

❧ This Is It ❧



We have finally written the last chapter of “our” book, and while it has been a much larger project than we expected, and while there were times when we wondered why we ever started it (and times when we were about to say ‘quits’ but didn’t), we continued and are glad we did. Marge and I are now into our third year of researching, assembling, writing, rewriting and typing these chapters and have now reached the point where we both feel that ‘this is IT’. Of course, as soon as we made the decision to quit, other topics that I could have covered started popping into my mind. But ‘this IS it’!

As you in our own generation read these chapters, I hope they help you recall similar events in your own lives and communities. For the younger readers my hope is that these pages will make it easier for you to envision and understand life in “the good old days.”

I have used 1950 as an approximate cut-off year for recording these thoughts, and hope that someone in the future will record for posterity significant community events after that time. After the middle of the 20th century, there were great changes, not only in our nation and state, but in our little family, as well. As an example, just during the month of August, 1950 we moved into a new house on our O Bar O Ranch, received rural electricity and, after 13 years of marriage, adopted a 9-month-old son. Big changes!

The two communities I have been writing about are far from what they used to be, in fact, Sims isn’t even a spot on the map any more! The original Lutheran Church is still standing and active, but there are only two families living within the boundaries of what used to be the town, and both have Almont as an address. They are Dick and Patty Feland

Hinton and Rodney and Teri Nelson and their children, Anika and Lafe. Many people still come to Sims to tour the town site and marvel at “what used to be.”

Almont is declining and not nearly as active as it once was, but we are not about ready to give up on it. All of us in the community work together as a big family to maintain, promote and appreciate what we still have. In this year of 1993, Almont has a population of 101 with three active churches which enjoy working together. Our Mayor, Lawrence Renner, not only supervises the town with all its problems, but is the community ‘Jack of All Trades’ who helps everyone in need and has never yet learned to say ‘no’. His wife, Goldie, is our cheerful, helpful and efficient Postmaster. The Tavis Cafe where good home cooked meals are available and where the Almont Commercial Club, which represents the entire community and includes many civic minded rural members, holds its dinner meeting each month, has been operated by Pearl Tavis for 45 years. She is 82 years young and still going strong.

The Almont Oil Company, owned and operated by Ed and Charlotte Thiel, sells not only gas, oil, diesel and propane, but feeds and fertilizer, as well. The Security State Bank of New Salem has a branch here that gives us service three days a week and we are fortunate in having a very good mechanic at the Farmer’s Supply, Gene Petersen, who is able to keep our mechanized equipment, cars and trucks in good operating order. The Muddy Creek Saloon and Don’s Bar satisfy those who thirst for spirits, and the Country Cut and Curl, owned by Lynnea Ritz, keeps our ladies beautiful.

Our Almont School still educates our children in grades K through 8 but high school students are bused to New Salem where many of them have, and are, excelling academically and in sports. There is an excellent Nutritional Hot Meal Program for all senior citizens coordinated by Lorene Peterson and we have a fully accredited volunteer squad for the Almont Ambulance that works in conjunction with the volunteer fire department.

Our Heritage Park and Museum is an attraction to our town, and has become an interesting place for people to browse and reminisce. The 110x40 museum is filled with artifacts of local interest. A one-room country school, NP Depot, stone jail, blacksmith shop and many pieces of antique machinery are also a part of Heritage Park.

People seem to enjoy coming to Almont as is evidence by the large numbers (sometimes thousands), who attend our Labor Day Reunion in September and the Lutefisk and Lefse Supper on the first Saturday in November. Almont is STILL on the map, and hopes to stay there!!

Marge and I have lived here all our lives and have elected to stay on our O Bar O Ranch until our health (which is still good!) forces us to move elsewhere. We are proud of our community and prouder yet to claim it as our home!

— Sig and Marge Peterson

(The Almont History book of 1981 include family histories of the population of this area and also a more detailed account of Almont’s growing years.)

Family Photos

— PETERSON —



Gabriel & Lene - grandparents



Thora & Pete

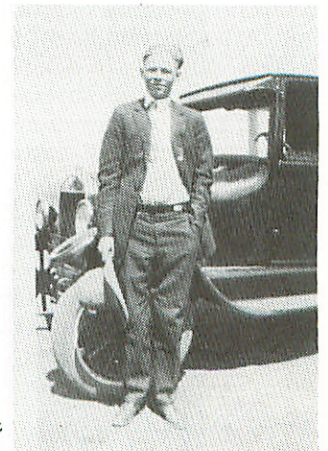
*Parents -
Pete & Thora
& Borghild
- 1899*



Sig & new colt



Thorleiv, Borghild, Ralph, Barney, Sig, Valborg



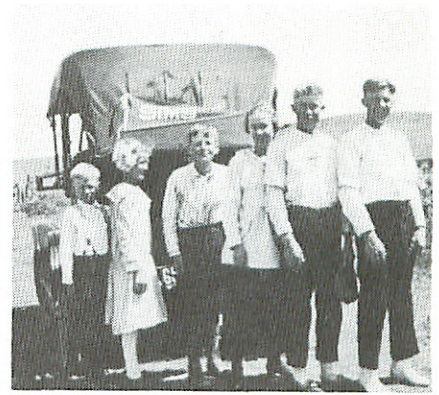
Sig



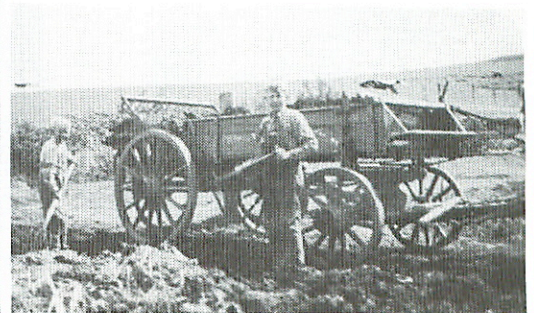
Borghild, Thorliev, Rolu, Bjorne, Valborg & Sigurd - 1910



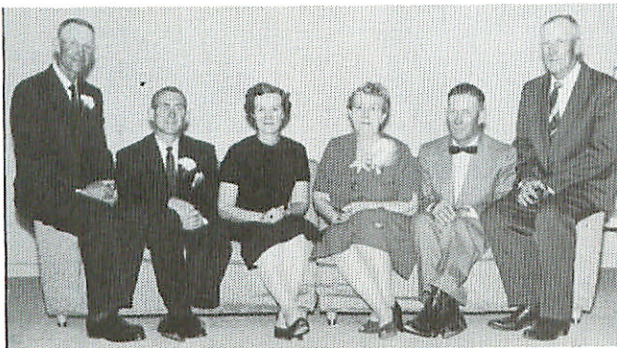
Sig



Peterson kids a little older



Sig & Barney loading manure



And older



And growing up



All together



Valborg & Sig 1992

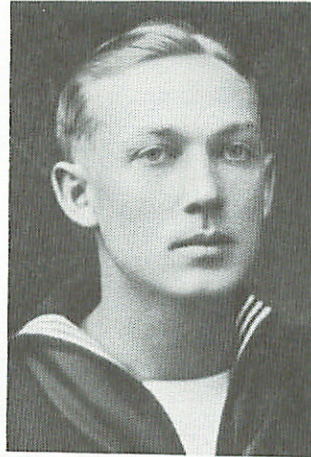


Sig on Shadrack

— NELSON —



*Grace & Lawrence
before marriage*



*Lawrence (Dad)
enlisted 1914
U.S. Navy*



Grace & Marjorie - 1914



Marjorie on the homestead



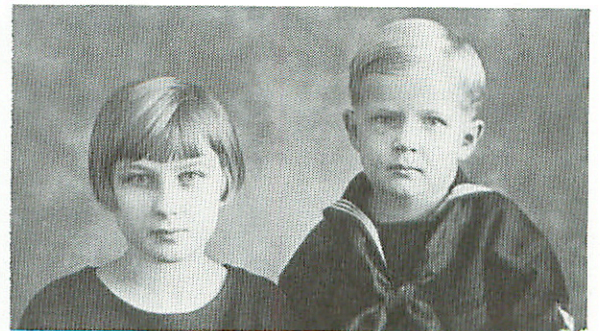
Lawrence



6 yrs. old



Marjorie



John Burton added to our family 1921



*Frances & Audrey
added to our family
in 1929 & 1930*



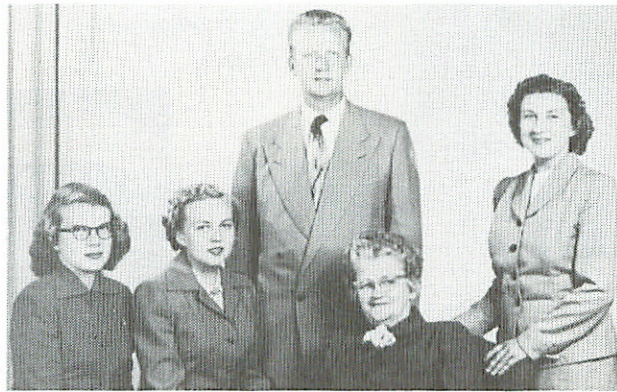
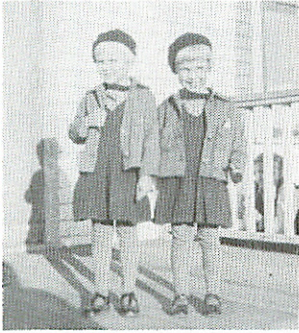
Marge & sisters



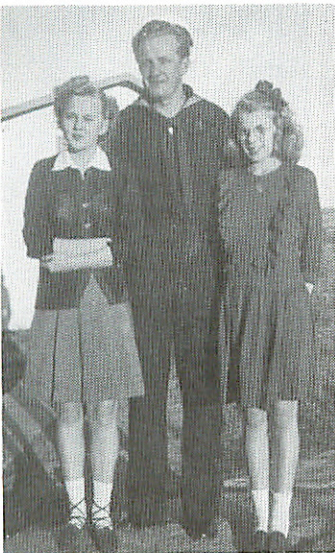
Marge, Burt, Frances, Audrey



Uncle Harry, Grace, Marge



1954



Burt home on leave - 1942



*Nelsons
1987*

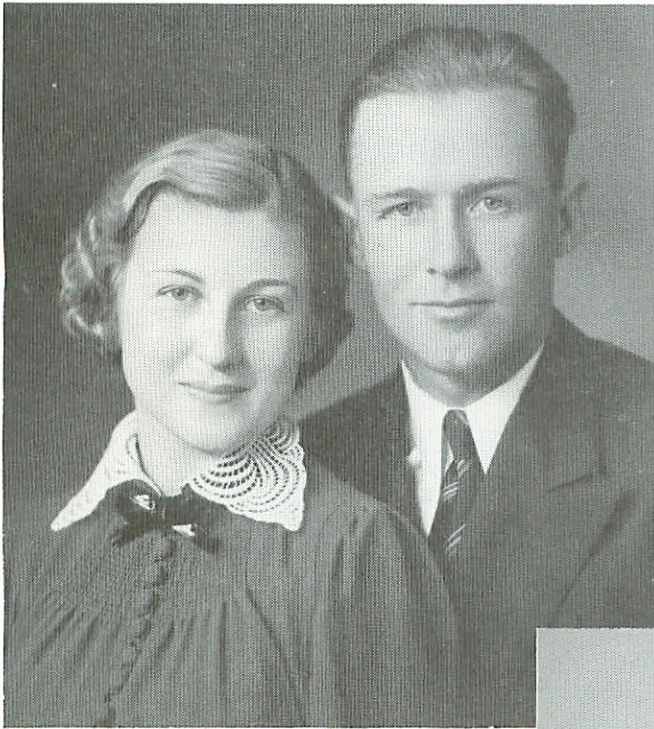


*Grace in her
restored
homestead
shack
1977*

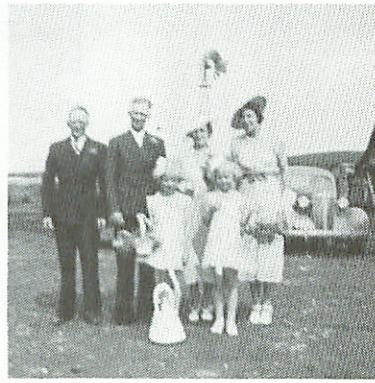


Still here in 1993

— SIG & MARGE —



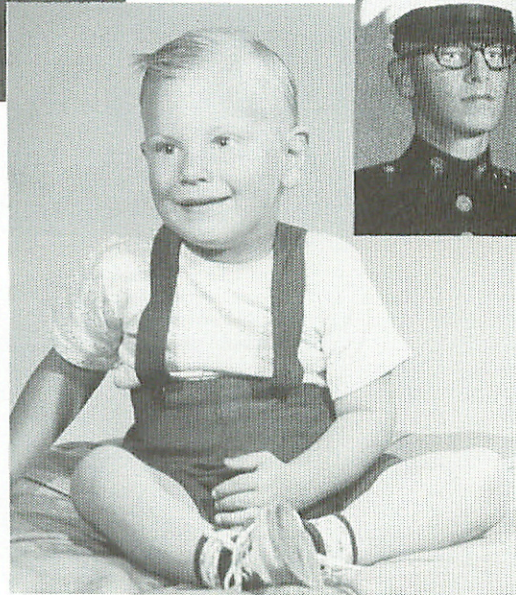
Wedding - 1937



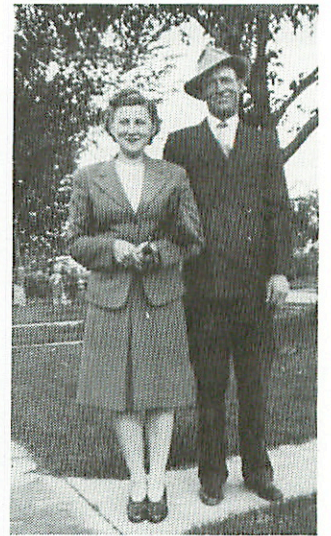
The Wedding Party - June 13, 1937
Attendants Barney P., Madaleen
Templeton, Jr. Bridesmaids -
Frances & Audrey



1st Anniversary - 1938



We added
Bruce to
our family
in 1950

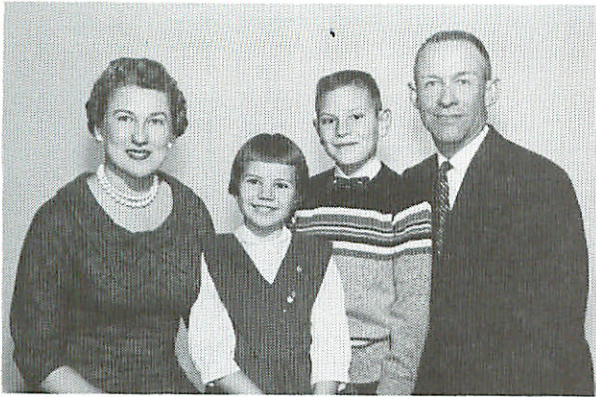


7th Anniversary
- June 13, 1944



O Bar O Ranch





Family picture - 1960
Marge, Mary, Bruce & Sig



Silver Anniversary - June 1962



Still riding at 83 years

Promoting our Norwegian heritage and passing it on - Annika & Lafe Nelson



Our 50th Anniversary - June 13, 1987

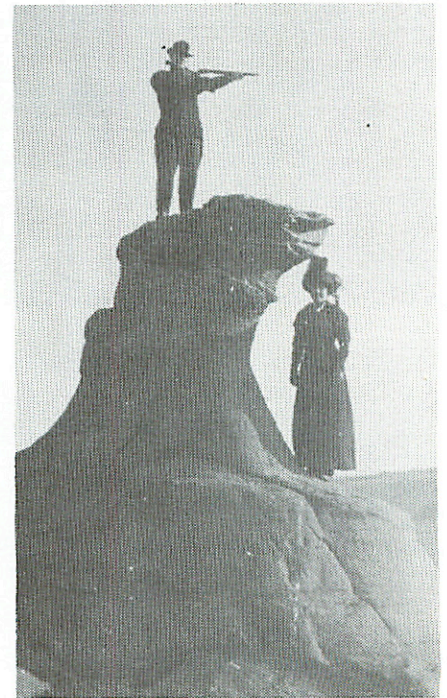


Sig's pride and joy - the horses? or passengers?

— BITS & PIECES —



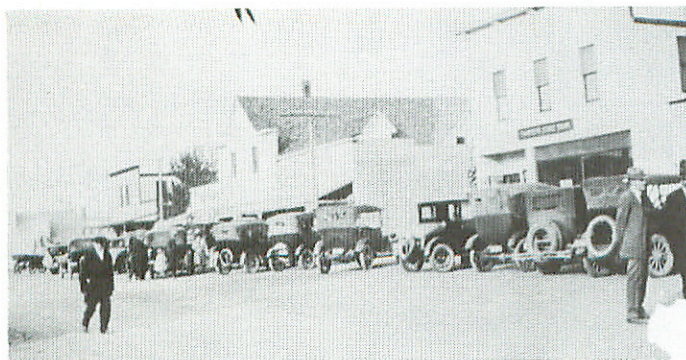
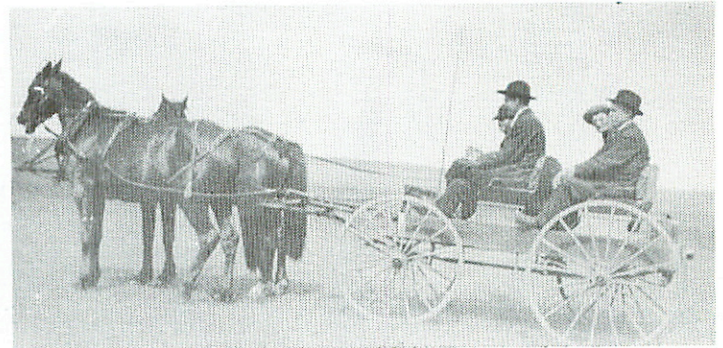
Territorial Capitol - half of it built with Sims bricks



The anvil at Lover's Cliff

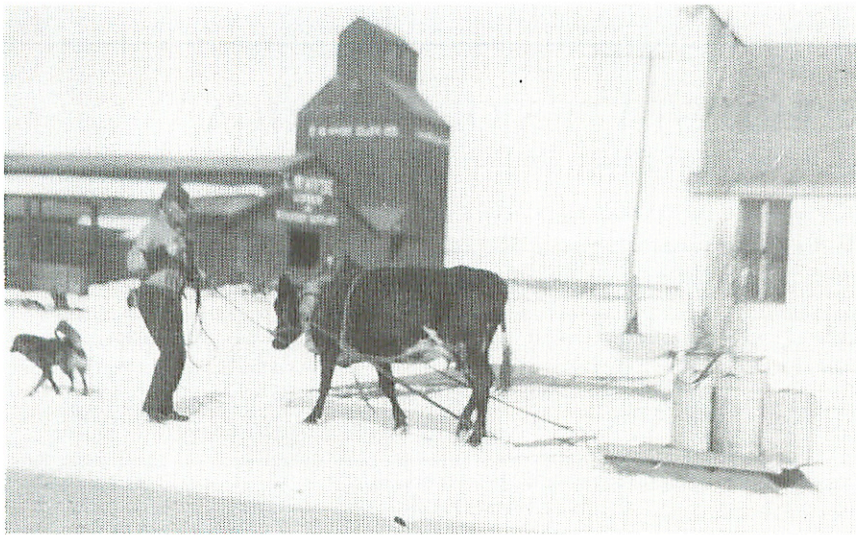


*50 buggies
in funeral
procession
- Emil Willman*

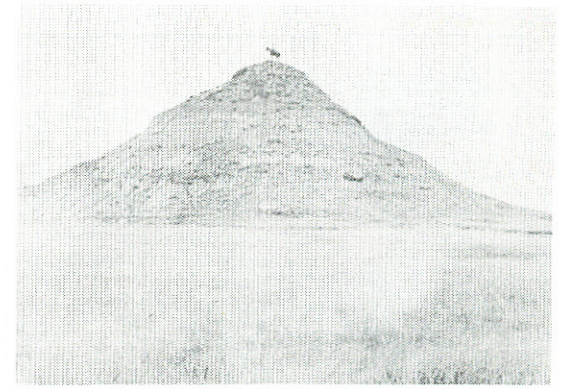


Almont's Main Street





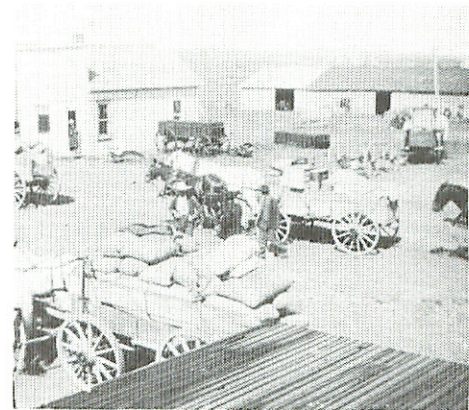
George Washington Bateman hauling hot water from school for Monday morning wash



Aunt Gustava on top of Sugar Loaf hill.



Saddling a bronc at the stockyards.



Bringing grain to town.



Fording the river



Lunch time - fly net from Nelson Hardware



Harry Jacobsen - driver



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Homestead Certificate No. 8226
Application 12, 1906

Whereas There has been deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States a CERTIFICATE OF THE REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE of Bismarck, North Dakota, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Gabriel Pedersen

has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the lot numbered four the East half of the South West quarter and the North West quarter of the South East quarter of Section thirty, Township one hundred and thirty-eight North of Range eighty-five West of the Fifth Principal Meridian in North Dakota, containing one hundred and sixty-two acres and sixty-four hundredths of an acre according to the OFFICIAL PLAT of the Survey of the said land, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the SURVEYOR GENERAL:

Now know ye, That there is, therefore, granted by the United States unto the said Gabriel Pedersen

the tract of Land above described: To have and to hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Gabriel Pedersen and to his heirs and assigns forever; subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights, as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts, and also subject to the right of the proprietor of a vein or lode to extract and remove his ore therefrom, should the same be found to penetrate or intersect the premises hereby granted, as provided by law. And there is reserved from the lands hereby granted, a right of way thereon for ditches or canals constructed by the authority of the United States.

In testimony whereof I, Theodore Roosevelt, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the twelfth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and six, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and thirty-first.

BY THE PRESIDENT: T. Roosevelt

By W. H. McLean, Secretary.

Recorded N. Dakota, vol 23, page 28

W. H. McLean Recorder of the General Land Office.

A Patent (Homestead Certificate) issued to my grandfather, Gabriel Peterson - November 12, 1906.

Not for me

When we were living those "good old days," they didn't seem so good.
We read by the light of a kerosene lamp and heated our home with wood.
We carried water up the hill to wash with, cook and scrub.
And we took our baths behind the stove in a galvanized laundry tub.
I still can smell the old lye soap and feel the sting and hurt
When some of it got in my eyes, but it really got the dirt.
We slept on cornhusk mattresses, sometimes three in a bed. The early ones got the head.
We waded snow, ice and mud to get to the seat of learning
With a pot-bellied stove that froze our backs while our fronts were nearly burning.
We drank from a cup by a water pail on a bench where the teacher put it;
And whatever ailment any kid had, the rest were sure to get it.
In the winter you milked in a drafty barn while the wind whistled through the cracks;
And the whirling snow, while you were inside, filled up your fresh made tracks.
A little house at the end of a patch, half hidden with brush and weeds,
In summer's heat and winters' cold served our family's needs.
Now you may look with envious eyes to these times - if you are twenty.
But I've been through those "Good Old Days," and once my friend, is plenty.

-Ruth Shook