

## Chapter 20 - Coming to America

**Introduction:** Everybody loves a good “Coming to America” story. In fact, it is the stuff that many movies have been made from. A common story is of emigrants from the old country passing by the Statue of Liberty and arriving at Ellis Island with only a suitcase and few dollars in their pocket. Or there are other stories that are told about the descendants of the *Mayflower*. The pilgrims at Thanksgiving, and the generation of immigrants that would fight in the Revolutionary War. But none of these typical stories have any relationship to the story of how our ancestors came to America.

Because we were migrants to California where almost everybody was from somewhere else, our coming to America story was very thin and perhaps a little distorted. Me and my siblings grew up with the notion that we were primarily Irish Catholics and our people came from North Dakota. That is all we knew. Our geographic separation from close relatives in North Dakota tended to dilute our story. Our only regular exposure to our ancestors was through our Grandparents Miles McLane and Hattie Jensen who lived near us in California. Sure enough, Miles McLane did descend from Irish ancestors and it was his family’s practice of Catholicism that was handed down to us.

As an inquisitive youth, I once asked my father who his grandfather was. He told me that his name was Christopher and he was probably from Canada. These details were sketchy at best. My mother, on the other hand freely described her mother as an Icelandic person and how her father’s family came from Scotland. She had an old bible in her possession that was published in the Gaelic language that had belonged to her ancestors.

For most people, their family story starts with their “race.” Even today, race remains a hot topic in current events. But as I shared in the first chapter of this book, the concept of race was arbitrarily created by an anthropologist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The advances in DNA research and the emergence of “Genetic Genealogy” has all but thrown the concept of race onto the dustbin of history. American history instruction often includes discussions about the “White Anglo-Saxon Protestants” (WASP) as being the dominate “race” in America. Or at least that is what “White Supremacists” would want you to buy into. Our DNA testing certainly shows that we come from Ethnicities that are “white.” Further, Y-DNA testing has found that we actually do descend from “Anglo-Saxon” DNA. One could say that our DNA is exactly what a “white supremacist” might desire. However, our Celtic DNA was something that the English looked down upon in perpetuating their “Anglo-Saxon” superiority myth. For centuries, the English believed that their base DNA was of an Anglo-Saxon nature. However, extensive DNA studies in the British Isles have turned this upside down and the base DNA of the English people is actually Celtic. In their oppression of the Irish and Scots they were actually conducting acts of genocide against their own base DNA. Because of this history and our Catholicism, we cannot conveniently fit our family story into the WASP category.

While our family story should not begin with race, it can and does include our ethnicity

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and the cultures that are associated with it. Each of our great grandparents emerged from four defined ethnicity groupings. These ethnicity groupings have been proven through DNA testing and reinforced by genealogical research. For simplicity, I am naming these ethnicity groups as follows:

- Celtic People from Ireland
- Celtic People from Scotland
- Scandinavian People from Iceland
- Scandinavian People from Denmark

Much is being debated in our world today about immigration. Immigration is defined as coming from a foreign country into a new country with the intent of staying there permanently. In my youth in California, this seemed to always have meant “Mexicans.” Yet, I learned a valuable lesson early on about this. My best friend in elementary school was Danny Pack. Danny was “dark skinned” and today everyone refers to this as “people of color.” So white kids at school would call him Mexican. However, I learned from his mother that she descended from Spanish people who were very early residents of California. This group of people were the originally Spanish occupiers of California that have been referred to as “Californios.” This was a Spanish-speaking community, some of who had resided in California since 1683. So her people had lived in California while it was still Spain. Then later it was part of Mexico. So in no way could her family be referred to as immigrants. Compared to her family, it was ours that were the immigrants.

Because both of our grandfathers were born in a foreign country (Canada), me and my siblings are only second generation Americans. Our family story is one that proves the concept that America is an immigrant country. Further, it could be said that we are “newcomers” compared to many other families. For example, our first ancestor to arrive in America was our Danish Grandfather Christoffer Jensen. He arrived in 1866. So the tragic history of slavery and the subsequent Civil War played no part in our family history. Further, since the construction of the Statue of Liberty did not began until 1875 and would not be completed until 1885, Christoffer did not sail past it into New York. Further, Ellis Island did not open until 1892. So the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island had nothing to do with our Coming to America story.

The ancestors of our other three sets of great grandparents all came to North America through the port of Quebec City, Canada. This meant that for the most part they came through the immigration station at Grosse Isle in the middle of the St. Lawrence river rather than “Ellis Island.” There was no Statue of Liberty there to welcome them to America.

When our immigrant ancestors did come to America, they first migrated with and settled in colonies. In this case a colony is a group of persons drawn together in a locality by a common nationality, religion and interests. It is a place where our ancestors lived near their relatives and friends that shared their ethnicity and culture. Further, our ancestors that immigrated to these colonies were coming from endogamous communities. These were communities in their former location in which the members tended to marry within their own ethnic, religious, class, or social group. The immigrant generation came to the colonies as endogamous groups. However, by the

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next generation they would inter-marry with persons from outside their group. Nevertheless, the colonies remained somewhat homogeneous in clinging to the cultural factors of names, religion, and language. But as assimilation into American society progressed, many of these factors diminished.

**Travel to the Colonies:** One of the first heritage trips I took was to travel with my parents to my step-grandmother Dora's home in Fargo, ND in 1996. After all, at that point I knew that our coming to America story started with North Dakota. When asking my Grandma Dora about my mother's family she produced a two volume set of books titled *Walsh Heritage* that had narratives about my mother's family that had lived on farms in Walsh County, ND. So this was my introduction to the Walsh County Colony below. We visited the farm where my mother's family had lived and the cemetery at Odalen Church where my mother's ancestors were buried, including my Great Grandparents Charles McLean and Elizabeth McDonald. We also took a drive north into Pembina County, ND to the site of the town of Akra where my mother believed her mother was born. This would be my first introduction to the Akra Colony. We toured the Icelandic State Park historical buildings.

My father knew very little about his family. After that first trip, I did a great deal of research using microfilms at the National Archives to find the places where my father's family had lived. I found my father's mother's family living in the Township of Tordenskjold in Otter Tail County, MN. Then I found my father's father's family living in Clark County, WI.

Meanwhile, I had come into contact with my mother's cousin, Don Hensel. Don had gathered a great deal of information about my mother's McLean family. Apparently, the McLean family had been holding family reunions every few years and he made sure I was invited to the next one.

The next McLean reunion was going to be held at Brainerd, MN in 1998. So I put together a trip plan that would start at the Minneapolis airport, then proceed to Neillsville, WI, then back track to Otter Tail County, MN and finish at the reunion in Brainerd.

Prior to my departure on this trip, I had come into contact with a 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin of mine named Diane Steltenpohl. She was born in Marshfield, WI so she was familiar with our shared ancestry in the area of Neillsville. I informed her of my travel plans and it just so happened that she and her mother were planning a visit to the area at the same time. Since I was going to be doing some research at the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Neillsville, we set an appointed time that we would meet in the church parking lot.

I had come across a historic plat map for Weston Township that showed where the John McLane farm was. So my first task in the Neillsville was to find that farm location. I found it easily. There was what appeared to be a historic home on the property and in all likelihood, I believed it to be a house that John McLane had built around 1882. It would be the childhood home of my Grandfather Miles McLane. After finding it, I returned to Neillsville and sought out the St. Mary's Church. I had written to the Pastor of the church ahead of time and told him that I would like to examine the parish register. He greeted me and invited me to sit at the dining room table in the rectory. He came back shortly with the register. The register was in bad shape and the bindings were falling apart. Nevertheless, he allowed me to examine it. I was primarily looking

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for the baptism records of the John McLane and Elizabeth Murphy family. But I also looked for events involving my Murphy relatives. The register provided a wealth of information. In addition to McLanes and Murphys, I came across a multitude of other Irish names, which started me to think that I had come across a colony of Irish families.

I came out to the parking lot and met up with Diane and her mother. Her mother was the former Gertrude Isabelle Murphy who was the granddaughter of Moses Murphy, the brother of my great grandmother Elizabeth Murphy. They invited me to have lunch with them at the farm owned by Gertrude's brother Bernard Murphy. I followed them to the farm and lo and behold I was now located right across the gravel road from the farm of John McLane that I had found earlier. Bernard Murphy's farm had apparently stayed in the family from when it was first built around 1882. The two houses appeared to be identical to each other except the floor plan was flipped. This indicated that they were quiet possibly kit houses. So my Great Grandmother Elizabeth lived right across the road from her brother Moses Murphy. Meeting my distant Murphy relatives was a delightful experience.

I went to the Clark County Clerk's Office where I located a number of McLane and Murphy land records. I discovered there additional evidence of the possibility of an Irish colony. I finished the day by finding my Great Grandparents John McLane and Elizabeth Murphy's graves in Marshfield, WI.

I headed back to Minnesota en-route to Tordenskjold Township, near Underwood, MN, where my Great Grandfather Christoffer Jensen had first settled when he came from Denmark. It was fairly easy to find as the place where he and his brothers had homesteaded was now the location of the Tordenskjold Free Lutheran Church with adjacent cemetery. I found the graves of my Great Grandparents Christoffer Jensen and Kirsten Hendriksdatter. The graves were fairly close to the church between two large trees. I couldn't help but notice the abundance of graves with the surname Jensen as well as many other graves of Danes, which are distinguished with surnames that end in "sen" rather than "son." This seemed to indicate a minor colony of Danes.

I completed this trip by attending the McLean family reunion at Brainerd, MN. It was a day long picnic. I was able to meet many of my mother's relatives including her cousin, Don Hensel, who was the family historian. I gathered many new leads to follow-up on in genealogy research. I was even invited over to the home of my mother's 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin Diane Hillman. Diane's husband Lyle Hillman is my mother's 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin, once removed, in the Icelander branch of her family. I found all of my new found distant cousins most hospitable.

So in those first two trips I had located the colonies where three sets of my great grandparents had lived and their final resting places. I still had more to learn about my Icelander ancestors.

I talked my parents into another trip to North Dakota, this time in 2000 to attend my mother's McLean family reunion that was to be held in Grand Forks, ND. Prior to attendance at the reunion, we went to visit my mother's cousin Wanda Hall. Wanda was my mother's double cousin, meaning that Wanda's father was my mother's mother's brother, Lewis Samson and Wanda's mother was my mother's father's sister Marie McLean. Wanda shared with me all the family history material that she had collected. I obtained a number of photos of my Grandmother Elizabeth Samson that even my mother had never seen before.

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Prior to this trip I had found several burial records in the Pembina Hills Lutheran Church register. Entries in this register confirmed that my Great Grandmother Katrin Asmundsdottir and her mother Gudrun Bjornsdottir were buried at the old Vidalin Lutheran Church cemetery in Akra, ND. I visited this cemetery and although records indicated they were buried there, their grave markers were no longer present. I began discovering the Pembina County Icelander Colony.

The McLean family reunion was well attending. Perhaps spurred on by my mother's planned attendance, also in attendance were her brothers Keith, Jay, and Ron with her step-mother Dora. Also her Samson cousins Glenn, Lyle, Wanda, and Virginia were all there. It was good that I talked her into this trip, as she, her step-mother, one of her brothers, and four of her cousins would die in the next ten years.

This trip to the colonies was not over. We returned to Idaho by heading north into Canada and traversing west to the area around Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. We stayed at a small motel at Foam Lake. By now I had exhausted my traveling companions with the search for the locations of our ancestors. So while they had a leisurely morning at the motel. I set out early in the morning in my quest to find the remains of the settlement known as Kristnes. I found it and the remains of the old school house was still standing, but in a very dilapidated state. It was here that our Great Grandfather Jonas Samson was the caretaker of the building and he had also been the postmaster of Kristnes. I then found my way to the Kristnes Cemetery where records indicated that Jonas Samson was buried. However, there was no gravestone that marked his grave.

In the passing of several years and three separate trips, I had journeyed to the areas of the four colonies where my ancestors had first settled in America. These colonies are: the Danish Colony of Ottertail County, MN; the Irish Colony of Neillsville, WI; the Scots Colony of Walsh County, ND; and the Icelander Colonies of Akra, ND and Foam Lake/Kristnes, Saskatchewan.

### **Otter Tail County Colony:**

Our very first ancestor to enter and settle in the United States (America) was Christoffer Jensen. Christoffer came to America when he was 17 years old in 1866 from Denmark. He would travel to Minnesota where he would settle in Otter Tail County.

The 1860 U.S. Census shows that there were thousands of Swedes and Norwegians in Minnesota, but there were less than two hundred Danes. The heaviest immigration from Denmark to Minnesota began in the late 1860s and continued during the next three decades.

The Danish immigrants in Minnesota represented practically every part of Denmark — the larger islands, Seeland (Sjælland), Funen (Fyn), Lolland, Falster, and the peninsula of Jutland, as well as the smaller islands. In Denmark they had spoken different dialects in their homes and communities; but all had also learned the national Danish in the schools.

The Danish pioneers in Minnesota were independent in settling, for instead of collecting at a few places under efficient leadership they scattered widely. The general trend of the Danish pioneers in Minnesota was toward the north and the west. Before 1870 they were found in most of the counties in the state. In the 1880 census, Otter Tail County ranked fourth in Minnesota in the total number of Danish-born residents.

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The greatest wave of Danish immigration to the U.S. followed the Danish 1864 border war with Prussia (Germany). However it was primarily economic reasons including the U.S Homestead Act which caused over 300,000 Danes to leave Denmark for the U.S. during this time period. The Homestead Act of 1862 granted 160 acres of public land to any citizen, or immigrant who filed an intent to become a citizen. Because of this, large settlements of Danes arose in the Minnesota. The Midwest offered new opportunities, as wages were much higher in the U.S. Farm work could earn twice as much as in Denmark, and artisans could earn four to five times more.

It is not known exactly how our ancestor Christoffer Jensen came to know about the Homestead Act when he was in Denmark. At a minimum he may have known that Minnesota was the place he needed to get to. Christoffer was from a farm in Ambæk in the Jungshoven Parish of Praesto County, Denmark. He was the son of a farmer named Jens Rasmussen and his second wife Ane Olsdatter. Christoffer was the youngest of three brothers. His brothers were Ole and Peder Jensen. Their mother Ane Olsdatter died in 1862 and then their father died in 1863, leaving the brothers as orphans.

Christoffer would be the first of the three brothers to go to America. He traveled from Copenhagen, Denmark to New York. He departed Copenhagen on April 17, 1866. So he probably arrived at New York around June 1866. The Ellis Island emigrant station did not exist at that time. The Statue of Liberty would not be done until 1875, so it was not there to greet him. He was required to enter the U.S. through the Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden. In the early 1850s, deceptive employers and unscrupulous money changers had been preyed on immigrants as they disembarked and attempted to secure work and lodging. In response, the State of New York's Board of Emigration Commissioners established in 1855 the Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden. From there he must have boarded a train for Minneapolis, MN.

He found his way to Kenyon, MN (about 30 miles south of Minneapolis). He lived through a bout of Typhoid fever while there in July 1866. Then he must have found out that townships in Otter Tail County, MN would soon be open to the filing of Homestead claims. According to his Works Progress Administration (WPA) pioneer interview, he established himself on a "claim" in Tordenskjold Township of Otter Tail County in September of 1867. Homestead claims were not supposed to be made until after the official survey of a township. In this case, the Tordenskjold survey would not be finished until July 11, 1870. So technically, he was actually "squatting."

He married a young 16 year old Danish girl named Ane Jensen in about 1869. In the 1870 U.S. Census, Christoffer is found living next to his brother Peder Jensen in Tordenskjold Township on August 25, 1870. However, he is not listed with a wife named Ane Jensen. Since Ane was about 3 months pregnant at the time with their son Hans, she may have been living elsewhere at the time. In the 1870 census, Christoffer reported that he had 5 acres of improved land on his farm which he stated was worth \$1,000 and he had \$100 in farm implements. He had 2 horses, 2 milk cows, and 2 oxen worth a total of \$600. Christoffer finally made his Homestead claim on March 27, 1871. But he would falsely report in his homestead filing that he didn't start living there until September 20, 1871.

Otter Tail County had become a minor Danish Colony. In the 1860 census, there were only 240 persons who were born in Denmark living in the County. By the 1870 census, this

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increased to 1,968. Danes usually spell the ending of their last names with an “sen” rather than an “son.” Using this factor, an examination of the homestead claims that were patented in the 1870s in Tordenskjold Township shows about 28 homestead claimants that were Danes. An Otter Tail County history reported that the early settlers of Tordenskjold were: Peder Pederson, J. T. Hoff, Lars Christiansen, Peder Hansen, Svend Johnson, Anders Jensen, Ole Jensen, Peter Jensen, Gabriel Stoutland, Mikke Tongerson, Telmer Hoff, Hans P. Bjorge, Knud Pederson, Tosten Stenersen, Sigrid Svensen and O. H. Ihlseng. Christoffer Jensen’s name should have been listed next to his brothers Ole and Peter, however Christoffer was perhaps long gone from Tordenskjold by the time this history was recalled and written down.

As stated above, “The Danish immigrants in Minnesota represented practically every part of Denmark.” The same appears to be true of Tordenskjold Township. There are public member trees available on Ancestry.com for several of the Tordenskjold Danish heads of households. The following Denmark Counties were among the origins found: Odense, Hjørring, Holbaek, Fredriksborg, Aarhus, Praesto, Aalborg, and Ringkvbng. A total of seven heads of households had Praesto as their county of origin. This was the most of any of the counties. Christoffer Jensen and his brothers Ole and Peder were among those with a Praesto origin.

In the 1875 Minnesota State census there were 65 persons in Tordenskjold Township who were reportedly born in Denmark. By the time of this census, two Jensen brothers, Christoffer and Peder were living in Tordenskjold. Christoffer and Peder had settled on their claims in Tordenskjold sections 8, 17, and 18 just south of Dane Lake. They were located right next to each other. Christoffer is found in the 1875 state census with his two children by his first wife, Hans and Maria. His first wife Ane Jensen had just died in February of that year leaving Christoffer as a widower with two small children. Christoffer probably had to rely upon his sister-in-law Maren (Peder’s wife) for some degree of childcare while he worked his farm.

Christoffer Jensen became a naturalized citizen of the United States on November 9, 1875 at Fergus Falls, MN. He was now fully American. In 1876, Christoffer traveled back to his homeland of Denmark perhaps to visit relatives. His primary destination was probably to visit his brother Ole Jensen who was a farmer at Ambæk in Junghoved Parish in Praesto. Ole had married in 1867 and had five children by then.

For his return trip home, Christoffer ended up on a ship named *State of Pennsylvania* that was headed to New York via Glasgow, Scotland and Larne, Ireland. On board the ship was a 20 year old women named Kirsten Hendriksdatter. Kirsten was the youngest child of Hendrik Christensen and Ellen Thomasdatter from the Parish of Forslev in Soro County, Denmark. She was traveling alone and stated that she was a domestic worker. She and Christoffer apparently started a romance while on board. They arrived in New York on May 25, 1876. After her arrival, she and Christoffer went their separate ways. Kirsten first traveled to Chippewa County, MN to live with her sister Ane Margarethe Hendriksdatter who had married Svend Petersen in Billingham, MN. Then in March 1877, Kirsten went to live with her brother Peder Frederik Hendriksen who had settled in the Kasson, MN area around 1860. She left Kasson in November 1877 and traveled to Otter Tail County where she married Christoffer Jensen at Fergus Falls, MN on December 4, 1877. She and Christoffer settled in at his home in Tordenskjold Township.

When Christoffer had returned to Tordenskjold from his trip to Denmark, he filed his

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final papers for his Homestead claim on July 11, 1876 and received a patent to the land on October 10, 1876.

In about April 1880, Christoffer's brother Ole Jensen with his wife and five children departed from Copenhagen on the ship named *Thingvalla*. He listed his destination as Fergus Falls, MN. When Ole arrived the Homesteading period for Tordenskjold had already passed. Ole Jensen apparently purchased a farm on the south shore of Dane Lake from the original homesteader named Nils P. Johnson. This farm was adjacent to the farms owned by his brothers Christoffer and Peder.

By 1882, Christoffer had sold his farm in Tordenskjold and started in the lumber business in Fergus Falls. While his brothers Peder and Ole remained in Tordenskjold for years to come. Christoffer would move away and live in South Dakota, Texas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, before returning to the area of Mahnomen, MN.

The Danish people of Otter Tail county were, of course, Lutherans. As Lutheran was the official church of state in Denmark, they were all raised in the Lutheran faith and continued to practice the same in Minnesota. The Tordenskjold Free Lutheran Church was founded in 1871. It is located on land that was once part of Peder Jensen's Homestead claim. Peder Jensen was one of the founders of this church. His brothers may have also had something to do with its founding and Peder Jensen may have even donated the land on which it sits. The church has an adjacent cemetery. Christoffer Jensen and both of his wives, Ane Jensen and Kirsten Jensen are buried in this cemetery. The cemetery is the final resting place of many Danish pioneers in the Otter Tail County Colony.

### Neillsville Colony:

Our next ancestor to come to America was our Great Great Grandfather Miles Murphy with several of his children including our Great Grandmother Elizabeth Murphy with our Great Grandfather John McLane and several of their children. This migration would be from the area of Ste. Marguerite, Quebec to Neillsville, WI in 1881.

The story of this migration starts with a resident of Ste. Marguerite, Quebec named Robert Ross. Robert Ross would be the earliest of the Frampton Irish to relocate to Clark County, WI and would ultimately find his fortune there and would serve to attract many other Frampton Irish families to the area.

Robert Ross arrived in Clark County, WI in 1848 after spending a short time in Illinois. The first three years he made shingles, which was then a good business, as shingles were a legal tender. He was one of the original pioneers of Clark County and was identified as a resident of the County in November 1854.

By the late 1860's, the three principal logging operators in Clark County were Hewitt, Woods & Co., Leonard R. Stafford, and Robert Ross. Hewitt, Woods & Co. would cut and bank each winter from twelve to eighteen million feet of saw logs. Stafford and Ross would each cut and bank from one-half to two-thirds of that amount. Robert Ross' brother Henry Ross was also a lumberman in the Neillsville area.

Another brother of Robert Ross was John Ross who was born in 1841 in Ste. Marguerite.



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John Ross was married in 1866 in the Frampton area to Mary Jane Johnston, who was the widow of Robert Sample. Mary Jane Johnston was born in 1833 in Ste. Marguerite. Her parents were David Johnston and Ann Beatty who resided in Concession St. Thomas in Ste. Marguerite. John Ross settled in Neillsville. He was foreman in the woods and river drives.

Martin Neville of Ste. Marguerite went to Neillsville, WI in the fall of 1866 where he worked that winter for Robert Ross in his logging camp. He returned to Quebec and was married to Mary Isabella Wright on July 29, 1869 at St. Patrick's in Quebec City. He then returned to Neillsville.

Michael and Anne Neville's first 2 children were born in Ste. Marguerite. Michael Neville and his family went to Clark County, WI in 1872. He was first engaged in logging and river driving and later he bought a farm in Weston Township. Michael Neville is listed in the 1880 census as a farmer in Weston Township. Michael Neville sold a 40 acre farm in Weston Township in 1882 to Hugh Tackney.

Hugh Tackney was a former neighbor of Michael Neville when they lived in Concession St. Thomas of Ste. Marguerite, Quebec. Hugh Tackney married Catherine McLane in 1874 in Ste. Marguerite. She was the daughter of James McLean and Anastasia O'Connor of Concession St. Anne in Ste. Marguerite. Hugh and Catherine Tackney had 2 children born in Ste. Marguerite. Hugh Tackney and his family went to Clark County, WI in 1879. So Catherine McLane Tackney would be the first of our relatives to migrate to Weston Township. Hugh Tackney is listed in the 1880 census as a farmer in Weston Township. Hugh Tackney purchased a 40 acre farm in Weston Township from Michael Neville for \$475.00 in 1882. In 1889, Hugh Tackney was working on a log drive on the Black River for the Coleman Lumber Company above the dam on Rock Creek. He was riding a log which was caught in the current, carrying him through the spillway and plunging man and log beneath the boiling flood. Two weeks later his body was found by Miles Murphy a mile or more down the creek completely buried in Edmunds' sandbar, except for two buttons on his clothes which were shining in the sun.

Our Great Grandfather John McLane married Elizabeth Murphy in 1875 at Ste. Marguerite. Elizabeth Murphy was the daughter of Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell of Ste. Marguerite. They had five children while living in Ste. Marguerite. After his father's death, John McLane and his family went to Clark County, WI in October 1882. This migration coincided with the movement of most of the Miles Murphy family to the same location. John McLane purchased a farm of 40 acres in Weston Township from his brother-in-law William Murphy.

John McLane is listed in the 1885 Wisconsin State Census in Weston Township as head of a household of 8. John McLane and Elizabeth Murphy McLane had seven more children in Weston Township. John McLane is listed in the 1900 census as a farmer in Weston Township. John and Elizabeth McLane retired from farming in 1914 and moved to a home in Marshfield, WI. Elizabeth Murphy McLane died in 1917. Around 1925, John McLane went to live with his daughter Bridget (Sarah) McLane and her husband in Kansas City, Missouri. John McLane died in Kansas City, Missouri in 1929. John McLane and Elizabeth Murphy McLane are buried in the Marshfield cemetery. John and Elizabeth McLane's sons James and Miles McLane were working in the woods of Taylor County, WI in 1900. James McLane and his brother Moses went on to homestead in Acadia Valley, Alberta. Moses later was one of the first to homestead in Crooked

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Creek, Alberta. Miles McLane homesteaded near Sherwood, ND and became a respected business owner and civic leader in that town. John and Elizabeth McLane's daughter Helen McLane married Louis Eckes at Marshfield, WI in 1910. While most of the McLane children had scattered throughout the continent, Helen and her husband made their home in Marshfield.

Miles Murphy was the son of Frampton's first settler Andrew Murphy and his second wife Elizabeth McMahan. He married Bridget O'Farrell in 1848 at Frampton. Bridget O'Farrell was the daughter of Michael O'Farrell and Elizabeth Doran of Frampton. Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell settled on a farm in Concession St. Edward of Ste. Marguerite. They had eleven children while living there. Bridget O'Farrell Murphy died in 1880 and was buried in the Frampton Cemetery. Miles Murphy and his sons were often employed in the lumber industry in Maine and other parts of the United States. In 1882, Miles Murphy and his family went to Neillsville in Clark County, WI. He helped several of his family members to buy farms in the area. In 1882, he loaned \$125.00 to his son-in-law John McLane. In 1883, he loaned \$200.00 to his son William Murphy. Again in 1884, he loaned William \$67.00. Miles Murphy later lived on a farm of his own in Weston Township near his sons and daughters. Miles Murphy died in 1900 and is buried in the St. Mary's Catholic cemetery in Neillsville.

Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's son Andrew Murphy married Bridget Donahue in 1882 at Frampton. Bridget Donahue was the daughter of Moses Donahue and Bridget Fitzgerald of range 5 of Frampton Township. Andrew Murphy and his young bride left for the Neillsville, WI area in 1882 with his father and siblings. They went to La Crosse, WI. Andrew Murphy is listed in La Crosse with a household of four in the 1885 Wisconsin State Census. Andrew and Bridget Murphy had six children. Andrew Murphy was a foreman on the Black River for about 25 years. He was also a foreman for the Coleman and John Paul Mills in La Crosse, WI. By the 1895 Wisconsin State Census, Andrew Murphy's household in La Crosse had increased to seven persons. Andrew Murphy and his family are found in the 1900 census in La Crosse where his occupation was listed as riverman. Andrew Murphy was a street foreman on the north side of La Crosse the last few years of his life. In the 1905 Wisconsin State Census, Andrew Murphy was a city foreman in La Crosse. Andrew Murphy died in 1906 at his home on Charles Street in La Crosse. His funeral was at St. James Church with Rev. Ambrose Murphy officiating. Bridget Donahue Murphy and her family are found in the 1910 census in La Crosse. Bridget Donahue Murphy died in 1916 at La Crosse.

Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's son Michael Murphy came to the Neillsville, WI area with his father and siblings in 1882. In the 1900 census he was living in the household of his brother-in-law John McLane in Weston Township and his occupation was shown as a woodsman. In 1902, Michael Murphy entered a homestead claim near his nephew Miles McLane in Sherwood, ND. By 1920, Michael Murphy was a lodger in Sherwood, ND. Michael Murphy died in 1923 at St. Paul, MN after traveling there to seek treatment for cancer.

Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's son Thomas Murphy came to the Neillsville, WI area with his father and siblings in 1882. He went on to La Crosse, WI where he was married to Mary Garrahan in 1883. They had at least three children in La Crosse. He is found in the 1885 Wisconsin State Census in the first ward of La Crosse. Thomas Murphy died in 1921 in Olympia, WA.

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Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's son William John Murphy was married to Catherine Redmond in 1882 at Ste. Marguerite just prior to his departure for Neillsville, WI with his father and siblings. Catherine Redmond was the daughter of Michael Redmond and Martha Cates of Caratunk, ME. Michael Redmond was the son of Hugh Redmond and Marcelline Fitzsimmons of Concession St. Thomas of Ste. Marguerite. William John Murphy often went to Maine to work at cutting heavy timber in the winter and then run the logs down the Kennebec River when the spring thaw came. Prior to his marriage, in June 1882, he purchased 40 acres in Weston Township. He then sold this farm to John McLane. Then in 1883, William Murphy purchased another 40 acre farm in Weston Township. William Murphy and Catherine Redmond Murphy had three children born in Weston Township. William Murphy is listed in the 1885 Wisconsin State Census as residing in Weston Township as head of a household of 4. In 1885, he purchased another farm in Weston Township and by 1895, his father Miles Murphy was living on it. Shortly after the birth of their third child in 1886, Catherine Redmond Murphy died. He married his second wife, Catherine McLane, in 1891 at Neillsville. She was the daughter of James McLean and Anastasia O'Connor of Concession St. Anne in Ste. Marguerite. She was the widow of Hugh Tackney. In one of his jobs, William Murphy helped to construct some log trestles on the Great Northern railway near Walla Walla, WA. William built up a large dairy operation in Wisconsin. After his second wife Catherine McLane's death in 1902, William Murphy migrated to Lawton, OK. He stayed in Lawton for a couple of years. He did a bit of "horse trading" in business properties. He owned and operated a small frame structured hotel called the "Old Southern," right up from the Frisco depot. He had title to a number of lots and business properties in downtown Lawton. He soon sold his Lawton properties in favor of investing in the new town of Chattanooga, Oklahoma. William Murphy owned and operated the "OK Hotel" in Chattanooga from 1905 to 1910. By 1906, it had a big saloon alongside and was a very active hostelry. Unfortunately the saloon had to be shut down in 1907 when Oklahoma became a State. William Murphy married his third wife Ann Woolridge in 1909 at Chattanooga. William Murphy got out of the hotel business around 1914 and moved to a house just west of the old Chattanooga schoolhouse close to his brother John Murphy's house. At one time he owned 2 or more farms in the surrounding area. He rented them out and finally sold them. At the age of about 60 he took on the responsibility of main custodial officer (janitor) of the nearby Chattanooga school. He worked at this occupation for 10 years and then located on a 40 acre farm on the east end of Chattanooga with a nice house which he enlarged somewhat. He kept a little string of milk cows there for years. William also maintain 3 rental properties in Chattanooga. In 1929, he moved to Lawton. William John Murphy died in 1937 in Chattanooga, OK.

Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's son Moses Murphy followed his father and siblings to Clark County, WI in 1884. In 1885, Moses Murphy purchased a farm in Weston Township. This 40 acre farm would remain in the hands of his descendants until modern times. Moses Murphy married Mary Catherine Redmond in 1891 at Neillsville. Mary Catherine Redmond was the daughter of Richard Redmond and Elizabeth Wilson from Concord, ME. Richard Redmond was the son of Hugh Redmond and Marcelline Fitzsimmons of Concession St. Thomas of Ste. Marguerite. Moses Murphy and Mary Catherine Redmond had three children in

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Weston Township. Moses Murphy and his family are listed in the 1900 census in Weston Township. Mary Catherine Redmond died in 1903 and was buried at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Neillsville. Moses Murphy was again listed as a farmer in Weston Township in 1910. Moses Murphy died at the home of his daughter in Greenwood, WI in 1936. His funeral services were held at St. Mary's Catholic Church at Greenwood with Rev. Father P. T. Weller officiating. He was buried in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Neillsville.

Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's son John Murphy was married to Bridget Jordan in 1883 at Frampton. Shortly after his marriage John and Bridget Murphy went to Clark County, WI in 1883. John Murphy is listed in the 1885 Wisconsin State Census in Weston Township as head of a household of 3. In 1893, John Murphy had a 40 acre farm in Weston Township. John and Bridget Murphy had eight children born in Weston Township. While John Murphy was farming in Christie, WI (Weston Township) he had a bad accident involving a road grader or some type of road building equipment. He became crippled from the waist down. He got around on a strong dining room chair with special footings on the front legs. In about 1905, John Murphy and his family moved to Chattanooga, OK following his brother William John Murphy. John bought a farm only a couple of miles northeast of Chattanooga. Around 1914, he had a business place a few doors down from the Chattanooga Post Office. He plied his skill as a cobbler and shoe repairman. His work was done with minimal use of machinery except for a very large heavy duty sewing machine. John's popularity around town led to his appointment as Justice of the Peace. His courtroom was his shoe repair and oil distribution shop. Bridget Jordan Murphy died in 1928 at Chattanooga. John Murphy died in 1932 at Chattanooga.

Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's son Miles Murphy, Jr., came to the Neillsville, WI area in 1882 with his father and siblings. He went on to La Crosse, WI where he married Mary Agnes Conley in 1891. Miles and Mary Agnes Murphy had three children in La Crosse. Mary Agnes Conley Murphy died in 1899 at La Crosse. Miles Murphy is listed in the 1900 census as a ship carpenter in La Crosse. He and his three children were living in the boarding house operated by his sister-in-law Marguerite Conley. He is listed as a laborer in La Crosse in the 1905 Wisconsin State Census. Miles Murphy died in 1915 at La Crosse. His funeral was at the St. James Church with Rev. Murphy officiating. He was buried at the Catholic Cemetery.

Miles Murphy and Bridget O'Farrell's daughter Margaret Murphy went to the Neillsville, WI area with her father and siblings. She married Bernard Zimmer in 1887 at Neillsville. She and Bernard had at least six children. She died in 1914 and was buried in the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Neillsville.

Another Frampton Irish person in the Neillsville area was Martin O'Brien. Martin O'Brien married Mary Ann Garvin in 1868 at Frampton and they settled on a farm in Cranbourne. Martin O'Brien and his family went to York Township of Clark County, WI in 1882 where he purchased an 80-acre farm. Martin O'Brien, Mary Ann Garvin O'Brien and their son William and his wife are found on a farm in York Township of Clark County, WI in the 1905 Wisconsin State Census. Mary Ann Garvin O'Brien died at her home in York in 1924. Her funeral was held at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Neillsville with Rev. P. Weber officiating. Martin O'Brien died in 1933 at Neillsville.

Bernard Cassidy married Anastasia Redmond in 1871 at Ste. Marguerite. They came to

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Neillsville, WI in about 1883 and settled on a farm in Weston Township. Bernard Cassidy is listed in the 1885 Wisconsin State Census as residing in Weston Township as head of a household of 6. Bernard Cassidy and his family are found in the 1900 census in Weston Township. Bernard Cassidy died at his home in Weston Township in 1909. His funeral was held at St. Mary's Church with Rev. Dorrenbach officiating. Anastasia Redmond Cassidy and her son Edward are found in the 1910 census in Weston Township. Anastasia Redmond Cassidy died of heart failure at her home in Weston in 1913. The funeral services were at St. Mary's Church. Their two surviving children were Edward Cassidy who remained in Weston and Frances Cassidy La Fleur who lived nearby.

Hugh Redmond and Marcelline Fitzsimmons were both born in County Wexford, Ireland and in about 1831 they settled on a farm in Concession St. Thomas of Ste. Marguerite. They probably went to Clark County, WI in about 1883 to live near their son Richard Redmond. They may have lived with their daughter Anastasia Redmond and her husband Bernard Cassidy. Marcelline Fitzsimmons Redmond died at Neillsville in 1887. Hugh Redmond died at Neillsville in 1894. They are both buried in the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Neillsville.

Their son Richard Redmond married Elizabeth Wilson in 1863 in Quebec City at St. Patrick's Church. Richard Redmond and his family are found in the 1870 census in Bingham of Somerset County, ME. Richard Redmond emigrated to Clark County, WI before 1883. He is listed in the 1900 census as a farmer in Weston Township. Richard Redmond and his wife and son Hugh Redmond moved to Portland, OR where they are found in the 1910 census. They later returned to the Neillsville, WI area. Richard Redmond died in 1920 at the home of his son in Weston. His funeral was held at St. Mary's Catholic Church with Rev. P. Weber officiating. He was buried in the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Neillsville. Elizabeth Wilson Redmond died in 1931 at the home of her daughter in Greenwood, WI. The funeral services were held at her daughters home and she was buried in Neillsville.

Peter Murphy was the son of James Murphy and Honorah Doyle of Frampton Township. He was the grandson of early Frampton settler Peter Murphy. He married Marie Clara St. Hilaire in 1885 at Notre Dame Victoire in Quebec City. Peter and Marie Clara Murphy went to Neillsville, WI in 1886. They had six children all born in Neillsville. Marie Clara St. Hilaire Murphy died in 1895 at her home in Neillsville. Peter Murphy and his children were found in Neillsville in the 1895 Wisconsin State Census. Peter Murphy and his family are found in the 1910 census in the 15th Ward of La Crosse, WI where he was a railroad laborer.

Michael Shea of Frampton Township went to Clark County, WI in 1886. He worked as a laborer. In the 1900 census, he was living in Weston Township where he was a boarder. He died in 1909 at Chippewa Falls, WI. His funeral was held at St. Mary's Catholic Church. He was buried in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery. His sister was Ellen Shea, who was the wife of Patrick Hughes of Grant Township.

Andrew Murphy was the son of Thomas Murphy and Mary O'Farrell of Frampton Township. Thomas Murphy was the brother of Miles Murphy and Mary O'Farrell was the sister of Bridget O'Farrell. He married Ann Quigley in 1888 at Frampton. Ann Quigley died before 1900 as in that census Andrew Murphy was listed as a single head of household living next to both the John McLane household and the Moses Murphy household in Weston Township.

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Andrew Murphy died at the home of his cousin, Margaret Murphy Zimmer in Neillsville in 1902. His funeral was held at St. Mary's Catholic Church with Rev. Father Garrity officiating. He was buried in the St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Neillsville.

The Frampton Irish who migrated to Neillsville, WI were predominantly of the Catholic faith. They were members of the St. Mary's Catholic Congregation in Neillsville. The church had been established in 1877. The church was a very important part of the Irish culture and many of their life events (baptisms, marriages, burials) can be found in the St. Mary's parish register.

When you examine the 1893 plat maps for the farm properties in and around Christie, WI (just North of Neillsville) you can easily find the surnames of many of the Frampton Irish that about 15 years earlier could be found on the farms in Concessions St. Anne, St. Edouard, and St. Thomas of Ste. Marguerite, Quebec. It was if the entire "neighborhood" of family and friends had been transplanted from one location to the next. In just one more generation, many of these families would ultimately forget all about their Quebec origins.

a Catholic Priest, Fr. Joseph Murphy (our 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, twice removed) wrote a story in July 1980 that describes the Neillsville Colony in his first three paragraphs of "Some recollections and musings regarding the clan of Murphy." The Story goes as follows:

That little colony of Irish Catholics in the Parish of St. Edouard of Frampton, Province of Quebec, contained among others the names of Cassidy, Hughes, Nugent, McLane, Redmond, and Murphy – just to name a few. As the second and third generations grew up in the era before 1860 many of them sought employment elsewhere. Farmland was in short supply around Frampton, and my father (William Murphy, son of Miles Murphy), always maintained that it was of poor quality – a few inches of soil on top of lots of rock. The French settlers had taken up the good land in the surrounding valleys quite before the Irish came. So many of the youngsters gravitated over into Maine – the boundary of which was very close by. There the usual and standard employment was in the lumber camps of the Maine woods. My father often spoke of cutting heavy timber during the winter months and then, after preparing the logs, running them down the Kennebec River when the spring thaws went into these activities.

In course of time these lumberjacks moved westward – to Michigan and Wisconsin. It seems that the Weyerhaeuser lumber company had vast holdings in many states at that time. The employees often moved on to where the greater action was. Also, in course of time, some of the Canadian migrants became involved in building the great railroads of the Northern U.S.A., Especially the Great Northern. My father spoke of working on the great trestle logs for the Great Northern as far west as Walla Walla, state of Washington.

Later, by the 1870s and 1880s, many of the lumberjacks – included members of the families named above – collected in Wisconsin to form a new Irish colony – around Greenwood and Neillsville, Clark County, Wisconsin. Here they had really fine soil – the Black River bottomlands, some of which they helped to clear as members of the lumber companies. The settlers now often sent for their parents and other members of the family who had been left behind in Frampton, Canada. These included Miles Murphy, father of William and John Murphy, several other sons and at least one daughter. That daughter was one who married a Cassidy – and Mrs. Cassidy was the one who reared William Murphy's first family after their mother died. These children were Mike, Mose, and Mary. Mrs. Cassidy also reared one known as "Sis LaFleur" (married name), who was the mother of Nina Lafleur of Texas. Another who was born in Frampton was Sarah McLane – who later came to Oklahoma with Mary (May) Murphy and Mary Tackney (later Frank Schwarte, Senior's wife). All these were helpful employees in William Murphy's OK Hotel in Chattanooga, OK in the era between 1905 and 1910. William Murphy had made his way to Lawton shortly after the Kiowa-Comanche opening of 1901.

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Fr. Joseph adequately described a scenario where working in the timber and lumber industries was a prime motivation in the migration of our ancestral families from Quebec to Wisconsin. And this general theme had been born out by my own historical research. It would indeed be a case of “chain migration.” Fr. Joe had prefaced his story by saying it was “Strictly from memory and oral sources of the past.” Although he had done some initial genealogical research in the 1970s, his research hadn’t been sufficient enough to paint the full picture of the families and their relationships to one another. That being said, a couple of notes are in order in regards to the above.

First, Miles Murphy had two daughters and not just one. They were Elizabeth Murphy who was married to John McLane and Margaret Murphy who was married to Bernard Zimmer. Neither of these daughters were married to a Cassidy.

Second, William Murphy first wife was Catherine Redmond. His “first family” with this wife were (baptized names) Bridget Margaret, Michael Edward and William John and not “Mike, Mose, and Mary,” unless these were later adopted names.

Third, as far as I know, the Cassidy in the area was a Bernard Cassidy who was married to Anastasia Redmond. This Anastasia Redmond was the aunt of William Murphy’s first wife Catherine Redmond. So it makes sense that Anastasia Redmond Cassidy would take care of William Murphy and Catherine Redmond’s children. Sure enough the children Bridget, Michael and William are found in the Cassidy household in Weston Township, WI in the 1900 census. Incidentally, William Murphy’s second wife was Catherine McLane.

Fourth, the Sarah McLane (baptized name was Bridget) mentioned was the daughter of John McLane and Elizabeth Murphy. The Mary or May Murphy was William Murphy’s daughter by his first wife whose baptized name was Bridget Margaret Murphy. Mary Tackney was the daughter of Hugh Tackney and William Murphy’s second wife Catherine McLane, by her first marriage.

### Walsh County Colony:

Our next set of ancestors and relatives to come to America were the McLean brothers, Alan, James, Charles, and Duncan. Alan and James would arrive in Walsh County, ND in 1883, Duncan arrived in about 1885, and Charles arrived in about 1895. They migrated from Bruce County, Ontario. Their attraction to North Dakota appears to be related to a “chain migration” of their neighbors, friends, and relatives who had gone to North Dakota earlier from the North Wellington County area near Harriston, Ontario. The McLean brother’s father John McLean had first settled near Harriston in Minto Township of northern Wellington County when he came from Scotland. The McLean brothers grew up in that location.

Using the set of books titled *Walsh Heritage, A Story of Walsh County and Its Pioneers*, and census records in Ontario, Canada and North Dakota, I was able to determine that a total of 18 families who were early settlers in Walsh County where all Scots who migrated to Walsh County from the area in and around Harriston, Ontario. This many families definitely implies a “chain migration.”

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It appears that the Homestead Act of 1862 and subsequent public land entry laws would attract the Scots of Harriston, Ontario to migrate to North Dakota. Some of the townships in the area that would become Walsh County would be opened to settlement in the late 1870s. In 1880, the State of North Dakota had not yet been established and the area was known as the Dakota Territory. Further, Walsh County would not be established until 1881. So in the 1880 census, the northern half of Walsh County was part of Pembina County and the southern half was in Grand Forks County. The first U.S. General Land Office was established at Pembina, ND in 1870.

As provided in an earlier chapter, by DNA, we are related either to the Gillespies or the Bells, or both. These families would be very influential in the chain migration to Walsh County.

Angus S. Gillespie and his family were living on a farm in Minto Township near Harriston, Ontario. He had emigrated to Minto Township from the Isle of Islay, Scotland. He and his wife Sarah McLellan had 10 children while living at Minto Township, Ontario. He took his family to the Dakota Territory in 1879. Their daughter Sarah was born in August 1879 in Dakota Territory.

As an early settler, Angus Gillespie has been described as “The Father of Minto and Harriston Township (both in North Dakota).” Coming from the town of Harriston and the Township of Minto, Ontario, he was among the first to stake out homes in this locality. Including lands filed on by himself and his sons were nine quarter sections, abutting what is now the city of Minto, ND on three sides. In fact when the village of Minto was platted, it was made up of a portion of his homestead and shortly thereafter he platted a tract of land to the south of the original town site which is what is known as Gillespie’s addition and on which there is a portion of the best residential section of the town.

Angus Gillespie and his family are found in the 1880 census for Dakota Territory in Grand Forks County in a township identified as T 156 R 52, which would later become Harriston Township. The Dakota Territory legislature created Walsh County on May 2, 1881, with areas partitioned from Grand Forks and Pembina counties. In the naming of the new township, Mr. Gillespie was honored by having his township designated as “Harriston”, after the name of the village in Ontario which was his home and when this village was organized by his suggestion it was christened Minto, after his home township in Ontario.

For his first land entry, Angus Gillespie purchased a 160 acre military script warrant for land in section 31 of Harriston Township from Amos and Alecta Van Duzor on March 30, 1881. Then he purchased a 136 acre military script warrant for land in section 30 of Harriston Township from Uriah and Hanna Wright on June 30, 1883. He then made a cash purchase for 160 acres in section 30 of Harriston Township from the Government.

Angus Gillespie’s children would also take advantage of the public land entry laws for lands in Harriston Township. His daughter Christina made a cash sale purchase for 160 acres in section 19 on June 1, 1882. His son John made two cash sale purchases, one for 160 acres in section 30 on February 17, 1885 and one for 160 acres in Section 20 on October 22, 1889. Malcom would make a Homestead claim. He probably began occupying his claim in about 1886 and he received patent to the 135 acre claim in section 19 on July 10, 1892. Angus Gillespie’s wife died on March 12, 1905 at Minto, ND. Angus died on March 15, 1907 at Minto, ND.

Angus Gillespie’s sister Flora Gillespie had also been born on the Isle of Islay, Scotland.



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She married Alexander Mitchell Bruce in Wellington County, Ontario. They had five children while living near Harriston, Ontario. In 1879, they migrated to what would become known as Fertile Township in the future Walsh County. In the 1880 census for the Dakota Territory, Alexander Bruce and his family are found in Drayton of Pembina County. Their son Archibald was born in Oct of 1879 in Dakota Territory. *Walsh Heritage* indicates that they filed a homestead on the Park River, five miles northeast of Park River, ND.

Alexander M. Bruce made two cash sale purchases, one for 160 acres in Section 17 of Fertile Township on March 1, 1883 and one for 160 acres in section 32 of Fertile Township on November 1, 1886.

Alexander Bruce and his family moved to Grafton, ND in 1889 and then later to Park River, ND. His wife Flora Gillespie died in 1928 at Park River. Alexander Bruce died in 1935 in Park River.

Living right next to our Great Great Grandfather John McLean in 1861 in Minto Township, Ontario was the family of John White, his wife Ann McGillvray, and their daughter Elizabeth Betsy White. This family was from the Isle of Islay, Scotland. Elizabeth Betsy White married William H. Bruce in 1866. They had six children in Minto, Ontario. They migrated to what would become Walsh County, ND in about 1879. Their daughter Annie was born in February 1880. William Bruce and his family are found in the 1880 census for the Dakota Territory in Drayton of Pembina County.

William Bruce made a Homestead claim in Fertile Township. He probably began occupancy around 1880, and received patent to the claim from 160 acres in sections 18 and 19 in Fertile Township on February 16, 1888. William Bruce died on August 25, 1893 at Park River, ND. His wife Elizabeth Betsy White died on April 28, 1904.

Another daughter of John White and Ann McGilivray was Mary Jane White. Mary Jane White was married to Peter William Campbell in Minto, Ontario in about 1852. Like his wife Mary Jane, Peter Campbell was from the Isle of Islay, Scotland. He and his wife had eight children while living in Minto Township, Ontario.

In 1879, Peter Campbell came to the Dakota Territory and settled in what would become Walsh County in the area of Fertile Township. He owned and drove the first team of oxen that came across the Dakota Territory. He and his family are found in the 1880 census for Dakota Territory in Drayton of Pembina County.

Peter Campbell, Sr. made two cash sale purchases from the Government. One was for 160 acres in section 18 and 19 of Fertile Township on July 25, 1882. The other was for 120 acres in section 20 of Fertile Township on February 17, 1885. His son John F. Campbell made two cash sale purchases from the Government. One was for 160 acres in sections 19 and 20 of Fertile Township on May 15, 1883. The other was for 160 acres in section 29 of Fertile Township on February 28, 1890. His son Peter F. Campbell made a cash sale purchase from the Government for 160 acres in section 20 and 21 in Fertile Township. Together these 760 acres would be known as the Campbell farms. Peter Campbell's wife Mary Jane White died in North Dakota on September 13, 1886. Peter William Campbell died in Minneapolis, MN on December 18, 1920.

Donald McCannell was from the Isle of Islay, Scotland. He was married to Ann Morrison while living in Minto Township, Ontario. Ann Morrison was also from the Isle of Islay. He and

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his wife had seven children while living in Minto, Ontario. He and his family arrived in Dakota Territory in 1879 and filed a claim in Forest River Township. Their son Donald was born in February 1880 in Dakota Territory. He and his family are found in the 1880 census for Dakota Territory in Grand Forks County in a township that would later become Forest River.

Donald McCannell made two cash sales from the Government. One was for 160 acres in sections 2 and 3 of Forest River Township on June 1, 1882. The other was for 160 acres in section 1 of Forest River Township. Donald McCannell died in 1902 in Minto, ND. His wife Ann Morrison died in about 1906.

. William James Hewitt was born at Mount Forest, Ontario (near Minto Township, Ontario). His father Jacob Hewitt had come to Mount Forest in about 1853. He came to Walsh County, ND in about 1880 and married Janet Arnot in 1881 at Drayton, ND.

William Hewitt made a cash sale purchase from the Government for 180 acres in section 2 of Harriston Township on July 10, 1883. He also ran a meat market in Minto, ND and later expanded it into a hardware and farm implement business in the same town. He and his wife had seven children in Minto, ND. William Hewitt died on February 2, 1941 at Grand Forks, ND. His wife Janet Arnot died on November 1939 at Grand Forks, ND.

. Archibald Ferguson was born in Minto Township, Ontario. His parents were John A. Ferguson and Catherine Bell. John A. Ferguson was born on the Isle of Islay, Scotland. Catherine Bell was also born on Islay, Scotland. Archibald went to Walsh County in about 1882. His widowed mother Catherine remarried an Archibald Shaw. Archibald Ferguson made a cash purchase from the Government for 160 acres on section 8 of Prairie Centre Township on October 10, 1882.

Archibald Ferguson married Christina Gillespie in 1884. She was the daughter of Angus Gillespie and Sarah McClellan. Archibald Ferguson and his family are found in the 1900 census in Minto, ND. Archibald Ferguson died on December 6, 1911. Christina Gillespie died December 7, 1942.

. Angus Bell was born on the Isle of Islay, Scotland. His parents were Neil Bell and Mary Turner. He married Martha Johnston while living in Arthur Township (near Minto Township), Ontario. He was still living in Arthur Township in 1881.

Angus Bell arrived in North Dakota around 1882. Angus Bell made a cash sale purchase from the Government for 160 acres in Section 25 of Dahlen Township in Nelson County on October 22, 1886. Dahlen Township is situated in northern Nelson County on the boundary with Walsh County.

In the 1900 census, Angus Bell, his wife Martha and three children are found living in Elkmont Township of Grand Forks County. This township includes the town of Belleville.

Angus Bell's wife Martha Johnston died in 1905. Angus remarried a Margaret McLean who was from Wellington County, Ontario. Angus Bell died April 2, 1933 in Walsh County, ND.

. Angus Bell's sister was Catherine Bell who was also born on the Isle of Islay, Scotland. She married Archibald McLean in Erin Township of Wellington County, Ontario. Archibald McLean had a farm right next to our Great Great Grandfather John McLean in Minto Township, Ontario. There is strong circumstantial evidence that indicates that Archibald McLean and John McLean were brothers. Archibald McLean and his family went to North Dakota in about 1883.

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. Archibald McLean made a cash sale purchase from the Government for 160 acres in section 25 of Dahlen Township in Nelson County on June 13, 1889. This land was next to the land claim made by his brother-in-law Angus Bell. Archibald McLean died on August 15, 1899 at Inkster, ND. His wife Catherine Bell died in 1901 at Inkster, ND.

. Another sister of Angus Bell was Mary Bell who was also born on Islay, Scotland. Mary Bell married Angus Johnston, Jr., who was also born on Islay, Scotland. The couple and their family lived in Simcoe County, Ontario up until at least 1881. Angus Johnston, Jr. died in Belleville, ND on May 16, 1897. Mary Bell Johnston died in 1921 at Grand Forks, ND.

. Duncan Gillespie was born on the Isle of Islay, Scotland. His parents were John Gillespie and Catherine Bell. He was the brother of Angus Gillespie above. He married Mary Catherine Bell in Minto Township, Ontario. They had seven children in Minto. He and his family went to North Dakota in 1882.

Duncan Gillespie made three cash sales purchases from the Government. One was for 160 acres in section 19 of Walsh Centre Township on October 20, 1884. Another was for 160 acres in Section 23 of Vesta Township on October 22, 1886. Another was for 160 acres in section 25 of Walsh Centre Township on February 2, 1888.

Duncan Gillespie eventually settled his family in Rushford Township where he and his family are found in the 1900 census. Duncan Gillespie and Mary Catherine Bell's daughter Margaret Gillespie later married Duncan McLean, our Great Grandfather Charles McLean's brother. Duncan Gillespie died in 1912 in Walsh County, ND. His wife Mary Catherine Bell died on July 6, 1903 in Walsh County, ND

Alexander John Ferguson was born on the Isle of Islay, Scotland. He married a Catherine McLean in Grey County, Ontario. Catherine McLean was from the Isle of Tiree, Scotland. They had nine children while living in Grey County. They went to North Dakota in 1882 and first lived in Grand Forks, ND. Alexander John Ferguson and his family are found in the 1900 census in Tiber Township of Walsh County, ND. His household is enumerated right next to the households of Allan McLean, James McLean and Charles McLean. Alexander John and Catherine Ferguson's daughter Margaret was James McLean's first wife. Alexander John Ferguson died on February 12, 1903 at Adams, ND. His wife Catherine McLean died on May 18, 1926 at Grand Forks, ND.

Duncan White was born in Minto Township, Ontario. He was the son of Neil White and Margaret Gillespie, both of whom were from the Isle of Islay, Scotland. His grandparents were John White and Ann McGillvray, the neighbors of our Great Great Grandfather John McLean in Minto Township, Ontario. Duncan White made a cash sale purchase from the Government for 160 acres in Section 30 of Fertile Township on October 4, 1884.

Duncan White returned to Minto, Ontario where he married Sarah Mariah Daws and the couple went to Walsh County, ND shortly after that where their son Edgar White was born in February 1885. They would have four children on their farm in Fertile Township. Duncan White died on November 17, 1931 in Park River, ND. His wife Sarah Daws died on April 5, 1938 in Park River, ND.

John Gillespie was a younger brother of Angus Gillespie and Duncan Gillespie. He also was born on the Isle of Islay, Scotland. He married Sarah Ferguson in Minto Township, Ontario.

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They had seven children while in Minto, Ontario. They went to Prairie Centre Township in Walsh County in 1888. John Gillespie and his family were living in Fertile Township in the 1910 census. John Gillespie's wife Sarah Ferguson died May 22, 1910 at Park River, ND. John Gillespie died April 8, 1914 at Park River, ND.

Our Great Great Grandparents John McLean and Mary McKinnon had married and settled in Minto Township, Ontario in the 1850s. All of their eight children would be born there. Perhaps to join with some of Mary's McKinnon relatives, John moved his family to Bruce Township of Bruce County, Ontario in 1880. Their oldest daughter Mary married a Christopher Greer and they migrated to Alberta and British Columbia. Their next oldest daughter Sarah married a Donald McLeod and they stayed and lived in Bruce County, Ontario. However, their four sons (Allan, James, Charles, and Duncan) and youngest daughter Katherine felt the pull to migrate to Walsh County, ND.

Just three years after the family had moved to Bruce County, brothers Allan McLean and James McLean went by train to Walsh County, ND in April 1883. Allan and James began by constructing a sod shanty on one of their Homestead claims in Tiber Township of Walsh County, ND. After staking his claim, James went to work for two years as a farm hand (perhaps working for the Gillespies, etc.) in Minto, ND. Nevertheless, the two brothers had established a foothold for the McLean family by the mid 1880s.

Allan McLean made his first petition to become a U.S. Citizen on December 16, 1884. As being a citizen is a requirement prior to patent for Homestead and other claims, this was most likely his plan and filing for citizenship was also a commitment to the permanence of his move to North Dakota. Allan would not file for his claim in Tiber Township until April 30, 1891. He is shown in an 1910 plat map as the owner of land in section 30 of Tiber Township. His land was located next to that owned by brothers James McLean and Duncan McLean. His land was also next to that owned by his brother Charles McLean just across the road in section 25 of Silvesta Township. He and his family are found in the 1900 census in Tiber Township.

Allan returned to Bruce County in August 1897 and married Isabelle McDonald. She was the daughter of Neil McDonald and Catherine McDonald who were both born on the Isle of Tiree. They had five children while living in Tiber Township. Allan McLean died on December 22, 1918 in Edinburg, ND and is buried at the Odalen Church cemetery. His wife Isabella McDonald died on February 21, 1909 and is buried at the Odalen Church cemetery.

James McLean made his first petition to become a U.S. Citizen on May 7, 1884. James then filed for a Homestead claim in Tiber Township of Walsh County on May 25, 1885.

James McLean married Margaret Ferguson in 1887 in Adams, ND. She was the daughter of Alexander John Ferguson and Catherine McLean. They had five children while living on the farm in Tiber Township. James McLean is shown in an 1910 plat map as the owner of land in section 30 of Tiber Township. His land was located next to that owned by Allan McLean and Duncan McLean. His brother Charles McLean's farm was across the road in section 25 of Silvesta Township.

James McLean's first wife Margaret Ferguson died on July 12, 1897 at Adams, ND. She was buried at the Odalen Church cemetery. James married an Anna Carlson in 1899 at Langdon, ND. They had five children while living in Tiber Township. James and his family are found in

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Tiber Township in the 1900 census. His household is enumerated right next to the household of his first wife's parents, Alexander John Ferguson and Catherine McLean. James McLean died on June 1, 1933 at Adams, ND and is buried at the Odalen Church cemetery. His second wife Anna Carlson died on December 25, 1960 at Grafton, ND.

Duncan McLean went from Bruce County, Ontario to Walsh County, ND in about 1885, perhaps following his brothers Allan and James. He began teaching in rural schools in Vesta, Silvesta, and Rushford Townships. He also bought land in Tiber and Silvesta Townships. He is shown in the 1910 plat map as the owner of land in section 30 of Tiber Township. His land was located next to that owned by Allan McLean and James McLean. He also owned another parcel in Silvesta Township in Section 36 just south of his brother Charles McLean's farm.

Duncan McLean eventually left teaching for an accountant job in Park River, ND. The school in Rushford Township where he taught was where the children of Duncan Gillespie and Mary Catherine Bell attended. Among the students there was a young Margaret Gillespie. Duncan McLean and Margaret Gillespie were married on July 12, 1899 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Duncan McLean died on September 18, 1938 at Grafton, ND. His wife Margaret Gillespie died in 1965 in Park River, ND. They are both buried in the Park River cemetery.

While his brothers had gone to North Dakota, for the time being, Charles McLean remained behind in Bruce County, essentially taking responsibility for managing his parents affairs. His father John McLean had passed ownership of his Bruce Township farm to Charles, Allan, and Duncan McLean. As Allan and Duncan were already in North Dakota, Charles would be the primary farmer on his father's farm in Bruce Township through 1894. John McLean had died in about April 1893, leaving his widow Mary McKinnon McLean to live with Charles. Charles sister Katherine was also in the household.

Charles McLean married Elizabeth McDonald in Bruce County in 1894. She was the daughter of Neil McDonald and Catherine McDonald who were both born on the Isle of Tiree. Their son John Harvey McLean (our grandfather) was born in Bruce County in January of 1895. Right after that, he took his wife Elizabeth McDonald, his infant son Harvey McLean, his mother Mary McKinnon McLean, and his sister Katherine McLean and they all went to Walsh County, ND. Charles and his family first lived in the sod house that Allan and James had built when they first came to Walsh County.

On March 16, 1895, Charles purchased a farm in Silvesta Township of Walsh County that was next to the farms of his brothers. Charles McLean is shown in the 1910 plat map as the owner of land in section 25 of Silvesta Township. His land was located right across the road from land owned in Tiber Township by his brothers Allan McLean, James McLean and Duncan McLean. Duncan also owned another parcel in Silvesta Township in Section 36 just south of Charles' farm.

Charles McLean and his family are found in the 1900 census in Tiber Township, even though they really lived across the road in Silvesta Township. Charles McLean's wife Elizabeth McDonald died on March 5, 1903 in Adams, ND and is buried at the Odalen Church cemetery. Charles McLean died on July 15, 1917 in Adams, ND and is buried at Odalen Church cemetery.

From this study of 18 families who were early settlers in Walsh County, ND, it can easily be discerned what they had in common as a colony. The three common elements are: (1) They

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were Scots who had ancestral ties to the Isle of Islay, Scotland; (2) They primarily came to North Dakota from the area in and around Harriston in Minto Township in northern Wellington County, Ontario; and (3) They were attracted to North Dakota by the availability of land that could be obtained through the Homestead Act of 1862 and other related public land entry laws of the United States.

It was easy for these Scots to maintain their cultural practices while in Canada. The population mix of Minto Township, Ontario was made up of several ethnic groups, but the community of Scots clearly was one of the major groups. The abundance of Scottish names in the early census records was very discernable. Most of the original Scot settlers spoke the Gaelic language. This was certainly true in the case of our ancestors since the family bible in possession of our family was published in the Gaelic language in Canada.

For the most part, the Scots remained members of the “Church of Scotland” which was known as Knox Presbyterian in North America. The building of the Knox Calvin Presbyterian church in Harriston, Ontario began in 1861. There was heavy dependance on the clans from Glenlee and from individual farmers as far away as the 2<sup>nd</sup> concession of Minto Township and half the distance to Clifford and these Scottish settlers provided the logs and the shingles and willing hands to do the work. A large segment of the founding congregation were Highland Scots, reared in the traditions of Gaelic services and there was never any doubt that these traditions and rituals would continue.

Rather than the members of the Scots community living about 10 miles of one another in Minto Township, Ontario, in Walsh County, North Dakota, they were now living in about eight different townships spread across 1,294 square miles. It is about 36 miles from Edinburg, ND (where the McLean brothers settled) to Minto, ND (where the Gillespies and the Bells settled). This made it difficult to establish a cultural focal point for the Scot settlers in Walsh County.

There was perhaps far more of the Scots community that lived in the southeast corner of Walsh County near the town of Minto. Thanks to these Scots settlers, the Knox Presbyterian Church in Minto, ND was established on February 18, 1883 and the first building was completed in 1886. The founding congregation included: Donald McCannell, Agnes Campbell, Angus Gillespie and Duncan Gillespie. The first Sunday School superintendent was Donald McCannell and the first teacher was Margaret D. Bell. There is probably little doubt that the congregation most likely included all the Scots families living in the area.

In *Walsh Heritage*, there is mention of only one Presbyterian church in the northern part of Walsh County. That church is the First Presbyterian Church founded in Park River in 1881. Scot settler William Bruce was identified as one of the first three Elders of the church. The founding congregation included : Alexander and Flora (Gillespie) Bruce and William and Elizabeth (White) Bruce. Among the first persons on the burial register was the January 22, 1902 entry for a Mrs. Archibald Gillespie who was “about 100 years old.” This was most likely the Mary Kennedy Gillespie, mother of Robert Gillespie who had come from Grey County, Ontario and settled in Rushford Township. Robert Gillespie had been married to Christina Gillespie, daughter of John Gillespie and Catherine Bell above. It was also mentioned that many members of the Ladies Aid Society in 1901 were of Scottish ancestry.

I once asked my mother what church her family went to. She simply said that they

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attended whatever church was closest to their home. This does appear to be true in the case of the McLean brothers of Walsh County. The town of Edinburg, ND was supposedly named in honor of some of the Scots settlers in the area. But it appears that the dominate ethnic groups in the area were Scandinavians. The Norwegians of the area founded the Odalen Norwegian Lutheran congregation in 1884. The church was located about five miles west of Edinburg. However, the McLean farms were located about 5 miles north of Adams, ND and about 4 ½ miles from the Odalen Lutheran Church. From the McLean farms to Edinburg was about 9 miles and it was another 10 miles to Park River. It seems that Adams would be closest to their homes. However, Adams had only a Lutheran Church which didn't have a church building until into the 1890s. So rather than making the long trek to the First Presbyterian Church in Park River, the McLean families began a long association with the Odalen Lutheran Church. Today, many of the McLean ancestors are buried in the Odalen Church cemetery. However, for whatever reason, the graves of the Scots are located in a separate part of the cemetery from their Scandianian brethren.

The Odalen Church building was added to the National Register of Historic Places on January 11, 2006. It burned to ground on June 21, 2007 and was de-listed on November 28, 2007. It was the last public building in Tiber Township. On July 30, 2008, an 80-foot cross was erected at the site to memorialize the church.

### **The Akra, ND and Foam Lake/Kristnes, Saskatchewan Colonies:**

The last of our ancestors to arrive in America was Jonas Samson and his family in 1889. His intended destination would be to North Dakota in the United States, but they would use travel routes that took them from Iceland to Canada and then to North Dakota.

Emigration from Iceland to North America would begin as early as 1851 and extend into the 1890s. Farmers in Iceland could not utilize their lands during unseasonably long winters resulting in crop failures, the sheep contracted diseases and frost hampered hay growth for summer grazing. The population boom in Iceland did not make migration to the outlying villages in Iceland fruitful as the small villages which were based on a fishing economy could not sustain a rapid growth of population. "The total population of Iceland was just seventy thousand, but even this was too many people for the island to sustain"

Between 1870 and 1914 approximately 15,000 to 20,000 Icelanders - roughly one quarter of Iceland's population came to North America. The urban centers were deluged in Iceland, and many from Iceland left these overcrowded conditions to migrate to North America.

The Canadian government carried on active work and sent agents to Iceland to encourage immigration to Canada. In September 1874, the steamer *St. Patrick* brought 365 Icelandic immigrants directly to Quebec. Some entered into an agreement to settle in Canada. The Canadian government was guaranteeing that they would enjoy full liberty and right of citizenship and that a tract of suitable land would be granted for creating a colony. They would be allowed to preserve unhindered their personal rights, their language and their nationality for themselves and their descendants forever. However, many of them said that they intended to go to the United States as they believed there was more freedom in the United States than in Canada.

In 1875, an Icelandic colony was established in Minneota, MN. In 1878, the Icelanders in

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this colony organized a Icelandic society for printing books and papers and establishing Icelandic Lutheran congregations. In this manner, the early Icelandic settlers could communicate in their own language throughout the North American colonies and accurate information could flow to those still in Iceland about the American colonies.

Also in 1875, a committee was formed to find a suitable place in Canada for a colony. This committee selected a strip of land along the west shore of Lake Winnepeg, calling it New Iceland. In a few years the population of this colony grew to about 1,400, making it the largest Icelandic settlement in North America. In 1877 steps were taken to organize a more permanent government for the colony. The town of Gimli, Manitoba was formed. This would result in Winnepeg, Manitoba becoming the initial destination of choice to many Icelandic emigrants.

In 1879, Rev. Pall Thorlaksson, accompanied by several leading men of the New Iceland colony set out to find a suitable location for a colony in the United States. A tract in Pembina County in the northeastern corner of North Dakota was selected. The townships in this area had recently been opened to settlement. After about ten years this colony, centered upon Akra, ND, became one of the largest Icelandic colonies in America.

Akra Township was organized in 1882, and was known as one of the "Icelandic Townships," due to its large population of Icelanders who had settled here. Akra takes its name from Akranes, Iceland, a town near Reykjavík. Akra Township was a "double township," spanning two fully surveyed townships.

There were a few of our relatives that were involved in some early emigration. Two of the siblings of our Great Great Grandmother Gudrun Bjornsdottir emigrated in the 1870s. Her sister Soffia Bjornsdottir became a widow in 1868. She emigrated with her daughter Gudridur, leaving Seydisfjordur and arriving in Quebec on July 31, 1876. Her intended destination was Manitoba, Canada. Her sister Katrin Bjornsdottir and her husband Jon Jonsson left Seydisfjordur and arrived in Quebec on August 1, 1878. Their intended destination was Lyon County, MN.

The largest migration from Iceland to North America was experienced in the 1880s. Two more of our Great Great Grandmother Gudrun Bjornsdottir's siblings emigrated in 1882. Her brother Jon Bjornsson and his wife Margret Benediksdottir left Seydisfjordur and arrived in Quebec, Canada on September 4, 1882. Their intended destination was North Dakota. Her sister Thorunn Bjornsdottir had been widowed in 1876. She emigrated with her daughter Katrin on the same ship as her brother Jon Bjornsson that arrived in Quebec on September 4, 1882. Her intended destination was the Northwest Territories (probably Saskatchewan) of Canada.

The Vidalin Icelandic Lutheran Church had been established at Akra, ND in 1886 by Rev. F. J. Bergmann, and was the pioneer congregation of central Pembina County. Jonas A. Sigurdsson was ordained a minister June 25, 1893, and at once assumed charge of the Vidalin church and congregation at Pembina. The Vidalin Church in Akra would be the headquarters of the five other Icelandic Lutheran churches in the area, namely: (1) the Vidalin congregation, with a church building; (2) the Pembina congregation, consisting of fifty families; (3) the Hallson congregation, established in 1894, and had thirty-five families and a church building erected in 1899; (4) the Peter's congregation in Akra Township, organized in 1893, and had about sixty families and a church building; and (5) the Grafton congregation in Grafton, ND.

Our Great Grandfather Jonas Samson's older brother Fridbjorn Samson would make the



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journey to North Dakota in 1882. Fridbjorn Samson was married to Jarthrudur Gislasdottir. They had five children while in Iceland. In 1882, he emigrated with wife, three of their children, a working woman named Elísabet Halldórsdóttir and an infant son of Fríðbjorn's she apparently just had. The group departed via the port at Vopnafjordur aboard the ship *Camoens*, bound for Quebec. Fridbjorn went direct to North Dakota. He seemed attracted to Pembina County, ND due to the availability of land through the Homestead Act of 1862. He probably began occupancy of his homestead claim in about late 1882. He filed his petition for Naturalization in the U.S. on March 6, 1883. He became a Naturalized U.S. Citizen on December 8, 1888. He received patent to his Homestead claim for 80 acres in Section 34 of Gardar Township on November 16, 1891.

Our Great Great Grandfather Asmundur Saebjornsson's sister Kristin Marie Saebjornsdottir emigrated in 1889 as a widow with her son-in-law and daughter: Sigurdur Sveinsson and Margret Asmundsdottir with their children Johann Sigurdsson and Anna Kristín Sigurdardottir. Their intended destination was Pembina, ND.

Perhaps Jonas Samson would follow his brother Fridbjorn and his wife Katrin Asmundsdottir would follow her aunt Kristin Marie Saebjornsdottir and other relatives to Pembina County, ND. Jonas Samson and his wife Katrin Asmundsdottir and their six children: Asmundur, Svava, Kristjan, Samson, Kristrun, and Krtistlaugur; departed Seydisfjordur for Glasgow, Scotland in 1889 aboard the *Lake Huron* with a final intended destination of Winnipeg, Manitoba. They boarded the ship *Siberian* in Glasgow with final intended destination of Winnipeg, Manitoba and arrived in Quebec, Canada on November 8, 1889. The family ultimately settled in Akra, ND where they lived on a rented farm.

Jonas and Katrin's 3 year old daughter Kristrun died at Akra, ND on November 8, 1890 and was buried at the Vidalin Icelandic Lutheran Church cemetery the following spring. Their daughter Helga was born in 1891 and was baptized at the Vidalin Church. Their daughter Elizabeth (our grandmother) was born in 1892 and baptized at the Vidalin Church in 1893.

Perhaps to join her daughter Katrin Asmundsdottir, her mother Gudrun Bjornsdottir departed Seydisfjordur on August 2, 1893 on the ship *Lake Huron* with final intended final destination of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The *Lake Huron* arrived at Quebec, Canada on August 11, 1893. She most likely went to live with her daughter Katrin and her son-in-law Jonas Samson more or less directly. But she died at Akra, ND just two months later and was buried at Vidalin Church cemetery on November 2, 1893. Then on March 12, 1894, Katrin Asmundsdottir died at age 39 and was buried at the Vidalin Church cemetery. This left Jonas Samson as a widower with seven dependant children.

It seems that Jonas Samson's long term goal was to remain in North Dakota as he became a Naturalized U.S. Citizen on November 2, 1894. He would be often employed as a carpenter which he identified as his occupation in the 1900 census. He married his second wife Sigridur Palsdottir on August 11, 1896 at Vidalin Church. She had come to North Dakota as a widow with her three children in 1889. Jonas Samson's household is found in the 1900 census in Akra Township, ND. His household included his second wife Sigridur with her son Hans Hanson and her daughter Stefania Gillis. Jonas oldest son by his first wife, Asmundur (or John as he was known in ND), was also in the household.

Jonas' other children had been placed in foster homes in the Icelandic colony in Pembina

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County by 1900. Kristlaugur (or Lewis) and Svava were fostered by Jonas' brother Fridbjorn Samson in Gardar Township. Kristjan was housed with Gudjon Saemundsson in Cavalier Township. Samson was fostered by Samson Bjarnason in Akra Township. Living next door to her brother Kristjan was Helga Samson who was adopted by Elizabeth Gudmundsson. Elizabeth was a foster child of Jon Bjornason in Akra Township. Elizabeth later lived with the Widow Kristin and her family.

Jonas Samson was apparently attracted to migrate to Saskatchewan, Canada in 1903 by the opening of areas for homesteading by the Canadian government. Other Icelanders were migrating to the same area.

The name Foam Lake was chosen by Joshua Milligan, the first settler to the area in 1882, when he noticed the foam which formed along the shores of a shallow body of water northwest of the Town's present site. Following the Milligans, were a group of Icelanders who settled in the area in 1892. They were looking for a steady source of water and settled in the Fishing Lake area before moving to Foam Lake in 1894. In 1872, The Canadian Parliament passed a Dominion Lands Act, granting each immigrant a quarter section of land for ten dollars.

There were two waves of Icelandic settlement to and within Saskatchewan. The first group came directly from Iceland, paused briefly in Winnipeg, then moved on to Saskatchewan. The second group trekked north and west from older settlements in North Dakota and Manitoba.

In June 1882, the first Icelandic families came to Fishing Lake. The magnets were hay and water. Settlements followed at Foam Lake, Kristnes, Leslie, Mt Hecla, Holar, Elfros, Mozart, Wynyard, Kandahar and Dafoe, creating the largest Icelandic settlement outside of Iceland.

In the early 1900s migrants were leaving North Dakota and Minnesota, where the colonies had become overpopulated, and they arrived in western Canada. In 1905 over 100 pioneers booked a special train to move away from North Dakota. The end of the line at that time was Wadena, which necessitated an overland journey of 35 miles to Sleipner, a new addition to the Lakes Settlement. A second large group migrated the following year. Similarly the Manitoba colonies began to see migrants heading westerly. The migration to south eastern Saskatchewan began with settlers from Iceland, however a group of Icelandic pioneers from Mountain, Red River Valley, and Gardar, ND migrated to the area. The Lakes Settlement did not expand much further than Kandahar and Dafoe, the last area to be settled.

Jonas Samson, his wife Sigridur Palsdottir, his step-daughter Stephania Gillis, his daughter Svava Samson, and his son Kristjan (Christian) Samson made the move to Saskatchewan in 1903 and would be located in the 1906 Saskatchewan Census in Kristnes. Jonas had made a Canadian Homestead entry for land in section 34 in Township 32, Range 12 on December 11, 1902. He built a house on his homestead in April 1903. He soon began running a small store out of his house and later a small post office operation. The post office called "Kristnes" was established quite early and served the settlers who were moving into the area immediately west of the original Foam Lake settlement. So it could be said that Jonas Samson was one of the founders of the Kristnes Icelandic colony.

The book titled, *The Saskatchewan Icelanders: A Strand of the Canadian Fabric* provides the following narrative:

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The Kristnes District comprises approximately the east half and the northwest quarter of Township 32 and 33 in Range 12 and extends into Townships 32 and 33 in Range 11.

The heavy migration into this district and the area further south started in the year 1903. Jon Thorlacius homesteaded on the southwest quarter of Section 16, Township 32, Range 12 and the following years established a post office which he called "Kristnes." Jonas Samson moved in the same year and opened a small store in his home on the farm. Later he took over the Kristnes Post Office.

A school district was established in 1905 as Akra School District No. 1267. The first trustees were Th. Thorvaldson, Oli Peterson. In 1908 the name was changed to Kristnes School District No. 1267.

Jonas and Sigridur Samson are listed among 40 settler families in the Kristnes district in *The Saskatchewan Icelanders: A Strand of the Canadian Fabric*. That same book listed Jonas daughter Svava and her husband Olafur Johnson as settlers of the Foam Lake district. Likewise, Jonas' sons Christian J. Samson and Sam F. Samson are listed as settlers in the Leslie District in Wynyard and Kandahar, respectively.

Jonas Samson became the caretaker of the Kristnes School in 1905. Then he was officially appointed as the Kristnes Postmaster on December 23, 1910. Jonas Samson died on November 25, 1920 at Kristnes and is buried in the Kristnes Cemetery.

Jonas Samson and Katrin Asmundsdottir's children would establish and distinguish themselves in both North Dakota and Saskatchewan. The oldest son Asmunder (John) Samson was a teacher in St. Thomas, ND in Pembina County in 1900. He went to law school and obtained his degree from the University of North Dakota in 1906. He practiced law in Lakota, ND. He twice ran for the office of States Attorney, once in Pierce County in 1908 and once in Nelson County in 1910. He had a law practice with his brother Christian in Lakota, ND in 1911. His law career was significant enough for a biographical sketch of his life to be included in the 1910 *History of North Dakota* by W.B. Hennessy.

Jonas and Katrin's daughter Svava went to Saskatchewan in 1903 with her father Jonas, her step-mother Sigridur, her step-sister Stephania, and her brother Christian. Svava was living in Jonas' household in the 1906 Saskatchewan census. Shortly after that she met and married Olafur Johnson, probably in 1906 where they took up residence in the Foam Lake district. They had a son they named Sigurjon (Johnny) Johnson in September 1906. Svava died at age 24 in 1907. Her son Johnny would be taken in by her father Jonas and step-mother Sigridur. Olafur then went to North Dakota and married Svava's cousin Kristbjorg Samson, daughter of Fridbjorn Samson and Jarprudur Gislasdottir.

Jonas and Katrin's son Christian went to Saskatchewan in 1903 with his father Jonas, his step-mother Sigridur, his step-sister Stephania, and his sister Svava. Christian was living in Jonas' household in the 1906 Saskatchewan census, as is his step-sister Stephania. Christian and Stephania had an illicit affair, the results of which was the birth of Jonas Samson in January 1909. Although, Christian had established a Homestead in Saskatchewan in 1907, he left Saskatchewan for North Dakota and enrolled in law school at the University of North Dakota. The child Jonas would be raised by his mother Stephania in the household of Jonas and Sigridur alongside Johnny Johnson. The child Jonas' true parentage would be a family secret for over 90 years. Christian got his law degree in 1911 and went into a law practice with his brother John Samson in Lakota, ND in 1911. Christian ran for States Attorney in Nelson County in 1912. By

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1915, Christian had migrated back to Saskatchewan and settled in Wynyard. He joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and served in World War I starting in 1916.

Jonas and Katrin's son Sam went to Saskatchewan in 1903, probably along with his father Jonas and family. However, he immediately struck out on his own making Canadian Homestead entries in Elfros and Wynyard, Saskatchewan. He joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and served in World War I starting in 1916.

Jonas and Katrin's son Kristlaugur (Lewis) made no effort to go to Saskatchewan. Rather he continued to work on farms around Gardar, ND and Edinburg, ND. In the 1915 North Dakota census, an "L. Samson" is found living in the household of Joe Simmons in the area of Tiber Township in Walsh County, ND. This household was right next door to the farms of Allan and James McLean. This would have placed him right across the road from the farm of Charles McLean who had a young daughter named Marie. In 1917, still using the name Kristlaugur, he registered for the World War I draft and he was working as a self-employed thresher in Lampton Township, Walsh County, ND with his home address at Edinburg, ND. Lewis Samson married Marie McLean in June 1919.

Jonas and Katrin's daughter Helga finished high school in 1911 in Fargo, ND and enrolled in the rural teachers program at North Dakota State University in Fargo in 1913. She graduated in about 1916 and was employed as a teacher in Lakota, ND. She also had taught school in Canada.

Like her sister Helga, Jonas and Katrin's daughter Elizabeth (our grandmother) also finished high school in Fargo, ND in 1911 and enrolled in the rural teachers program at North Dakota State University in Fargo in 1913. She taught school in Adams, ND in 1915. She wrote a letter in January 1915 to Marie McLean. The implications in the letter were:

- She was planning a drama play in which she, Laretta McLean and Lewie Samson are involved in.
- She is living in a house with her brother Lewie and a Joe Simmons.
- She was recently at a party where Harvey McLean danced quite a bit.
- She was pretty sleepy the next day at school.
- Marie McLean was living in Grand Forks, ND at the time and Elizabeth used to live there.

So this means that she and her future husband Harvey McLean were at least acquainted since 1915. According to the book *Reflections by the Quills*, Elizabeth was a teacher at the Harvard School District #2026 in about 1916 near Wynyard, Saskatchewan. This meant that she was living near her father Jonas and her brothers Christian and Sam probably in the years 1916/1917. Elizabeth was an amateur photographer at the time and her photo album is full of Saskatchewan Icelanders. Elizabeth returned to North Dakota in 1918 and may have taken her old job of teaching in Adams, ND. She married Harvey McLean in July 1919 one month after her brother Lewis Samson married Harvey's sister Marie McLean.

It appears that the distance between the North Dakota Samsons and the Saskatchewan Samsons would become a greater divide over time. A record of Jonas Samson crossing the

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Canadian border after a visit to Edinburg, ND was found dated October 24, 1912. He probably came to visit his North Dakota children. This was a period of time in which his oldest son John was known to have been diagnosed with tuberculosis in the middle of July 1912. Perhaps Jonas came to see his ill son. By the end of August 1912, John had been sent to a sanitarium in Colorado where he ultimately died just two days after Jonas crossed back into Canada.

The Samson children were now divided into a North Dakota group (Lewie, Helga, and Elizabeth) and a Canadian group (Jonas, Christian, and Sam). It is thought that after Elizabeth's return to North Dakota in 1918 that the two families did not meet up with one another for the next 100 years. I made the trek to Nanaimo, British Columbia in 2017 where I met up with Pat Samson, the daughter of the younger Jonas Samson (son of Christian Samson and Stephania Gillis). So this would be the first meeting of the divided Samson families after almost a century.

The history of the Icelandic Colony of Akra, ND is now commemorated at Icelandic State Park. Many of the old buildings from Akra have been moved to the park and meticulously restored. One of which is the Akra Town Hall which Jonas Samson worked on as a carpenter. Further, the Vidalin Church is still being maintained and stands in its original location with its adjacent cemetery.

The Icelandic Colony of Kristnes, Saskatchewan is not so fortunate. The old Kristnes School stands in as state of decay. The Kristnes Cemetery can still be found down the road, however, there are no grave markers for Jonas Samson and Sigirdur Palsdottir.

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