WPA (Works Project Administration) in 1934. Field workers interviewed the pioneers and compiled their comments and biographies for posterity. The local field workers were Erling Willman, Grace B. Krueger and Mabel Conlee. The following biographies were obtained from the North Dakota Historical Society; not all have been copied in entirety.

Brent Ramsland

Bernt Ramsland was born in Haaman, a farmstead near Farsund, Norway, July 24, 1852. Was married to Anna Sine Tenneson in March 1879.

In 1881 Mr. and Mrs. Ramsland and their child Tinius left Norway with a party bound for Sims, D.T. USA. In the party was Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Johnson, and a sister of Mrs. Johnson — now Mrs. John Olin, and Theo. Ramsland.

This party had been advised to go to America by A.J. Johnson who had spent about 25 years in the United States before this time. Mr. Johnson first came to the United States in about 1845. Having taken in the “gold rush” in California in 1849, also having traveled across the United States twice in a covered wagon—from coast to coast, Mr. Johnson had returned to Norway in 1870 with many stories of wonderful possibilities that could be found in America.

After being on the ocean and railroad about a month, this party arrived in Fargo, D.T., May 17, 1881, travelling via Quebec, Canada to Duluth, Minnesota where they stayed for two days to rest up. The members of this party later expressed regret because they had not stayed at Duluth and took up a homestead there, instead of coming to North Dakota.

Bernt Ramsland and family stayed in Fargo from May 17, 1881 to Nov. 17, 1881. No more work around Fargo, Mr. Ramsland and family decide to go to Sims, D.T. Here work could be had at the Company Coal Mine.

Early in 1882 Bernt Ramsland filed on Sec. 14-T-138-86. However, in 1883, Mr. Ramsland proved up his homestead with cash so he could sell his land to a brick manufacturing company. During the next four years he continued to live in Sims, working at the brick plant part of the time — the rest of the year he worked in the coal mine. He also had a small blacksmith shop. It was in this little shop in 1883 when he built a small, man-powered, threshing machine. This machine was used successfully for two years on the farms near Sims.

Mrs. Anna Ramsland Larson

Born at Treland, near Farsund, Norway, Nov. 20, 1856. Was united in marriage to Bernt Ramsland during March 1879. Came to Fargo, N.D., May 17, 1881, together with her husband and his brother Theodore, also her mother Bertha Pederson. Her husband Bernt Ramsland was born July 24, 1852 at Haaman, a farmstead near Farsund, Norway. He died Feb. 23, 1889.

“Interesting Notes as Told by Mrs. Larson”

My first home in North Dakota was in Fargo. Coming to this state from Southern Norway. I lived in Fargo from May 17th to Nov. 17th, 1881.

Leaving Fargo bound for Bly’s Mine, which was later called Sims. The railroad on which my husband I took passage on did not cross the Missouri River at that time. The end of the road was Bismarck. So we stayed at Bismarck until the next day.

On Nov. 18, 1881 my husband and I walked across the ice of the Missouri River carrying a child on my back. November that year must have been a cold wintery month in order to freeze ice thick enough for people to walk on. We were the first to cross on the ice that year.

On the other side of the river we got aboard a freight train which took us to Bly’s Mine (Sims) that same day. We arrived at Bly’s Mine without much trouble. When we left Fargo, the snow was knee deep. At Bly’s Mine there was no snow to be seen.

Bly’s Mine at that time had only three houses of one room each. The houses were of the box-car-type. There was also a boarding house for the miners. The coal miners worked night and day. A box-car served as the first store. The first jail was also a box-car. The mail (letters) was thrown along the side of the track for us to pick up.

In 1881 eggs were \$1.00 per doz. Butter was 50 cents per pound; flour—\$4.00 cwt. Meat was cheap, because it was so plentiful—that is there was plenty of deer and antelope for the miners to shoot when the meat supply ran low.

Transportation on the prairies was done with ox-team. My husband had the first team of oxen in Bly’s Mine. Homesteaders who located on the Heart River, eighteen miles south of Bly’s Mine used ox teams. And those who couldn’t afford oxen, carried their flour on their back. Others used to wheel it home on wheel-barrows. In May 1883 the first team of horses was brought to Bly’s Mine, by Mr. A.A. Johnson.

The first winter I spent at Bly’s Mine was extremely mild. So mild that we planted potatoes during the last days of February 1882. Three days of snow and wintry weather was all the winter we had. The following winters were more severe. During the last days of January 1885 a coal miner and his son became lost in a snow storm while walking home from work to their homestead about 5 miles southeast of Bly’s Mine. They were found the next day frozen to death in a snowdrift.

A few years later when the town was well started, there were rumors that the Indians were breaking out of their

reservations, and would soon come to Bly's Mine to attack the miners. To protect ourselves from the Indians a fort was built as a look-out on a high hill right west of Bly's Mine. Fortunately, no Indians came. The government supplied the miners with rifles and ammunition to be used in fighting off any possible attack from the Indians.

As Sims (Bly's Mine) grew and prospered, a side line to the coal mining was added. This was the making of bricks at the Brick Yard from the clay found right near the plant. My husband's homestead and tree claim was sold to the Brick Yard Co., to be used in taking clay for the plant. This company started making bricks in 1883.

In 1884 a three story hotel was built. Two boarding houses, a bank, a drug store, two butchershops, a jewelry shop, a general store, and a schoolhouse were added. Evening School for grownups was offered to anyone who wished to avail themselves of it. Every patron of the school paid 50 cents per month, per scholar for paying the teacher's salary and the upkeep of the school. A church was started in 1884. This building served as church and parsonage. This building became the parsonage when a larger church was constructed in 1899.

A park was laid out and planted with trees of different kinds. Forty men were hired to build and care for the park and irrigate the trees.

In 1883 there were two saloons in operation. In less than a year the number had increased to seven. It has been estimated that the population of Sims was about 1200 in 1885. Sims was at its height of prosperity at this time.

More than 120 men were at work night and day mining coal. The amount of coal taken out daily was about 20 railroad boxcars, winter and summer.

In 1886 the Brick Yard failed in business. About this time the Northern Pacific Co. discontinued the mine at Sims, and instead opened a mine in Montana. The working men left Sims to take homesteads and picked buffalo bones for a living. These bones were shipped to bone mills.

When the harvest season came around in the eastern part of the state, the homesteaders went there to work as harvest hands, leaving their women and children to take care of themselves and care for the stock if they had any, until the harvest was over.

After living about five years in Sims, we moved out in the wilderness so to speak, to live on a ranch. This land was first taken as a "preemption" and later became our ranch. The reason we went so far out (12 miles S.W. of Sims) was to find the best location for ranching. This land had, and is yet, covered along the creek banks with a good growth of native ash, and elm trees. This woods, as we call it was the most attractive part.

Our ranch house was made partly of rocks, and partly of logs. In the cellar under the house was a spring that seeped out of a coal vein. So we had plenty of nice spring water in the house, and the coal was handy all the time, winter and summer, in the bank just back of the house. We had plenty of kindling from the trees that had been destroyed by prairie fires.

Deer and antelope in large herds roamed the prairies. This gave us plenty of meat (venison). There were no buffalos when we came. They had left before we came. They could be found farther west where there were no settlers.

Indians and prairie fires were our enemies. We were afraid of the Indians, but fortunately the Indians did not give us

any trouble. During my first years on the ranch, I remember seeing two Indians carrying a stretcher with a dead Indian on it. They marched down one hill and up the next. They kept on going until they were out of my sight. At that time, there were a few Indians who had their camping grounds about five miles southwest from our ranch. This site is marked by a pile of rocks.

The prairie fires gave us the most trouble. We had prairie fires every fall for many years. One summer it had been so extremely dry, that the grass had dried up. When the first rain came it was attended by a hard thunderstorm. This thunderstorm started a prairie fire on a little knoll about two miles west of our ranch. This happened about 1890 or 1891. I saw the lightning set fire just as I was driving home from Glen Ullin. The fire didn't get very far before the rain put it out.

The worst prairie fire took place in October 1886. This fire started near the Cannon Ball River and went northward to the Heart River. The grass must have been quite tall along the banks of the river in those days, because the fire gained enough force to enable the flaming pieces of grass to cross the Heart River and start a new fire which continued northward. In those days there was only one settler for every fifteen miles. So these settlers were helpless when a big fire came along. This fire continued until it reached the Missouri River.

In 1886 and 1887, when one went out in search of new land for a homestead, the common mode of travel was to go on foot, or drive an ox-team. To make sure of finding their way back the land prospector would drop pieces of bark or else put up a pile of stones a certain distance apart to mark the way.

Later, when the horses and mules were shipped in, ox-teams went out of style. The settlers found horses and mules to be far better than oxen. The first set of harness at Sims, was made of burlap and rope for tugs.

The first plows (walking plows) were made mostly of wood. The first reapers were made mostly of wood. The first threshing machines also were made of wood, powered by horsepower. The first threshing machine used at Sims, was powered by man-power. One man could run it for 5 to 10 minutes.

Farming in those days was not a money making proposition, because there wasn't much farming being done. Each of the early settlers only cultivated from 5 to 10 acres.

Mrs. Anna Ramsland Larson died at Almont May 10, 1937.

Theodore Larson

Theodore Larson, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lars Arian-son, was born on November 27, 1863 at Ghare, Norway. He attended school until he was 14 years old and then worked on his father's farm.

His cousin, Jacob Mydland, who was living in America wrote to him and asked him to come here also. So in 1883 he left Norway and came directly to Sims, D.T. He arrived here on May 6, 1883.

He worked in the brick yard at Sims until in the fall of 1884. Then he found employment on the Northern Pacific railroad as section laborer for several years. About 1890 a coal mine was opened near Sims where he then secured work.

He took up a homestead in section 2, township 137, range

87. He does not remember the year nor the quarter. A 12' by 14' house was built of sod and lumber by Mr. Larson and Mr. Ramsland. The furniture was purchased second hand. One bed he made himself.

In the fall of 1890 reports were heard concerning the breakout of the Indians. A fort was built on a hill where the men took turns watching. The women and children were to be taken into the mine for safety. However, nothing ever came of it as Chief Sitting Bull was killed which ended it.

In 1892 he was united in marriage to Anna Sine Tenneson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Tenneson. She was born on Nov. 20, 1865 at Trelan, Norway, where she also attended school and later worked as maid.

She was first united in marriage to Bern Ramsland. They came to the United States in 1881. (Mr. Larson stated that they were in Sims when he arrived in 1883, but does not know when they came.) They lived on a farm near Sims.

Following the death of her husband she married Theodore Larson in August 1892. Rev. Norby performed the ceremony. They lived on Mr. Larson's homestead 12 years before he filed on it.

Many prairie fires were started by the trains and by the carelessness of the settlers. Old clothes and sacks were soaked in water and used in beating out the flames. Several times he had to go out and help fight fires for days and nights at a time.

Translated from the Diary of Theo. O. Feland
Beginning when he arrived in Baltimore from Norway
By Erling Willman

I arrived in Baltimore on the boat, April 29, 1883, together with my dad, my sister Bertine (Mrs. J. Jacobson) and two other relatives. Immediately we went to the depot and boarded a train for the west. Arrived in Chicago April 29, changed trains and continued westward. About six hours later we were in Minneapolis. Stopped there five hours, then took a train to Bismarck, D.T. Here we stopped over for one day, and checked up on the steamboat schedule on the Missouri River — with the idea that we might continue westward on the river. However, we decided to go on the railroad, as we had relatives living at a place called Bly's Mine about 40 miles west of Bismarck. Also, while at Bismarck, we heard that good wages could be had at the Northern Pacific Coal Company mine there.

The following day after we arrived at Bly's Mine (Sims) I got work at the mine shoveling coal into the coal cars. But this work was too hard for me as I was quite young at the time — 19 years old. After two days of this work at the mine I quit, and went to work on the section, at a place called Blue Grass. I worked here one week, then went back to Bly's Mine to work at the brickyard.

I continued to work for the Carbon Brick and Lime Company, from July 16, 1883 to August 11, 1884, at which time this company went bankrupt, and couldn't pay me a cent of my wages. Together with my foreman, Sam I. Monroe, and two other men, we went to Bismarck, where we received a settlement. Immediately I went back to Bly's Mine, to work at the brickyard (now called C. H. Bly Brickyard).

This job did not last long, for on August 22, 1884 it started to rain hard. This rain lasted more than a week, leaving the ground soft. The Company decided to close the brickyard

for the rest of the year.

On August 27, 1884 a farmer by the name of Glass, from Menoken, wanted some men to help him with the threshing. Two of my comrades and I went with him. The job lasted 10 days. Then this man's work was done. My comrades went to Fargo to look for work, but I stayed and followed the threshing machine until the 12th day of November, when all the threshing had been completed.

I then went with the rest of the threshermen to Bismarck where I stayed for two days. As I could find no other work I went back to Sims (Bly's Mine).

Here at Sims I found conditions improved. The coal mine was running full capacity. Also Sam I. Monroe had taken a contract from C.W. Thomson to manufacture brick and terra cotta, for Cox-Owen of Timberline, Montana. I worked with Monroe until February 12th, 1885. Then that work was over. The rest of the winter I was idle, and stayed with my dad who was batching in Sims.

March 14, 1885 I got work shovelling coal in a box-car until 22nd. Then C.W. Thomson came and wanted me to open up a new mine. This I did with the help of my dad and brother Rudolph. On this job all went well and I made a lot of money. Three times during this winter I had sent money to mother and younger brothers and sisters in Norway.

On the 24th day of May, C.W. Thomson came to me and wanted me to go with him to Bismarck, and do some work for him on his house. This I did. It was while doing this work I met with misfortune. On the 23 day of June, I was standing on a 79 foot ladder when I lost my balance, and fell down. After this fall I was bedridden at the home of Ben T. Ramsland, in Sims, for three months.

Beginning with the 16th day of September, I started to work for Ben T. Ramsland, who at that time had a contract with C.W. Thomson to mine coal. I worked for Ramsland until January 28, 1886, when I thought he was too unreasonable. Then I quit, and went to work for the Northern Pacific Coal Co., where I remained until fall.

Then I was sent by C.W. Thomson, to Rosebud, Montana to open a new mine. Winter had already started in Sims. It was on the 27th day of November, I left Sims. The weather was quite cold with much snow. However I was well fitted and everything went well. By December 7, 1886 we had the first carload of coal ready to ship to Billings. I was foreman on this job. I resigned my job April 13, 1887 because of conditions there. However, I had everything in good shape before leaving.

On the 14th day of May I started working again for the Northern Pacific Coal Company in Sims. I stayed on the job until July 27, 1887, when they discontinued mining at Sims. The company took its rolling stock to Roslyn, Washington Territory. Immediately I decided to follow out to Roslyn.

No sooner said than done, on the 29th day of July, I packed up and started out for Roslyn, W.T. On the way out I stopped off at Helena, Montana, and found work at the brickyard there. I stayed there until the 22nd day of September, when I decided to continue on to Roslyn.

At Roslyn I settled down to work in the new mine. All went well up to October 12. Then I became affected with rheumatism, which got worse to the extent that on the 13th day of December, I discontinued my work, and journeyed back to Sims.

After getting back to Sims, I found employment with Cyrus Thomson. For one month my work was to check up

and inspect the old mine. Afterwards during the winter I mined coal until March 27, 1888. Then Cyrus Thomson sent me to Lehigh—near Dickinson, to take charge of his mine there.

Here—at Lehigh, I encountered much trouble with a man named Mr. Lalley, who also had a mine there. The mine which I worked was on Northern Pacific land. This Mr. Lalley proclaimed that the land belonged to him, because he had proved up a homestead on it. Mr. Lalley must have taken up his homestead on railroad land. His own mine had been shut down. It hurt him to see us working our mine and having his own being idle. He tried every possible means but to no avail. He had the sheriff and surveyor from Dickinson to the mine every month. This brought him only a tremendous expense. Finally Mr. Lalley decided to bury the hatchet and seek a peaceful agreement. Therefore he came over one evening and acted like a gentleman. I met him half ways, and we talked the matter over. We became friends and were friends as long as I stayed in Lehigh.

I was getting tired of the Lehigh Mine. I had to live in a dugout—the size of a horse stall. This I had to be satisfied with because, when Cyrus Thomson couldn't get to buy out the Lalley mine, he thought it wise, to not spend more money than necessary, to bring out the coal left on the railroad land, and quit. I could go and stay with a widow that lived about 2 miles from the mine. Her house too was a dugout, and this woman was not a very good cook. Neither was she a good house-keeper. My health was still troubled from that siege that I had while in Washington, four years ago. I pleaded with Cyrus to release me from my duties at Lehigh. Finally, he told me to select one of the miners, and put him in charge. I could then come to Sims and open up a new mine, which delighted me.

December 12, 1888 found me back in Sims working in the new mine for Cyrus Thomson. Everything went well at first. I had my brother working with me. By a month later, the water in the mine caused so much trouble I had to quit that mine and open up again in the old one.

DIARY DISCONTINUED...THEO FELAND.

Otto Feland

Otto Feland came over from Norway in 1886. While still quite a young lad, worked out as did the other children, to help support the family. From 1886-1890 worked out for the farmers near Sims, and at times worked at the mine.

From 1890-1894 together with his brother Rudolph they ran a bunch of sheep on Owen's Creek which is west of Almont. They had about 200 head of sheep.

Beginning with 1894 Otto squatted on Sec 2-T137-R86. Being only 18 years old, he could not file on the land. But the law then gave him full rights to the land as long as he squatted on the land. After he was 21 years old he could file and prove up, which he did.

Otto tells some interesting stories about the first years, when the first settlers came in. At first there were very few settlers, and the land not settled on could be used by the settler that got on the land first. When haying season came on, those who had a mower would cut a swath with their machine, and encircle a big "ring" on this free land. The hay within this "ring" belonged to him. At first this practice was respected. Later, some of these settlers became so selfish, that they would ring in several sections of the choicest

hay land. Thus leaving many with little land to cut but their homestead. And during some of the dry years this was not enough. Soon however, the huskier settlers that were tardy in getting out after their hay, simply stepped inside of these rings and helped themselves to the hay they needed. Sometimes there would be trouble. Ten or fifteen years later when the country became pretty well settled up, those who needed more land found it best to rent.

One year, about in 1896, a man named Hauser got a permit from the Railroad Company to run sheep on all the railroad land around Sims. He had about 10,000 head. This herd of sheep caused so much trouble with the settlers that the Railroad Company did not give a permit again.

According to Otto, in the early years there was an abundance of trees along every creek and slough. Prairie fires of course destroyed some. But most of the trees were destroyed by the early settler. One settler living on the creek west of where Joe Pederson now lives, was too lazy to haul the trees home after they were cut, but would let the flood waters carry them down to his place in the spring. Many of these trees went right on down the stream. These trees were never replaced. In most of those coulies you can't find a single tree.

Information by Otto Feland on early tradesmen and professional people in Sims, N.D., beginning with 1882.

C.C. Burger — had a boarding house

H.C. Kauffman — sold machinery and lumber

Theo. Schenkenberg — banker and partner in a mine with Cyrus Thomson and Thoe. Feland after the Railroad Company discontinued to operate the mine at Sims.

Harry Graham — mine boss

Jim McKearn — engineer at the mine

A.H. Burr — surveyor

Geo. Aid — owner of store later sold to Fred Meyers

B.T. Brown — contractor

August Sells — saloonkeeper

Dr. Harris — company doctor at Sims

Joel Blood — contractor

C.L. Timmerman — first was bookeeper, later bought store from Meyers

Ed. Langdon — hunter and horse trader

G. Lampman — hunter

James Pugh—made the first carload of brick at Sims. A small brick factory operated by Pugh had been in operation before the larger plant was constructed. This plant was located near the place where the "maintainer's house" now stands. The clay used in this brick was taken out of the Company mine, and was a better clay than that used later in the larger plant.

Sakerias Egen and Ole Barstad made the corner stone for the first State Capitol building at Bismarck. This corner stone was made at Sims, in 1883.

During the period between 1882-85 there were three denominations in Sims. They were: The Norwegian Lutheran, the English Presbyterian, and the Catholic.

The Lutherans beginning in 1881 met in the home of A.J. Johnson. In 1885 their first church was completed. Later in 1889 the Lutherans built and completed another church. This church is still in use. The bell for this last church was ordered by Rev. Gaustad from Troy, N.Y., and is engraved. The Lutherans did not organize until 1884, at which time Rev. Norby was minister. The Lutheran cemetery is just south of town.

The English Presbyterians were organized perhaps one year earlier. They held their meetings in the school house. They started to build a church on top of the hill east of town near the old school house. The foundation was laid, but the church was never completed. Traces of the foundation can still be seen. Their cemetery was about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile northwest of town. Since then all the bodies have been removed.

The Catholics held their meetings at the section house.

Not until 1883 did they have any cemetery at Sims. The bodies were simply buried on their land. Later moved to the cemetery.

Men that died when the railroad was being built were usually buried near a construction camp, or on the spot where they died. Graves can be found on several places along the track. One man was shot because of some trouble with another man at the construction camp near the place called "Rattlesnake Curve," just a mile east of Almont. The grave can still be found. The story goes that this man used another man's team while the other man was sick. Very few had teams and he thought he could just as well use the horses while the owner was sick. As soon as the owner got well he went over to him and shot him. Another body can be found near Curlew.

O. G. Feland

Came to Sims, N.D. in 1886 with his mother and four younger brothers and sisters. His dad Ole Feland and three of the oldest children had come to Sims, in 1883. His dad had been a sailor and until they came to Sims was almost a stranger to his family. While on the sea his dad had developed a weakness for liquor which brought hardship on the rest of the family. It was necessary for the children to go out and find work at an early age. Also they had no chance to go to school. Oscar had a month of school at Sims. However Oscar like the rest of his brothers and sisters learned to read and read a good deal.

At the age of 10 Oscar worked out on some of the nearby farms for wages ranging from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per month.

Oscar told about the heavy snow in the winter of 1888. That winter he had been employed to take care of the stock for Ben Olson and Jacob Olson so that they could stay in Sims and work in the mine. The two Olson farms were about three fourth mile apart and about 5 miles west of Sims. During the winter much snow fell, and soon there was from 4 to 5 feet of snow on the flats and in the sheltered places from 10 to 12 feet. Neither of these families had laid in enough coal for the winter. John Olin had the job hauling coal from the mine to the homes in Sims. At that time Jacob Olson hired Olin to haul a load out to the farm. Early in the morning John Olin started out with the coal. All day he was on the road with the team pushing through snow four feet deep and more. It was getting dark and he had reached within a half mile from the house when it became necessary to unload and start for home for he would never be able to see his tracks in the dark. This load Oscar brought home on a stone-boat pulled by a little Indian pony, hauling about 300 lbs. to the load.

During the winter many of the ranchers lost much cattle. L.N. Wang lost some cattle in the barn. The weight of the snow caused the roof of the sod barn to cave in on the cattle. In some places the snow was so deep the ranchers could

not find the haystacks they had standing on the prairies.

Oscar Feland tells about a bad snowstorm in November in 1904. It was during this storm that Nels Skavang and Ole Torgeson were killed. They were working on the section, and the snow got so bad they had to leave their hand car, at Curlew and start walking to Sims. Neither one of the men heard the train coming that was pushing a snowplow. When the train arrived at Sims one of the men was still laying on the front part of the snowplow and still alive. This man told them to go back and look for the other man which they did. The locomotive was uncoupled and run back over the line to Curlew. The other man was found near the tracks, near Curlew. Both men died during the night.

In the early days the settlers never locked the doors on their shacks even when they were gone. Travelers passing through were welcome to go in and make themselves at home even tho the owner was gone. Many times Oscar says, he found his house had been used in his absence, by travelers. Some of the settlers down below the Heart River and even from the territory near the Cannon Ball came all the way to Sims to do their trading. When nightfall overtook them they would drive in to the nearest farm place, unhitch, feed and water their team and put them in the barn. Then if the owner wasn't home they would go ahead and make their own supper.

Another interesting phase of his talk is in regard to the way some of the homesteaders would locate their shack. In some cases four settlers, homesteading on the same section, would build a four room shack. This shack was located in the center of the section, placed in such a manner that each had a room on their quarter. In this manner they could be together and still be on their land as required by law, of the homesteaders.

Rickart Olson

Rickart Olson left Feland, Norway when he was 17 years of age. He arrived in Sims, D.T., May 2, 1883.

Rickart had very little schooling in Norway, and none in this country, but he has read considerable, and is interested in the affairs of today.

His brother Ben, advised him to come here, telling him there was much work to be had in the mine at Sims, D.T. Rick had been a sailor, for one year before he came to this country. Wages on the sea was \$4.00 per month. Couldn't save much on this wage, but his brother Ben sent him money for his ticket.

From 1883-1885 Rick worked on the section, at \$1.75 per day. Then worked in the brickyard at Sims, until it closed down. Here he lost 4 months wages, because, the company went bankrupt. After that he worked in the mines in Sims, until 1903.

Beginning in 1903 he took up a homestead on Sec22-T138-R86. Having saved most of his wages while he worked in the mine those 18 or 20 years, he was able to build nice buildings on his farm, got the necessary equipment, and thirty head of cattle. This was a nice start.

Girls were scarce in Sims, in the early days. Rick became acquainted with Lina Lewison, who became his wife, through Mrs. Harry Wadeson. Lina and Mrs. Wadeson were chums and had grown up together in Wisconsin. It was during the time Rick was working for Harry Wadeson—he boarded at the Wadeson place, when Mrs. Wadeson gave him the ad-

dress of Miss Lewison. They began corresponding and shortly were married. [Both are living on the old homestead.]

Tobias Olson

Tobias Olson had a common school education in Norway. He was just 15 years of age when he came to Sims, D.T., May 30, 1887.

He worked in the mine at Sims, for 8 years. About 1895 he homesteaded on Sec20-T138-R85. Tobias let the homestead go after a couple of years, for it was too hard to get water on this land. In those days the wells were all hand dug. While on this land, Tobias would farm during the summer, and work in the mine at Sims, in the winter.

In 1904 Tobias took up another homestead on sec24-T138-R87. He lived here until 1910, when he sold out and went to Norway. In Norway, he bought a small farm. However, this small farm seemed to cramp his style after being used to the wide open spaces, in North Dakota.

In 1914 he came back to North Dakota again, and this time bought a farm—the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of sec18-T138-R86.

Mr. Olson told about the Indian scare in 1890. He was working in the mine at Sims, at the time. He says, the Government supplied them with Winchester rifles, and ammunition, for their protection.

Food and bedding had been stored in the mine where they planned to hide their families, in case they were besieged by the Indians. Also, a fort had been built on top of the high hill on the west side of Sims. Food and water had been carried into this fort. But the Indians didn't come, and the pioneers were glad of it.

Ben S. Olson

Ben Olson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Reinert Olson, was born on December 14, 1862 at Feland, Norway. He attended the local school until he was fourteen years old and then worked at common labor until he became a seaman sometimes later.

His cousin, Ben Ramsland, who lived in Sims, Dakota Territory, urged him to come to America, where many opportunities were being offered. He arrived in Sims, D.T. on July 1, 1882 after a long journey which lasted six weeks. He stayed with the Ramslands for a week and then found employment on the railroad as a section laborer. In 1883 he worked in the brick yard at Sims where over 200 men were employed.

In 1884 he took up a homestead which was the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 20, township 138, range 86. He built a 8 x 10 house. This was a dugout with a lumber roof and front. The furniture he made himself. The bed, made of old boards and scantings and filled with straw, served as a mattress. Chairs, benches and a cupboard were also handmade. He made the stove from large sheets of tin and was made on the same principle as a kitchen range.

In 1885 he was united in marriage to Bertine Peterson, who was born in Norway January 19, 1862. They had five children: Bine, born Sept. 24, 1886; Pauline, born Feb. 7, 1888; Rudolph, born Nov. 10, 1889; Marie born Nov. 30, 1891; and Tobias born Aug. 4, 1899.

Mr. Olson stated that there wasn't much game to hunt besides rabbits, prairie chickens, ducks and antelopes. He picked buffalo bones and sold them for \$9 per ton. Oxen

were used to pull the heavy loads as he did not have horses. The bones were shipped east where they were used in purifying sugar. Many nights were spent on the prairie to save time.

In the fall of 1890, Mr. Knudson, a neighbor, told him that the Indians, who were supposed to have burned several homes belonging to the White people, were coming to kill all the settlers. He urged Olson to take his family to Sims for protection. A fort had been built and guns had been sent from Bismarck. However, Mr. Olson thought he and his family were safe at home, so did not leave the homestead. Gradually the rumors stopped and no more talk was heard concerning the Indians.

In 1911 he sold the farm, which was his homestead, and went back to Norway, leaving the younger children with his sister. The following year, April 1912, he married Ida Christianson in Spangereid, Norway. They had two children, Thomas, born January 24, 1913 and Christ, born March 6, 1915.

Following the death of his second wife in 1919, he returned to America accompanied by his two sons. They came directly to Almont where he rented a building in which he began repairing shoes.

On August 23, 1923 he married Gurine Tobiason, who was born in Norway. Sometime later he had a new shop and home built in which they resided for many years.

John Olin

John Olin came to America in 1882, locating at Sims, Dakota Territory. Norway and Sweden at that time was suffering from a financial depression. Since 1873 jobs had been very scarce and wages small. Many of the young people left their native land hoping to find better conditions in America.

Arriving in Sims which at that time was a small but booming mining town, Mr. Olin found work in the coal mine. Soon after he began work at the mine Mr. Olin with two friends, Hausley and Burg found clay which they believed would make a good brick. They took out some of the clay, pressed it between two rocks and made sample bricks which they sent to Chicago and N. York to be tested.

This was the beginning of the Sims Brickyard which furnished brick for Dakota's first capitol and many of the early brick buildings of Mandan and Bismarck. (Mr. Olin cannot give accurate information as the origin of the Sims Brick Yard.)

In 1884 the coal mine and brick yard were employing about three hundred men, a large hotel and \$5,000 school building were erected in 1884. By 1889 the hotel had been abandoned. It was later torn down, most of the fixtures were stolen. The schoolhouse was soon replaced by a smaller building. Mr. Olin believes the first school was torn down. The finding of better veins of coal in other localities and the abandonment of the Sims mine together with the closing of the brick yard caused the collapse of the "Sims Boom." Sims was platted by the N.P.R.R. in 1883. The coal mine was already in operation and there was a settlement on the townsite.

Rev. U. J. Norby who founded the Scandinavian Lutheran Church first came to Sims to preach in 1883. The church was organized in 1884 and a building erected which was used as both church and parsonage, the upstairs being used for a

church. Mr. Olin believes this was the first Lutheran Church west of the river as the Mandan Church was not organized until two years later.

Mr. Olin did not file on a homestead until about the time of his marriage in 1884. They have always lived on the farm. He retired several years ago selling his farm to a son-in-law, Walter Bakken. When not visiting with their other children they still make their home there.

John Peterson

John Peterson came to Iowa from Sweden in 1876. He worked on a farm for one year. Wages for the year was \$250.

In 1877 he went to Fargo, D.T., where they were building a new railroad. The job was moving dirt for the new roadbed, for which they were paid 10 cents per yard. He could make as much as \$3.10 a day, with his shovel and wheelbarrow. He continued with this work until 1881. The Railroad was now built into Montana. Then he took on a contract with the company, to blast rock where the roadbed was going to be.

In 1882 he came to Sims to work in the Northern Pacific Coal Company mine.

In 1883 he got married to Inger Syverson—a sister of Mrs. Jacob Olson of Sims.

Mr. Peterson filed on two different pieces of land near Sims. Neither place seemed to suit him. Later in 1892 he homesteaded on sec20-T137-R85. This land he proved up and lived there until 1910 when he moved to Oregon.

In 1888 he heard there was gold in the Black Hills. Together with I.C. Johnson and Adolph Jacobson—who later was County Commissioner of Morton County, they left for the Black Hills in a covered wagon. On this expedition they had a few Indian scares, but nothing serious happened. However, they couldn't find any gold there, and they came back to Sims in 1889, satisfied to continue farming there.

Mr. Peterson did well on his farm on the Muddy, especially with cattle, for there was plenty of good grazing, and plenty of open land in the early days. Mr. Peterson had made enough money from the farm so that he could retire and move to Oregon, where the winters were milder, in 1910.

Mr. Peterson told about the prices of farm produce in 1890. Butter was 6 cents per pound. Eggs were 6 cents. Wool too was 6 cents per pound.

Sometimes the merchant would not take butter at any price. He also told that about 1880, matches were \$1.00 per box. In those days they were careful not to use matches except when they couldn't get fire another way. Usually lighting their pipes from the fire in the stove.

This information given by his son Martin Peterson of Almont, N.D.

Peter Hoovestol

Peter Hoovestol, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Halvor Hoovestol, was born August 16, 1864 near Hoovestol, Norway. He attended school until he was 14 years old and then became a sailor.

On February 24, 1884 he married Petrine Feland. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Reinert Olson and was born on June 11, 1864. She attended school until she was 8 years old. She then worked as a maid until her marriage. After their marriage, Peter continued as a sailor. Two children were

born while they lived in Norway: Harold, born Sept. 18, 1884 and Thomas born Dec. 4, 1887.

In 1887 they decided to follow Mrs. Hoovestol's parents to America (where the latter had gone the year before). They arrived in Sims, D.T. on June 24, 1888, and lived in a four room brick house. Mr. Hoovestol paid \$150 for it. He worked in the coal mines several years, or until 1896. The mine was owned by Charles Thomson and approximately 17 men were steadily employed there. Joe Schollaert was the foreman.

Three children were born while they lived in Sims: Johanna, born April 18, 1890; Gunda, born May 18, 1892; and Joseph on Sept. 29, 1894.

In 1896 he took up a homestead which is the SW ¼ section 24, township 138, range 86. He built a 14'x14' two-room house out of railroad ties and other timber. The roof was made of sod. He made most of the furniture himself although some was purchased in Sims.

Five acres of land were plowed the first year (1896). His wife drove the horses while he held the plow. They harvested enough to supply them with seed for the following year.

Mr. Hoovestol remembers seeing a dead Indian taken past his home on a travois. The Indians also buried lump sugar with the corpse which was wrapped in bright colored blankets. He was buried about a mile north of Sims.

Many prairie fires were started by the railroad during the eighties and nineties. He often stayed out days and nights helping fight the flames.

In the fall of 1890 rumors were spread that the Indians were massacring the white people and burning their homes. A fort was built on the hill north of Sims where the women and children were to be taken. After completion of the fort, the settlers awaited the Indians and took turns keeping watch. However, when Sitting Bull was killed no more rumors were heard.

Farm produce was very low in price. They received 6¢ a pound for butter and eggs usually sold for 20¢ a dozen.

During the summer of 1914 a severe rainstorm did considerable damage to crops, and some of their neighbor's homes were badly damaged. That same year (1914) Mr. Hoovestol sold his homestead and other land and they moved to Almont.

A. M. Johnson

Amund Johnson was born at Ostre Gausdal, Norway, October 10, 1863. His wife, Ingeborg Martinson was also born at Ostre Gausdal, Norway, March 9, 1864, both being descendants of industrious, thrifty and sturdy people of religious bringing up. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson received their educations in the public school and Lutheran Church at Ostre Gausdal.

They both came to America in 1883 and were married in Georgeville, Minn., November 7, 1885. They resided in Minnesota four years and then came to Morton County, locating at Sims, N.D. in the year 1887. They later took up a homestead on the Heart River, 12 miles south of Almont in Grant County. Coming here as young people, they experienced most of the hardships endured by early pioneers. Their farm was known as the Rose Dale Stock Farm.

There were 12 children born to this union, 8 boys and 4 girls. One passed away in infancy. Although times were tough and often it was necessary to pinch pennies pretty tight, they

successfully managed to feed the hungry mouths of their 11 children. In the early days their home was a stopping place for the many who made trips to Almont and Sims from this part of the country and places South of here.

Mr. Johnson was director of the Lincoln school district for 36 years. On Nov. 7, 1935 about 75 guests gathered at their home to help them celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary.

Theo Ramsland

I was born in Norway, October 8, 1866. Came to Valley City in May 1881 and started to work on a farm at Sand Prairie about 25 miles south of Valley City. At this time I was 15 years of age. My wages were \$10.00 per month.

During the spring months I plowed with oxen. During the summer I herded cattle. I worked 2 years on this farm. The owner of the farm was Pete Larson. His house was built of logs. Most of the farmers of that neighborhood had sod houses. Wheat and oats were the only grain raised. The grain drill had hoes instead of discs which they now have. The hoes were shaped like the cultivator shovel of today. There was no seat or platform for the driver, he had to walk, which made the implement so much easier to pull, that was one advantage.

Later on, in May 1883, my brother, who lived at Bly's Mine (Sims), came to take me to his home, where my first job was coal mining. The regular coal miners received about 90 cents per ton, working for the Coal Company.

A year or two later I was engaged in plowing clay with a team of oxen for the brick yard. At that time the brick yard was making bricks for the Capitol at Bismarck which was then in the process of construction.

After the brick yard and the coal company failed, I took a team of oxen and went out to break up sod for homesteaders.

This sod was left exposed to the elements until next spring when it was seeded with wheat. The fields were from 5 to 10 acres in size.

Driving a team of oxen was no easy matter. I had no lines or reins by which to guide them. They were guided by the commands of the driver, with these words: "Gee, Haw" which is well known to all pioneers. "Gee" for turning to the right, and "Haw" for turning to the left. "Ho" was the command to stop. The oxen were held or tied together by the ox-yoke over their neck which served also for the harness by which leads were pulled.

While plowing along a creek with about three feet of water in it, a rather unusual thing happened. The weather being quite warm, the oxen noticed the creek close by which made them wish they were there, to cool themselves off. Instead of obeying my commands of Gee and Haw or Ho, they went straight for the creek. They did this in spite of all my efforts to stop them. To get them out of the creek was one job, but the hardest job of all was to get the plow out of the creek bank.

Steers had to be three years old before they could be "broken in" (trained) to drive or pull loads. The usual way was to hitch up the new animal with an old experienced one and drive them together for about a week which was the usual time it took to "break in" a new animal.

We used oxen to ride as we do horses now. The first steer I tried to break in to ride threw me off the first time I

mounted him. The second time I got on him I was able to "stay with him." He served as my saddle horse until I was able to get myself a team of mules. After I got my first team of mules, I felt like I had made a big step forward in the world of transportation for those days. This was about 1886.

At that time there was no work to get in Sims. This made it necessary for me to take my team of mules and go west, picking buffalo bones for a living. The bones were shipped east to bone mills. While we were picking bones we took our bed clothes along and slept under our wagons out on the open prairie. There wasn't a settler to be seen within a radius of 12 to 15 miles. The farther we got from the railroad track the greater was the distance between settlers.

There was very little hay to get in those days because of the many prairie fires that swept the country every fall.

In 1895 I bought a quarter section of land for \$2.50 an acre. I still have this land. During the first years of my life on this land, I lived in a dug-out, but I almost snowed in. This dug-out was located in the south side of a hill with a grove of native trees on the N.E. side. This no doubt was the reason I almost snowed in. Therefore, I found it necessary to pick out a different site for my place to live. This time I located myself on a higher place, where I lived in the cellar the first winter while I was building the house above the cellar. I lived in this house for about 10 years at which time I took a homestead right next to the land I bought, which later became my permanent home.

Written by Fred Ramsland.

Karen Underdahl Wadeson

Karen Evanson was born in Norway in 1864. She came to America with her parents in 1868. She never had the opportunity to attend school. She married Peter Underdahl in 1883 and they came to Sims to find employment in 1884. They rented a house in Sims and the only furniture they had was a table, 4 chairs, a bed and bedding, a small stove, frying pan, one kettle, a pail and a few dishes.

The first night in Sims, they spent with Mr. and Mrs. Bernt Ramsland, and they had to sleep on the floor. The boarding house and every private home that had any room to spare, was filled to capacity with miners and men who worked in the brick plant.

Mr. and Mrs. Underdahl liked the town of Sims, for in this town were many other of their own countrymen, and everyone seemed like old friends to them. Some of these friends were Ben Olson, Theodore Ramsland, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsland, Theodore Feland and his father Ole Feland, Nikolai Ostreng and family, Mr. and Mrs. John Olin, Mr. and Mrs. A.A. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. John Fallgren, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Olson, Mr. and Mrs. Rickart Olson, Mr. and Mrs. L.N. Wang, Mr. and Mrs. Christ Thompson, Sivert Olson, Gust Olson. Most of these people earned their living working in the Northern Pacific Coal Company coal mine or the brick plant.

Mr. Underdahl went to work at the mine on the third day after they came to Sims. This employment was quite steady both winter and summer, for the railroad company mined coal for use on their locomotives at that time. The men were paid 75¢ per ton they mined, but they had to buy and furnish their own powder. Mr. Underdahl was able to earn from \$2 to \$3 per day, which was good wages in those days.

Mrs. Underdahl took part in the Ladies Aid work of the

Norwegian Lutheran Church at Sims. The Ladies Aid was organized to raise money to buy new fixtures and pay for the necessary improvements in the church. In the By-laws of the organization were fixed regulations. One rule was that each member should pay 10¢ every time the Aid met in one of the homes — nothing more or less. Another rule was that the lunch served at these meetings should consist of coffee, one sandwich, and a cookie or piece of cake. Both of these rules were soon forgotten, and no one would think of putting a smaller coin than 25¢ or 50¢ in the collection plate, and lunch soon became a banquet. However, these Ladies Aid meetings or gatherings in the homes of members were always enjoyed by everyone, and much was accomplished toward repairing the church building, and buying new fixtures.

After the Underdahls moved to Sims, three children were born to them. They were Alfred, Ella and Martin.

In December 1894, Mr. Underdahl met with an accident while working in the mine at Sims. A cave-in nearly crushed him while mining coal. He was ill in bed until February 1895 when he contracted pneumonia and passed away.

In 1904 Mrs. Underdahl married Harry Wadeson. Harry came to Sims in 1882 and worked in the Company mine at Sims until 1887 when that mine was closed. From 1888 to 1905 Harry operated a mine of his own at Sims.

Mrs. Wadeson told about the "romantic era" of Sims. About 90% of the population of Sims were young men between the ages of 25-35 years, and they were still unmarried. This era was between 1885-1895. After the railroad company quit operating their mine at Sims, and moved its rolling stock to Montana in 1887 — and also the brickyard at Sims was shut down, many of those who had been employed there decided to file on land and have a farm of their own. However, to live on that farm alone would be very lonesome and undesirable. The only thing for them to do was to get a wife. This was easier said than done, for there were no girls in Sims. Some of the young men, Theodore Ramsland, Otto Feland, Rudolph Feland, Ben Olson, Tobias Olson, and Pete Peterson went back to Norway and picked a nice girl. Each returned to Sims with a wife and settled down on a homestead. T.C. Johnson and Severt Olson did not feel that they could afford to take a trip to Norway so sent money to girls in Norway that they had been corresponding with. Soon the girls arrived at Sims and immediately they too were married and living on their homesteads.

Mr. Wadeson invented an automatic self-dumping tippel for his mine in Sims in about 1895. This tippel was so devised that when the cars of coal were pulled up by steam winch and cable, the cars would automatically dump themselves and return. Up to this time it was necessary to have

a man on top of the tippel to dump the cars and send them back.

Mrs. Wadeson said her husband made the first briquets that she had ever seen, in Sims in 1890. These briquets were made of the coal slack usually wasted at the mine. They were perhaps not as good as those made today, but they burned good in the stove and would hold their shape until they were completely burned up.

Mr. Wadeson experimented with manufactured gas made from coal slack, or dust found round the tippel or dump at the coal mine. Mr. Wadeson made a test tube from a piece of 4 inch pipe, about 4 ft. long. This pipe was plugged shut on the bottom; the top of the pipe had a cap that could be screwed on tightly. In the cap he had drilled a small jet. During the day he would fill this tube with fresh coal slack, which he brought home when he quit work in the evening. He would insert this tube into the heating stove (a hole had been cut in the stove to admit the tube). When the coal slack in the tube became hot it would emit a gas through the jet in the cap of the tube. This system would furnish light for the evening, as long as they cared to stay up. Mrs. Wadeson said this system was not very satisfactory, because the fumes were very strong when burning this light.

Mrs. Wadeson relates that at the time of the Indian scare in 1890, she was living in Sims. The miners had built a fort on top of the hill about ½ mile west of the church. The fort was built of sod, and a cellar had been excavated large enough to hold supplies needed for a long siege. Many barrels of water had been hauled up the hill and stored in the cellar. The government had sent Army rifles and ammunition from Fort Abraham Lincoln at Mandan, D.T. Scouts had been posted on the surrounding hills to be on the lookout for the Indians. The settlers were told to hide the women and children in the mine. Mrs. Wadeson said that this Indian scare was a terrible nightmare, for she couldn't sleep at night because she was afraid the Indians would come at night and kill them. She was on the verge of leaving Sims — she even had her trunk packed. But the Indians didn't come, and soon they got word that the Indians had returned to their reservation.

Mr. Wadeson quit mining in Sims because there was too much water in the mine and difficult to get rid of it. In 1906 he went to Hebron, N.D. and bought land with coal on it. He called his mine the North Star Mine because it was located north of Hebron in the same direction of the North Star. He went back to Sims and knocked down the house they had there in sections, loaded the sections on a railroad flat car, and shipped them to Hebron. Harry Wadeson died in 1917.

HISTORICAL FACT

In 1887 the first farmers cooperative was organized in the eastern part of the state. Through the newly organized cooperative farmers could buy wholesale and thus, compel dealers to operate on a smaller margin of profit. The cooperative also started a crop insurance program.