

Brief Biographies of Blilie and Gundersen Family Members

James W. Blilie, 30-Jan-2022

As I have been going through my parent's old photographs and documents, scanning them for archiving them and sharing them online, I see that biographical information about my ancestors is fragmentary and scattered through these photos and documents.

This is my attempt to gather this information in one place.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	3
Gundersen Family	6
Some Jon Gundersen Papers.....	8
Translation of the first letter	10
Translation of the second letter.....	12
Notes on these Letters, by Jan Bendiksen	12
Jon Gundersen, As Told by James Louis Blilie	21
Julie Antonette Gundersen, As Told by James Louis Blilie	26
Blilie Family	30
Blilie Family History as Told by Maurice Blilie.....	32
John Blilie's Wife, Ruth.....	36
Blilie Family Grave Site, Ogema, Wisconsin	37
Louis Blilie as Told by James Louis Blilie.....	43
The Birthday Club, As Told by James Louis Blilie.....	47
James Louis Blilie Obituary.....	48
A Visit to Blili, Norway, 1992 and 2012	53
Introduction	53
The Land	53
The Family	57
History and Information from The Narum's/Bliligård	58
Family Tree and Photos.....	58

The Blilie and Kelly Families in the United Kingdom	63
Harrington Family.....	64
Kotts/Gregerson Family	70
Kotts Graves, Baldwin Cemetery.....	75

List of Figures

Figure 1 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Tree.....	6
Figure 2 Elling and Marie Haanes, Antonette Jorgine Haanes' Parents, date unknown.....	7
Figure 3 Letter Number 1 from Parish Priest of Frosten, Page 1	8
Figure 4 Letter Number 1 from Parish Priest of Frosten, Page 2	9
Figure 5 Letter Number 2 from Parish Priest of at Flakstad, A.P. Grytnæs.....	11
Figure 6 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI	13
Figure 7 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI: Aerial View of Sunset Cemetery.....	14
Figure 8 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI	14
Figure 9 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site and Monument, Woodville, WI	15
Figure 10 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Jon Gundersen Headstone, 1851-1928.....	15
Figure 11 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Antonette Jorgine Gundersen Headstone, 1857-1935	16
Figure 12 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Josefine Gundersen Headstone, 1891-1867	16
Figure 13 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Sophie O. Gundersen Headstone	17
Figure 14 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Gustav Gundersen Headstone, 1881-1927	17
Figure 15 Receipt for the purchase of the cemetery plot in Woodville, Wisconsin, 1919	18
Figure 16 Jon Gundersen's US Naturalization Certificate, 1893	19
Figure 17 Gundersen and Bendiksen Family Tree.....	20
Figure 18 Map of Norway, Showing Location of Sandnessjøen	23
Figure 19 Scan of Gustav Gundersen's Signature from an Old Music Book	23
Figure 20 Antonette Jorgine Gundersen, 1934, Photo by Julie A. Blilie.....	24
Figure 21 Jon Gundersen, date unknown	24
Figure 22 Gustav Gundersen, date unknown.....	25
Figure 23 The Gundersen Girls: L-R Olga, Selma, Julie, Josie, date unknown (arranged by height!).....	25
Figure 24 Julie Antonette Gundersen and Her Students, circa 1910, Near Woodville, Wisconsin.....	29
Figure 25 Blilie Family Tree, Summary	30
Figure 26 The Blilie Brothers, circa 1940, St. Paul, Minnesota, Louis, John, and Maurice.....	30
Figure 27 The Hans Christian Blilie Family, circa 1888, Prentice, Wisconsin, Maurice, Hans, Louis, Regine, John	31
Figure 28 Maurice Blilie, 1952, Prentice, Wisconsin	34
Figure 29 John Blilie, 1952, Prentice, Wisconsin	34
Figure 30 John Blilie, Julie (Gundersen) Blilie, Josie Gundersen, and Maurice Blilie , 1952, Prentice, Wisconsin	35
Figure 31 Excerpt from the 1910 Census of Prentice, Wisconsin	36
Figure 32 Excerpt from the 1920 Census of Ogema, Wisconsin	37
Figure 33 Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI	37
Figure 34 Blilie Family and Ruth Peterson Grave Locations, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI	38
Figure 35 Hans Christian Blilie Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI	38
Figure 36 Regine (Arnsen) Blilie Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI.....	39
Figure 37 Maurice and John Blilie Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI.....	39
Figure 38 General Views of the Blilie Family Gravesites, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI.....	40

Figure 39 Ruth Victoria Peterson Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI.....	41
Figure 40 Josephine A. Peterson Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI	41
Figure 41 John and Christine Peterson Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI	42
Figure 42 General Views of the Peterson Family Gravesites, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI	42
Figure 43 Louis Blilie on a St. Paul Street Car (at Left)	44
Figure 44 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map	45
Figure 45 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map	46
Figure 46 Louis Blilie Head Stone, Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul, Minnesota	46
Figure 47 Julie Antonette Blilie Head Stone, Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul, Minnesota.....	47
Figure 48 James Louis Blilie (1923-2010) Head Stone, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota	49
Figure 49 Harriet Elizabeth Ventress Blilie (1935-2020) Head Stone, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota.....	50
Figure 50 Julie Elizabeth Blilie (1962-1997) Head Stone, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota	50
Figure 51 General Location, Blilie Graves, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota.....	51
Figure 52 General Location, Blilie Graves, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota.....	52
Figure 53 Blili in Relation to Oslo	54
Figure 54 Blili Area (Eina, Eina Fjord)	55
Figure 55 Blili and Eina	56
Figure 56 Two Groups in the Bliligård Doorway, 1870s? and 1992	59
Figure 57 Bliligård, 1992.....	60
Figure 58 Brief Blilie-Bendiksen-Narum Family Tree	60
Figure 59 Larger Blilie Family Tree	61
Figure 60 Family Groups Bliligård Doorway and Yard, 2012	62
Figure 61 Harrington Family Tree.....	64
Figure 62 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map	67
Figure 63 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map	68
Figure 64 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Ira W. Harrington Gravestone.....	68
Figure 65 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Selma M. Harrington Gravestone	69
Figure 66 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Alvin John Harrington Gravestone	69
Figure 67 Kotts, Gregerson, McKenney Family Tree	70
Figure 68 Gregerson Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI	71
Figure 69 Gregerson and Richards Family Grave Sites, Woodville, WI: Aerial View of Sunset Cemetery	72
Figure 70 Adolph and Ida Gregerson Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI.....	72
Figure 71 Adolph and Ida Gregerson Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI.....	73
Figure 72 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Adolph Gregerson Head Stone, 1879-1948	73
Figure 73 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Ida Gregerson Head Stone, 1883-1952.....	74
Figure 74 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Bert (1898 – 1975) and Olga Richards (1889 – 1974) Head Stone..	74
Figure 75 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Bert Richards (1898 – 1975) Veteran’s Medallion	74
Figure 76 Robert and Anita McKenney Grave Stones, Georgia Memorial Park, Marietta Georgia.....	75
Figure 77 Baldwin Cemetery Map.....	76

Figure 78 Benjamin Kotts Family Gravestone Group 77

Figure 79 Bernard (Bernie) Kotts Gravestone 77

Figure 80 Benjamin Kotts Gravestone..... 78

Figure 81 Hattie Kotts Gravestone 78

Figure 82 John, Ruth, and Marie Kotts Gravestone Group 79

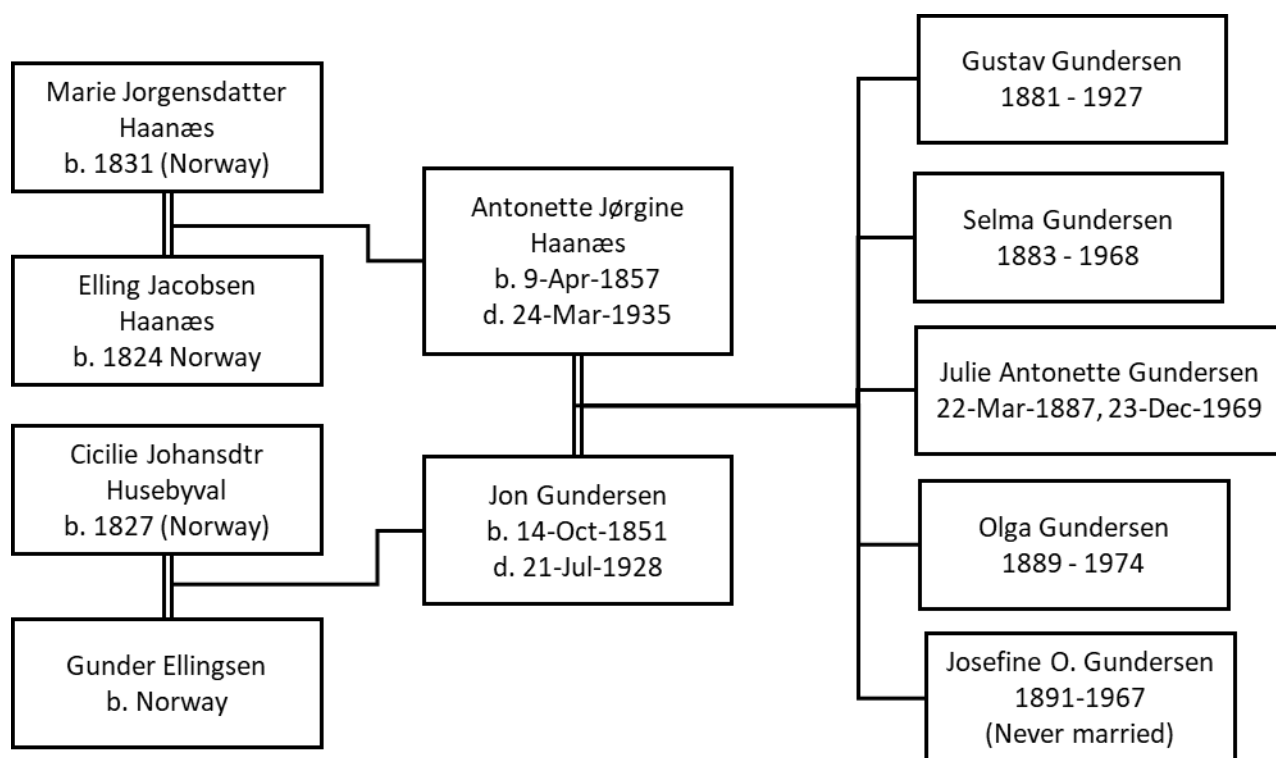
Figure 83 Ruth Kotts Gravestone (Bernie’s Sister) 79

Figure 84 John Kotts Gravestone (Bernie’s Brother)..... 80

Figure 85 Marie Kotts Gravestone (John’s Wife) 80

Gundersen Family

Figure 1 shows the nuclear family of Jon and Antonette Gundersen. Jon Gundersen and Antonette Jorgine Haanes emigrated to the USA in 1880. They married in Flakstad parish, 12th of July 1880, in Norway. They settled in western Wisconsin, in the towns of Baldwin and later Woodville. They are buried in Woodville.



Jon and Antonette were married 12-Jul-1880 in Norway
 They lived in Baldwin and Woodville, WI
 They both spoke Norwegian
 They emigrated to the USA in 1880

Figure 1 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Tree

Many old photos of the Blilie and Gundersen families can be seen here:

<http://www.berettaconsulting.com/barbarossa/BlilieOld%20Pho.html>

Many more old photos can be seen in Julie Antonette (Gundersen) Blilie's photo album:

http://www.berettaconsulting.com/barbarossa/PandJ-Family/0_Julie_Blilie_Album/Julie_Blilie_Album.html



Figure 2 Elling and Marie Haanes, Antonette Jorgine Haanes' Parents, date unknown

Figure 2 is a copy of a photo that I saw at the home of Jan Bendiksen, in Varberg, Sweden, in 1992. I took a photo of the photograph.

Some Jon Gundersen Papers

In a folder titled "Jon Gundersen" found at my mother's house in 2020 (and examined in 2022), I found several documents from Jon Gundersen and Julie Antonette Gundersen. Two were letters written by priests in Norway, explaining some family history and life events for Jon Gundersen and Antonette Jørgine Haanæs. These were prepared as part of their plan to emigrate to the USA in 1880.

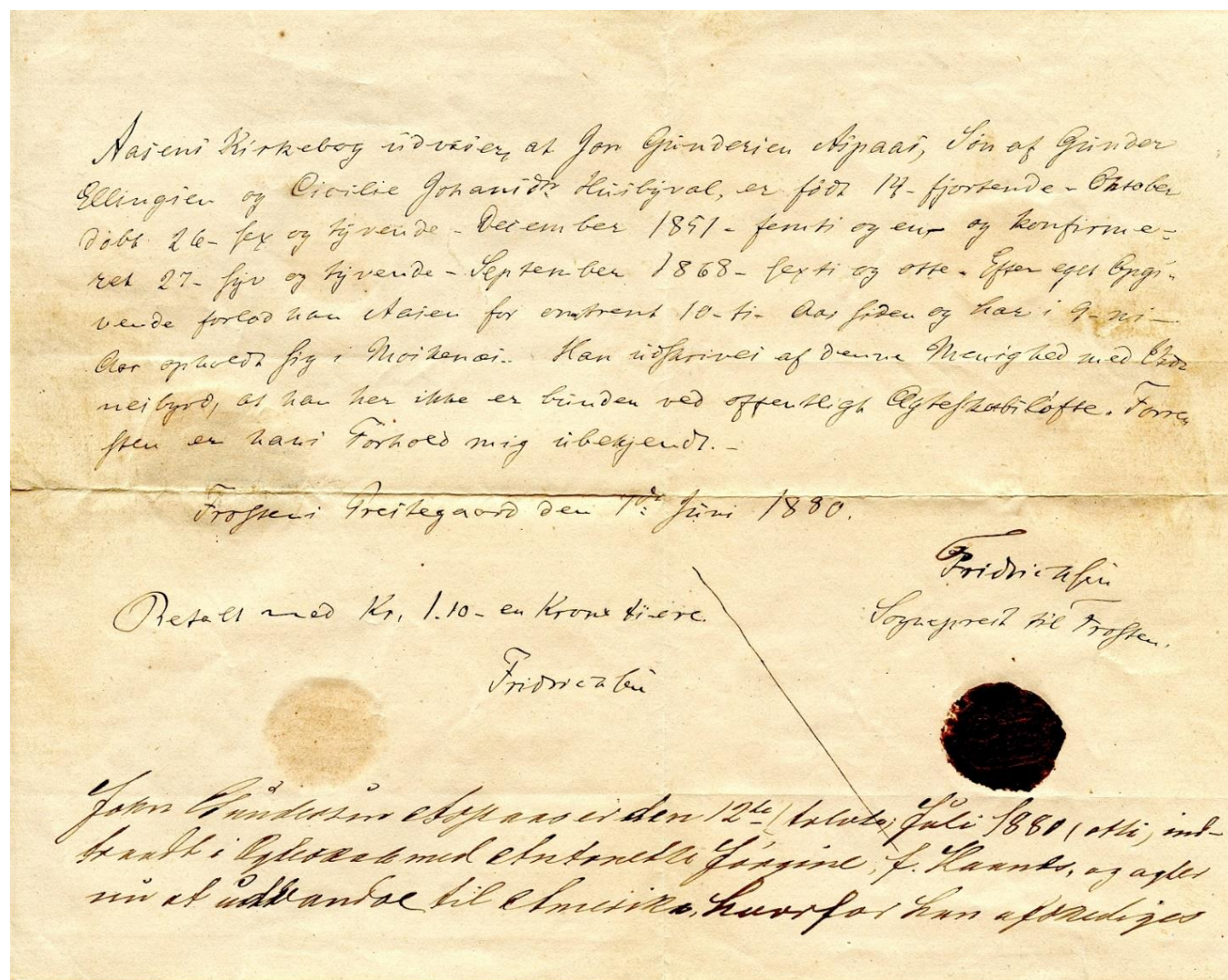


Figure 3 Letter Number 1 from Parish Priest of Frosten, Page 1

År da denne er udsendt, haas han har oplyst sig i anledning
9. m. d. 1880. Haas han har paataget sinde? Bane?

Kjøbenhavn den 12^{de} Juli 1880.

C. F. O. Nielsen,
Sognepræst i Helsingør,
og Helsingør.



Figure 4 Letter Number 1 from Parish Priest of Frosten, Page 2

Translation of the first letter

Translated by Jan Bendiksen (Varberg, Sweden, Jan is from Bødo in Norway), 2022

Part one

The parish register of Aasen parish shows that Jon Gundersen Aspaas, son of Gunder Ellingsen and Cicilie Johansdtr Husebyval were born 14th – fourteenth – of October, baptized 26th – twenty-sixth of December 1851 – fifty-one , and confirmed 27th – twenty-seventh – of September 1868 – sixty-eight. According to his own statement he left Aasen about 10 – ten – years ago and has for 9 – nine – years been living in Moskenæs. He is deregistered from this parish with a testimony that he is not bound here by any official promise of marriage. Otherwise, further circumstances are unknown to me.

Frosten vicarage, 7th of June 1880

Fridrichsen

Parish priest of Frosten

Payed with Kr 1,10 – en Krone ti øre

Fridrichsen

Part two (starts on page 1, ends on page 2)

John Gundersen Aspaas has on July 12th (twelft) 1880 (eighty) married Antonette Jørgine, born Haanæs, and is now going to emigrate to America, which is why he is deregistered from this parish, where he has been staying for about 9 – nine – years. May the Lord follow him on his future career !

Flakstad, 12th of July 1880

A.P. Grytnæs [seal shows A.P.G.]

Parish priest of Flakstad and

Moskenes

Ifølge Høiested Parvejilds skrift-
 lags Udvisende, er skrevet the følgende
 Gudsord Biskoppen i Andenore den 9^{de} m-
 ende, April 1857, sig og sendt af Biskop
 af Helsinghus, Helsinghus og Helsinghus
 Gudsord, Konfirmand i Helsinghus
 til Høiested den 30^{de}, Meddelelse Juni 1852 og
 sig og skrevet Sammenlæs den 12^{de}, 1850, Juli
 1850, (offic). Da han nu med sin Elsker
 Gudsord og sig og skrevet at udvandre til
 Amerika, og skrevet sin Gudsord og skrevet
 Gudsord og skrevet har været i Helsinghus, med sin
 om, at Herren vil Gudsord med sin Elsker
 og skrevet.

Høiested den 12^{de} Juli 1850.

Skrevet Nr. 1. og.

et. J. Christensen.

et. J. Christensen,
 Synepast.



Figure 5 Letter Number 2 from Parish Priest of at Flakstad, A.P. Grytnæs

Translation of the second letter

Translated by Jan Bendiksen (Varberg, Sweden, Jan is from Bødo in Norway), 2022

According to the register of Flakstad clerical district Antonette Jørgine was born on Giskø in Sundmøre on the 9th (ninth) of April 1857 (fifty seven) by her parents Lighthouse keeper Elling Haanæs and wife Marie Jørgensdatter, confirmed at Moskenes in Flakstad the 30th (thirtieth) of June 1872 (seventy-two), and married in the same place the 12th (twelfth) of July 1880 (eighty). As she now with her husband John Gundersen Aspaas intends to emigrate to America, she is deregistered from this parish where her conduct has been irreproachable, with a wish that the Lord will follow her with his mercy and peace.

Flakstad the 12th of July 1880

A.P. Grytnæs
Parish priest

Payed Kr 1,0 (?)

A.P. Grytnæs

Notes on these Letters, by Jan Bendiksen

A parish priest may sign using either Flakstad or Moskenæs, but never Aanstad. Moskenes is a parish within the clerical district Flakstad.

Aspaas is the name of a farm. The common rule for surnames was to use patronymics, but the farmers could take the name of the farm as surnames, and sometimes they used both patronymics and farm names [as in the Blilies of Bliligård], the latter being like an address part of his name.

In Letter Number 1 there is valuable information about Jon Gundersen's parents Gunder Ellingsen and Cecilia Johansdatter. After looking in some parish registers I have found that they were married January 21, 1847 and that Gunder's father was Elling Hansen from Aspaas and Cecilia's father was Johan Olaus Johannesen from Hofvedsvold. So far all places are in the same area in Trøndelag.

Give me some time and I'll probably be able to find more ancestors.

The graves of the Gundersen Family are in the Sunset Cemetery, associated with Zion Lutheran Church, both in the town of Woodville, Wisconsin. Refer to Figure 6 through Figure 14. Maps of the graveyard can be viewed at Zion Lutheran Church.

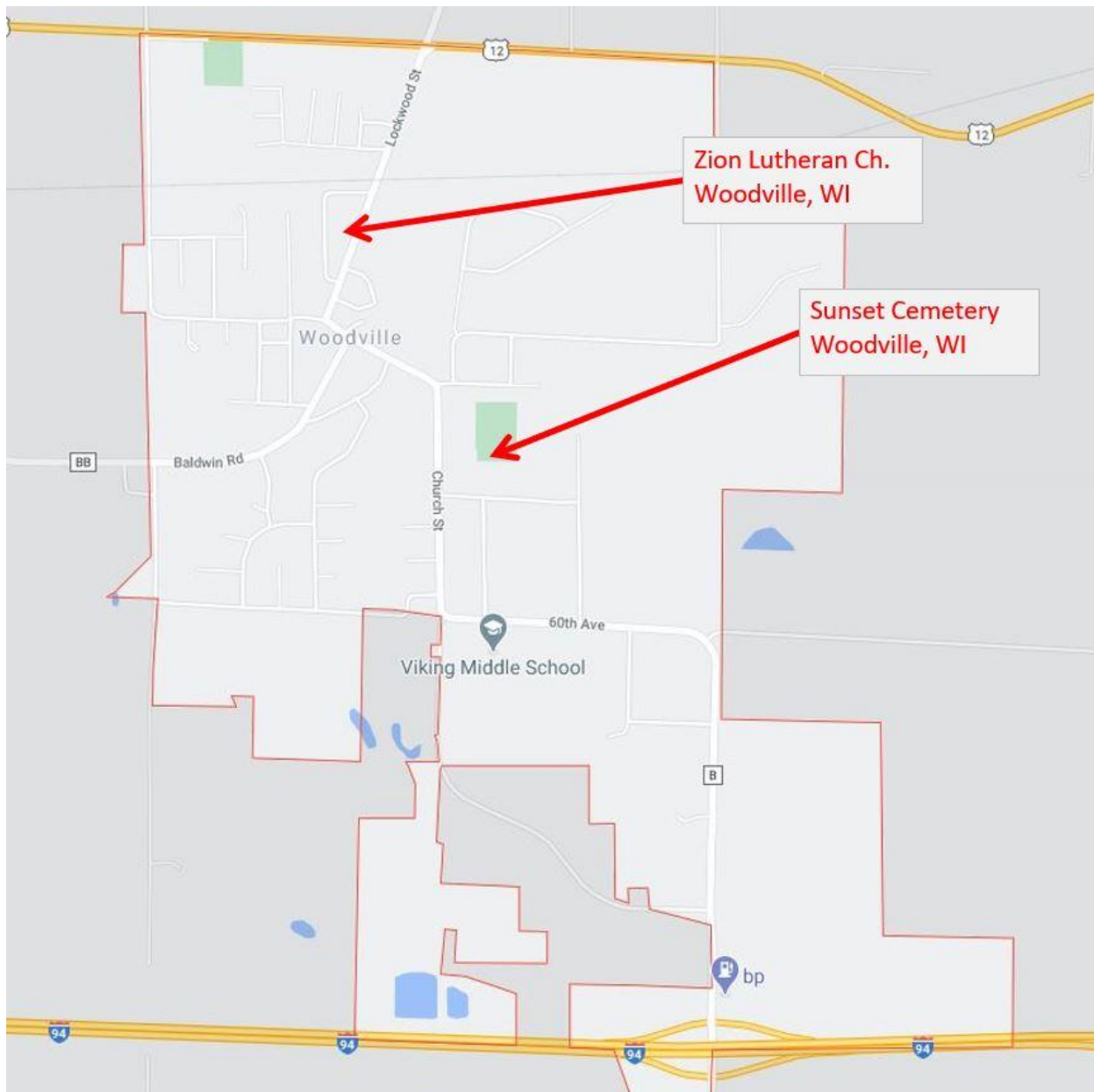


Figure 6 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI



Figure 7 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI: Aerial View of Sunset Cemetery



Figure 8 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI



Figure 9 Jon and Antonette Gundersen Family Grave Site and Monument, Woodville, WI



Figure 10 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Jon Gundersen Headstone, 1851-1928



Figure 11 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Antonette Jorgine Gundersen Headstone, 1857-1935



Figure 12 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Josefina Gundersen Headstone, 1891-1967



Figure 13 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Sophie O. Gundersen Headstone

I assume Sophia O. Gundersen was Gustav's wife, based on the name and dates.



Figure 14 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Gustav Gundersen Headstone, 1881-1927

Figure 15, below, is the purchase receipt for the cemetery plot at Sunset Cemetery in Woodville, Wisconsin, bought by Jon Gundersen for \$10.00 in 1919.

Figure 16, below, is Jon Gundersen's US Naturalization certificate, dated 1893.

Both of these were found in the "Jon Gundersen" file at my mother's home in 2020.

THE Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Cemetery Association of the Village of Woodville, County of St. Croix and State of Wisconsin, Grantor, hereby sell and convey unto *John Jensen* Grantee, of St. Croix County Wisconsin, for the sum of *\$10.00* Dollars, in hand paid, the following piece and parcel of land, situated in said Cemetery, in the Town of Baldwin, County of St. Croix and State of Wisconsin, to-wit: Lot No. *8* in Block No. *1* of said Cemetery, according to the plat thereof recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds in and for said County of St. Croix and State of Wisconsin, said real estate herein described and conveyed, being sold and conveyed by the said party of the first part to the said party of the second part for burial purposes only and no other, together with all the right, title and interest of the said party of the first part therein.

In witness whereof, we, the said Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Cemetery Association has caused this instrument to be signed by its President and Secretary, the day and year first above written.

OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH CEMETERY ASSOCIATION.

In the presence of

Clara Hanson
George S. Hanson

By *J. C. Johnson* President
A. J. Hanson Secretary

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }
COUNTY OF ST. CROIX, } ss.

Personally came before me this *8* day of *February* A. D. 19*09*.
J. C. Johnson President, and *A. J. Hanson* Secretary
of the Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Cemetery Association, to me known to be the same persons who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same.

Edw. Hand

Notary Public St. Croix Co., Wis.

Figure 15 Receipt for the purchase of the cemetery plot in Woodville, Wisconsin, 1919

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
ST. CROIX COUNTY.



CIRCUIT COURT,
EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT.

Sept TERM A. D. 189*8*

Be it Remembered, That on this *26th* day of *September*

in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety *three*, and of the Independence of the United States *One Hundred Seventeen*

, an alien being a free white person, appeared before the *Circuit* Court of the State of Wisconsin, for St. Croix County, and applied to the Court to be admitted to become a CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES; and the said *John Gundersen*

having, more than two years ago, made declaration of his intended application as aforesaid, in the manner and form prescribed in an Act of Congress entitled "An Act to establish a uniform rule of Naturalization, and to repeal the Acts heretofore passed on the subject;" and the Court being satisfied by the testimony of

James R. Overoig and Elias R. Kuipers, citizens of the United States, that the said

John Gundersen has resided within the United States

for the continued term of five years last past, and within the State of Wisconsin one year at least; and that during that time he has behaved as a man of good moral character, attached to the principles of the

Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same; and the said applicant declaring on oath before the Court that he will support the Constitution of the United States,

and that he doth absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to every foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatsoever, and particularly to *Oscar II King*

of Norway and Sweden, whereof he was before a subject.

Thereupon the Court admitted the said *John Gundersen* to become a citizen of the United States.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto affixed my hand and the

Seal of said Court, at Hudson, this *26th*

day of *September*, in the year of our Lord one

thousand eight hundred and ninety *three*

and of the Independence of the United States the *one*

Hundred Seventeenth

W. E. M. B. A. T. E. R.

Clerk of Court.



STATE OF WISCONSIN, } ss.
ST. CROIX COUNTY.

I, *W. E. M. B. A. T. E. R.* Clerk of the

Circuit Court in and for said County, do hereby CERTIFY that I have compared the above and foregoing with

Figure 16 Jon Gundersen's US Naturalization Certificate, 1893

Jon and Antonette Gundersen had one son, Gustav, the first-born, and four daughters: Selma (born 1884), Julie Antonette (born 22-Mar-1887), Olga (born 1889), and Josephine (Josie, born 1891). These were “the Gundersen girls”.

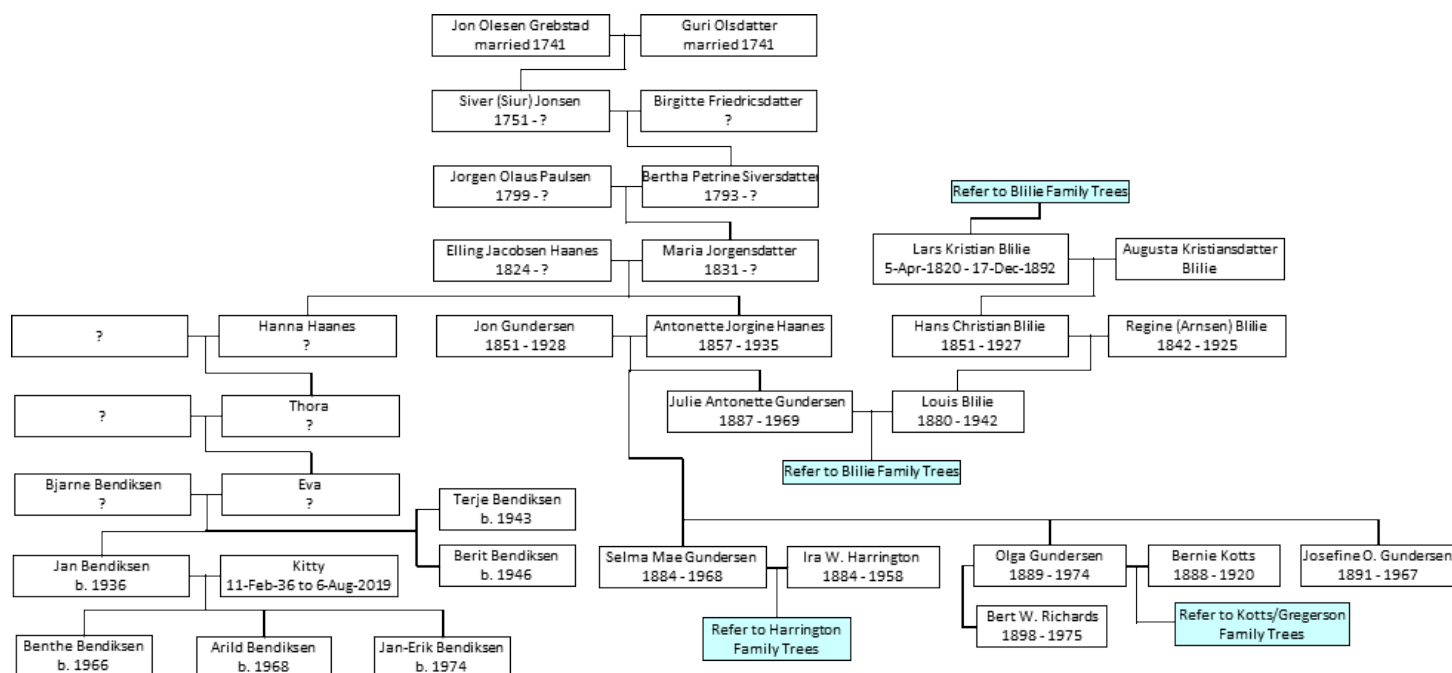


Figure 17 Gundersen and Bendiksen Family Tree

Figure 17 shows the relationship between the Haanes family (and their ancestors) and the Gundersen and Bendiksen families. The Bendiksens are from Norway and live in Sweden.

Selma married Ira W. Harrington circa 1908. Refer to the Harrington Family section, below.

Julie A. Gundersen was trained as a teacher and taught in a one-room schoolhouse near Woodville, WI, from circa 1906 to circa 1914. She eventually met Louis Blilie (see the Blilie Family section), in St. Paul, Minnesota (see the Louis Blilie section), where Louis worked as a streetcar conductor. They married in 1915. Julie’s sisters Josephine (669 Thomas Street on a 1910 postcard), Selma (1444 Sherburne Avenue on a 1914 postcard), and Olga lived in St. Paul. See the Blilie Family section.

Olga Gundersen married (circa 1915?¹) Bernie Kotts who died young of tuberculosis (Olga told Robert Gregerson this). They had two daughters: Marjorie (born 1916 in Baldwin, WI, died 2004) and Anita, (b. 1919, d. 1995). Olga then married Bert Richards of Glenwood City, WI, some time after 1942². Refer to the Kotts/Richards Family section.

¹ 1910 census of Baldwin, Wisconsin shows Bernie aged 21 as a single son of Benjamin H. Kotts (age 62) and Hattie Kotts (age 58).

² 1930 census on Woodville, Wisconsin shows Olga Kotts, age 41, as “Housekeeper” and her daughters Marjorie (age 14) and Anita (age 11) as her daughters, along with Vallea (daughter age 7) “Braunoe” listed as “Step-son” (age 12), all in Bert

Jon Gundersen, As Told by James Louis Blilie

James Louis Blilie, 18-Jan-1993, Isanti, Minnesota:

Here is what little I “know” about Jon Gundersen, my maternal grandfather, and his origins. He died when I was about 4 or 5 years old, so I know virtually nothing first-hand. What I do know is from listening to my mother and her sisters talk. They talked a lot about their childhood, their parents, relatives, etc. Unfortunately, I did not pay much attention. There are some photographs, and some physical “evidence” such as a violin now in my possession³, that I played (very poorly) when in school. Some of the English language document I have spell his name “John”.

Jon Gundersen was a blacksmith, a hard and heavy trade. But he also made violins and jewelry, objects that require delicate skill and artistry. Among the jewelry items were small crosses made of gold and mother-of-pearl, and tiny “jack knives” having blades made of steel, “end caps” of gold, and slides [scales] of mother-of-pearl. I had (can’t find) one of these knives that was only about 1 inch long (2.5cm). My sisters each have one of the crosses. I also have a toy hammer and a small anvil (about 8 inches / 20cm) he made from a piece railroad rail for Gustav. It is a real anvil, even if small, and I use it⁴.

I have reason to believe that he was from Trondheim (they pronounced it “Tronhjem”) or that area, because the tops [bellies] of the violins were made, I was told many times, from the wood of very old pews taken from the Trondheim Dom Kirke (cathedral), that wood being available when the old pews were replaced with new ones. That wood is (I almost wrote “was”) very stable. It might be pine, but it looks like spruce to me. The sides, bottoms [backs], and necks of the violins are of curly maple, and the fingerboards ebony.

How and where my grandfather, Jon, and my grandmother, Antonette, met and married is unknown to me, but I believe they came to America as husband and wife. I heard much talk about “Tronhjem”, so I am sure there is some connection.⁵

Richards’ (age 33) household. 1940 census shows Olga Kotts listed as “Housekeeper” (age 50) and Vallea Mae (age 17 as daughter. By then the Kotts daughters. Aged 24 and 21 had left home. Bert’s service record lists him as widower without dependents on 4-Sep-1942. Note that census records from 1950 onwards are not available to the public (only to the person listed or their heirs).

³ James W. Blilie: I now own this violin and have restored it to a playing condition.

⁴ James W. Blilie: I now have this anvil; and I use it too.

⁵ Antonette Jorgine Haanes (Gundersen) was born 9-Apr-1857, in Herø, on the west coast of Norway, daughter of Elling Jacobsen Haanes. They soon (she was quite young) moved to the Lofoten Islands. (Info from Jan Bendiksen from Dec 1988).

When my aunt Josefine (Josie) was 6 years old, Jon and Antonette Gundersen returned to Norway on a visit and they took her [Josie] with them. As Josie was born in about 1891⁶, that would have made it about 1897. My mother, her brother Gustav, and her sisters Selma and Olga, were left in the care of Aunt Lizzie, and they didn't like it a bit! Apparently Aunt Lizzie was very strict with them. She looks very stern in a photograph we have of her. I think Lizzie was Jon's sister.

I remember Aunt Josie relating pleasant memories about visiting a place that sounded to me like "sandesein" or "sognessand". [Confirmed by Jan Bendisken as [Sandnessjøen](#), 2021.] I can't find it on a map. But apparently there were relatives there.

I think my mother said that her parents came by ship to Montreal, and overland from there.

I am reasonably sure that Jon, after he and Antonette were settled in America (Woodville, Wisconsin), brought his parents over to America. So there may not be much connection remaining in Norway.

And that is all I know.

⁶ Josie was born in 1891 according to her headstone. She is listed as 18 years old on the 1910 census in Baldwin Wisconsin, taken 7 and 9 May 1910.



Figure 18 Map of Norway, Showing Location of Sandnessjøen

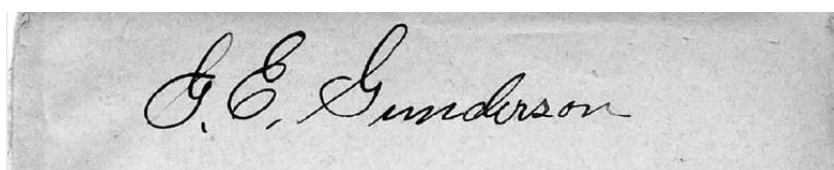


Figure 19 Scan of Gustav Gundersen's Signature from an Old Music Book



Figure 20 Antonette Jorgine Gundersen, 1934, Photo by Julie A. Blilie

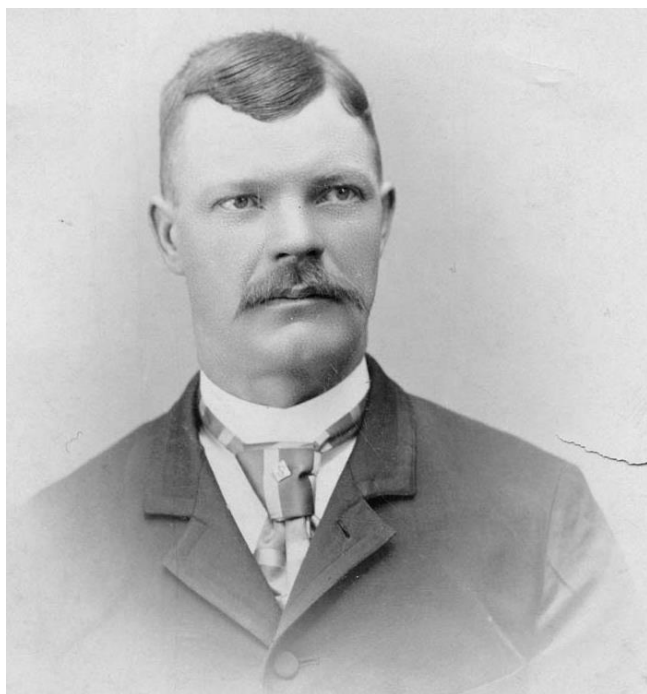


Figure 21 Jon Gundersen, date unknown



Figure 22 Gustav Gundersen, date unknown



Figure 23 The Gundersen Girls: L-R Olga, Selma, Julie, Josie, date unknown (arranged by height!)

Note from James L. Blilie, 28-Jun-1993, Isanti, Minnesota:

The following is from the back of a checking deposit slip that Lorraine [(Blilie) Polanek] sent to me in June 1993. It contains some information on my maternal grandparents. [James W. Blilie, I presume this deposit slip came from Julie Antonette (Gundersen) Blilie.]:

Jon Gundersen. Born in Åsen (Aasen), near Trondheim, October 14, 1851. His father was Gunder Aaspos. Died July 21, 1928.

Antonette Jorgine Haanes. Born April 9, 1857 in Synmor (sp?) – moved to Lofoten at 4 years of age. Died March 24, 1935

Jon and Antonette were married in 1880

Wallen – grandpa's parents [I don't know what this last item in the list means]

James L. Blilie
24780 Tulip Street
Isanti, Minnesota
June 28, 1993

Julie Antonette Gundersen, As Told by James Louis Blilie

Julie Gundersen was my paternal grandmother. Below are some notes my father, James Louis Blilie wrote about her, in the late 1990s.

It was my intention when starting this file to write pretty much only about my mother, Julie Antonette Gundersen; but somehow I have drifted off course and brought in a number of other people associated with her, most of whom are also part of our family history.

Julie Antonette Gundersen was born on March 22, 1887 (exactly six and one-half years after Louis Blilie). Her named was pronounced as “Julia”, because the final letter, “e” in this case, was customarily pronounced at that time in the northern European languages. She was born in Woodville, Wisconsin. Her parents were Jon and Antonette Gunderson, of which more elsewhere.

She was the fourth child born to Jon and Antonette. Gustav was the first and Selma the second. The third was a girl they named Julie. When this Julie was still a baby, the house burned down,

and the baby was killed. Antonette's hand was badly burned in attempting to save the baby from the burning house. So, she gave the next baby, who was also a girl, the name Julie.

Doctors weren't too highly qualified in those days, and the closest one they found merely bound Antonette's fingers together in a single bandage on each hand. Jon thought that this would cause the fingers to be bound together when healing would occur, so he took off the bandages, and put some clean cotton between the fingers, and put another bandage around the four fingers of both hands. This was successful, and the fingers healed perfectly.

The next baby was another girl, and she was named Olga. The last baby of Antonette and Jon was one more girl, and they named her Josefine. Gustav, usually called Gust, and the four remaining girls grew to adulthood. Although Gust was alive until I was about two years old, he died when I was too young to remember. The cause was said to be "stomach ulcers," but I suspect, considering the doctor skill in Woodville, Wisconsin, that perhaps it was really cancer.

Before getting into more about my mother, Julie, I will write a little about the other Gunderson siblings.

Gust helped his father in the blacksmith shop, learning the trade, and then went to Arizona, (I don't know what city or town) where he set up his blacksmith shop. Apparently he did not stay there long, for he came back to Woodville, and married Sophie Wallesverde (not sure of spelling) which her family later changed to Walsworth. Gust and Sophie had no children of their own, and adopted three children born to Sophies brother and his wife, both of whom had died. The three were Charles, Helen, and Thomas. I don't know where Helen and Tommy went, but Charles eventually became a guard for Sperry Univac, where I worked after retiring from the Air Force. I saw him fairly often then, but had not really known him before that, and really saw little of him.

We saw Aunt Sophie very often, for she continued to live in Woodville after Gust's death.

Selma married Ira Harrington, mentioned above, and lived in St. Paul (1099 Edmund as I recall). Their offspring were: Alvin (who died at the age of about three of some childhood disease.), Walter, Milford, Ira Jr., and Winnifred who was born on April 1, 1924. Ira had been in the U.S. Army cavalry, but separated from the Army and went to work for the Minneapolis/St. Paul streetcar company.

Olga married Bernard (Bernie) Kotts. Bernie and Olga produced Marjorie and Anita. Marjorie is about the same age as my sister Antonette, and Anita is about the same age as my sister Lorraine.

Bernie operated a small electric power generating station at a local river (my guess is the Eau Galle). Bernie contracted tuberculosis, as many did in those days, and died from it. After some time, Olga met Bert Richards, whose wife had died. He had two children also: Bruno (Buddy) and Vallea. Olga and Bert married. Bert was primarily a farmer, but also worked with dynamite and other explosives.

Josefine (my Aunt Josie) never married. But she always lived near us, and seemed much like a member of the family.

Back to Julie Gunderson. Her parents, as you know, immigrated to America around 1880, or perhaps a bit earlier. The ship from Norway took them to Montreal, from whence they crossed the St. Lawrence into the United States, and soon made their way to Wisconsin.

Everybody in and near Woodville spoke Norwegian or Swedish, and all the children spoke one of those languages - not English. As in the case of my father, Louis Blilie, they started school not knowing English. It was, as was typical in those days and places, a one-room school, with one teacher, Mr._____ (I might remember his name - I heard it often from my mother). As was typical, there were only 10 grades, and all students were in the same room. The older ones often helped the younger. Somehow, they all learned English and much more. Julie finished 10th grade on schedule - at the age of 16. The teacher urged her, another girl, and a boy to enroll in the Normal School at River Falls (now the University of Wisconsin, River Falls). All three did enroll. Julie graduated in 1905 at the age of 18, and soon taught in another one-room school (we have a photo of her by the schoolhouse with her students. I met some of them many years later.) This school was in Tidalen, (pronounced tee-dallen) near Woodville. She later taught in another one-room school near Grantsburg, Wisconsin. In a while she sought greener grass and moved to St. Paul.



Figure 24 Julie Antonette Gundersen and Her Students, circa 1910, Near Woodville, Wisconsin

One of the places she worked after arriving in St. Paul was for the producers of the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory.

One day she went with Selma to a social affair of some of the employees of the streetcar. Louis Blilie was there as well as a number of other unmarried men. Julie, as she told me more than once, pointed to Louis and said to Selma, "I want that one!" And that is the way it worked out. They were married in June, 1915.

Their offspring were Antonette Regine (29 April 1916). Lorraine Jeanette [French names were popular this soon after World War 1] (12 June 1920), and James Louis [me] (November 16, 1923).

Blilie Family

Hans Christian Blilie emigrated from Norway to the US in September 1880. He and his wife, Regine (Arnsen) Blilie first stopped in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, before moving north to farm in Ogema, Wisconsin, some time before 1890.

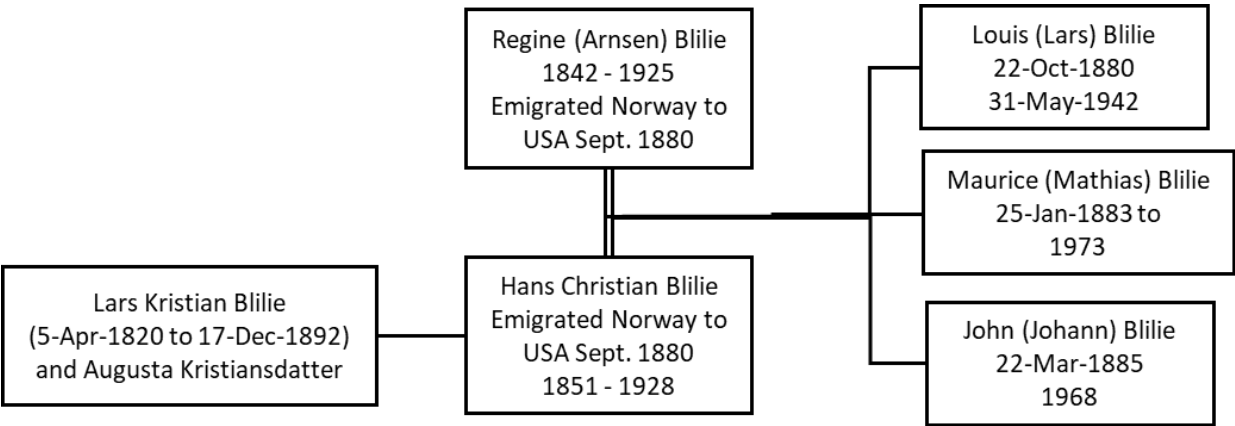


Figure 25 Blilie Family Tree, Summary



Figure 26 The Blilie Brothers, circa 1940, St. Paul, Minnesota, Louis, John, and Maurice



Figure 27 The Hans Christian Blilie Family, circa 1888, Prentice, Wisconsin, Maurice, Hans, Louis, Regine, John

Blilie Family History as Told by Maurice Blilie

In the summer of 1971, I [James Louis Blilie] asked my father's brother Maurice Blilie, to write what he could recall of the history of the Blilie family. My father, Louis Blilie, had died in 1942. Maurice was 88 years old at this time, and was living in a nursing home in Phillips, Wisconsin. Maurice and John, the third of the Blilie brothers, had lived near Prentice, Wisconsin, all of their lives. John had died in 1969, at the age of 85. Maurice lived to be 91 years old. He wrote what follows. I have inserted a few comments [now footnotes, JWB], and they are in italics, as is this introduction.
-- James Louis Blilie, 12-Dec-1987

My father, Hans Christian Blilie, was born in a place they call Totan⁷ that is a particular farm. There [Norway] a farm is a gård [or gaard]. It is pronounced "gord". That was my grandfather's farm. My father worked there until he was old enough to go out. Then he was a sailor for 17 years, and the last few years was the captain of the boat he sailed. My father's brother Mathias Blilie was a Stortingsman, the same as a U. S. Senator here.⁸ He never wrote about anything. He has several children, but we never heard from them, so we know nothing [about them].

Father was married in Norway to my mother, and she was born in Norway in a place called Biri. She worked in a dairy where they made butter and cheese, so she could make all kinds of cheese.

And then they decided to go to America [Sept. 1880], so they landed at LaCrosse, Wisconsin.⁹ My father's sister¹⁰ was in LaCrosse, and he worked in the store until he quit the store business. His [referring to his brother in law, his sister's husband] name was Fjelstad¹¹ that had the store. He was our uncle, and he worked in the State Bank of LaCrosse until he was 93 years old [1933].

Louis Blilie was born in LaCrosse on September 22, 1880¹², and I was also born there, on January 25, 1883. We had a sister that was the oldest. Her name was Mary Janet, but she died

⁷ James W. Blilie: Hans Christian Blilie was born and raised at Bliligård, which is in the traditional region of Østre Toten, Oppland, north and east of Oslo. See my trip to Blili, Norway, below.

⁸ James Louis Blilie: I have read that the first "parliaments" were patterned after the "Thing" or "Ting" that was first created in Iceland way back in the 1100s or 1200s. [James W. Blilie: "Stor[e]" means great in Norwegian. So the Storting is the great thing.]

⁹ James Louis Blilie: In Hans Christian Blilie's naturalization application he attests that he first landed in New York. His naturalization date was 6-Nov-1889. He landed at New York in Sept. 1880.

¹⁰ Karen Augusta (Blilie) Fjelstad, 1843 – 12-May-1910

¹¹ James W. Blilie: I have identified him as Andrew (born Anders) Fjelstad (born 1840 in Norway per the census) in the 1930 Census of LaCrosse WI. Sons: John Fjelstad, born circa 1863 (in Norway) and Axel born circa 1887 in Wisconsin.

¹² According to Louis Blilie's draft registration card of 12-Sep-1918, he was born 22-Oct-1880. Address listed as 204d St. Anthony, St. Paul, MN. 1900 census in Ogema, WI, lists his birth as Oct. 1880.

when she was 3 years old and she was buried at LaCrosse. John [Maurice's brother] was born in the town of Ogema¹³, and lived in Price County [Wisconsin] all his life.¹⁴

Father and a neighbor bought land that joined together here in Price County. It [there] was not much work to get then, but he got work at a lumber yard in Prentice. He was a piler boss there, and they had a big saw mill there. After a few years he was Chairman of the town of Ogema, and he was Chairman for 16 years. He was also a member of the County Board [Price County, Wisconsin], and stayed on the farm until he died.¹⁵

My mother was Regena Arnsen before she was married. She had one brother in LaCrosse, but he died in LaCrosse, and she [Regene's brother's wife] went to North Dakota and had a farm there. She [Regena's sister in law] had three boys. Paul Fasting was the oldest, and he was an engineer on the trains. Another was a barber. And another one was a carpenter and worked for us¹⁶ quite a bit and was a ball player with the LaCrosse team. He was the catcher. All three are dead now.

My mother had two brothers in Norway, and they are all dead now. So I am the only one left now. That is all I know about it.

¹³ Per John Blilie's draft registration, 12-Sep-1918, he was born 22-Mar-1885, his address is listed as Route D, #2, Ogema, WI. John is buried in Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI. Maurice's birth is listed in the 1900 Ogema census as Jan 1883. He was born 25-Jan-1883.

¹⁴ James W. Blilie: John Married Ruth some time before 1920. She is listed in the Louis Blilie household as daughter in law in the 1920 census. James L. Blilie: Maurice never married. John married Ruth, but Ruth died in childbirth of what would have been their first child. He never remarried.

¹⁵ James L. Blilie: Which must have been around 1921

¹⁶ James L. Blilie: Maurice and John had a construction business and built houses, country schools, etc.



Figure 28 Maurice Blilie, 1952, Prentice, Wisconsin



Figure 29 John Blilie, 1952, Prentice, Wisconsin



Figure 30 John Blilie, Julie (Gundersen) Blilie, Josie Gundersen, and Maurice Blilie , 1952, Prentice, Wisconsin

John Blilie's Wife, Ruth

Based on US census records for Prentice, Wisconsin in 1910 and Ogema, Wisconsin in 1920, and the headstone in Hillside Cemetery in Ogema, Wisconsin my great Uncle John Blilie married Ruth Victoria Peterson, daughter of Daughter of John Peterson and Kristina Peterson of Prentice Wisconsin (both were born in Sweden), some time before 1920. She died in childbirth of what would have been their first child in 1921. John never remarried. She was listed as daughter of John and Kristina Peterson in the 1910 US census for Prentice, Wisconsin, age 12, on 21-Apr-1910. She was listed as daughter in law on the 1920 Ogema, Wisconsin US census age 21, on 20-Jan-1920. So her birthdate was between 21-Jan-1898 and 21-Apr-1898. Both censuses list her parents as born in Sweden. I searched all of Wisconsin for Ruths and she is the only fit and very good one.

I located her gravestone and those of her sister Josephine A. Peterson and her parents, John and Christine Peterson (she was Kristine in earlier census records) in the Hillside Cemetery.

42	46	—	Audry L	Daughter	F	W	1/2	S			Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Michigan
		—	Peterson John	Head	M	W	47	M	23		Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish
		—	Kristina	Wife	wf.	F	W	44	M	23	9	7	Swed-Swedish
		—	Josephine	Daughter	F	W	22	S			Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish
		—	Hilda	Daughter	F	W	16	S			Wisconsin	Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish
		—	Velma G	Daughter	F	W	14	S			Wisconsin	Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish
		—	Ruth V	Daughter	F	W	12	S			Wisconsin	Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish
		—	Adolph	Son	M	W	5	S			Wisconsin	Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish
		—	Alice	Daughter	F	W	1/2	S			Wisconsin	Swed-Swedish	Swed-Swedish

—	Audry L	Daughter	F	W	1/2	S			
—	Peterson John	Head	M	W	47	M	23		
—	Kristina	Wife	wf.	F	W	44	M	23	
—	Josephine	Daughter	F	W	22	S			
—	Hilda	Daughter	F	W	16	S			
—	Velma G	Daughter	F	W	14	S			
—	Ruth V	Daughter	F	W	12	S			
—	Adolph	Son	M	W	5	S			
—	Alice	Daughter	F	W	1/2	S			

Figure 31 Excerpt from the 1910 Census of Prentice, Wisconsin

Line	Name	Relationship	Sex	Age	Birth	Death	Marriage	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Place of Burial
71	Blilie B. C.	Head	M	68	1880	1980		Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
72	Regina	Wife	F	77	1880	1980		Norway	Norway	Norway
73	Maurice	Son	M	34				Norway	Norway	Norway
74	John	Son	M	34				Norway	Norway	Norway
75	Ruth	Daughter-in-law	F	31				Norway	Norway	Norway
80	Johnson John G.	Head	M	59	1880	1980		Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
81	Christine	Wife	F	55	1880	1980		Sweden	Sweden	Sweden

Line	Name	Relationship	Sex	Age	Birth	Death	Marriage	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Place of Burial
71	Blilie B. C.	Head	M	68	1880	1980		Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
72	Regina	Wife	F	77	1880	1980		Norway	Norway	Norway
73	Maurice	Son	M	34				Norway	Norway	Norway
74	John	Son	M	34				Norway	Norway	Norway
75	Ruth	Daughter-in-law	F	31				Norway	Norway	Norway
80	Johnson John G.	Head	M	59	1880	1980		Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
81	Christine	Wife	F	55	1880	1980		Sweden	Sweden	Sweden

Figure 32 Excerpt from the 1920 Census of Ogema, Wisconsin

Blilie Family Grave Site, Ogema, Wisconsin

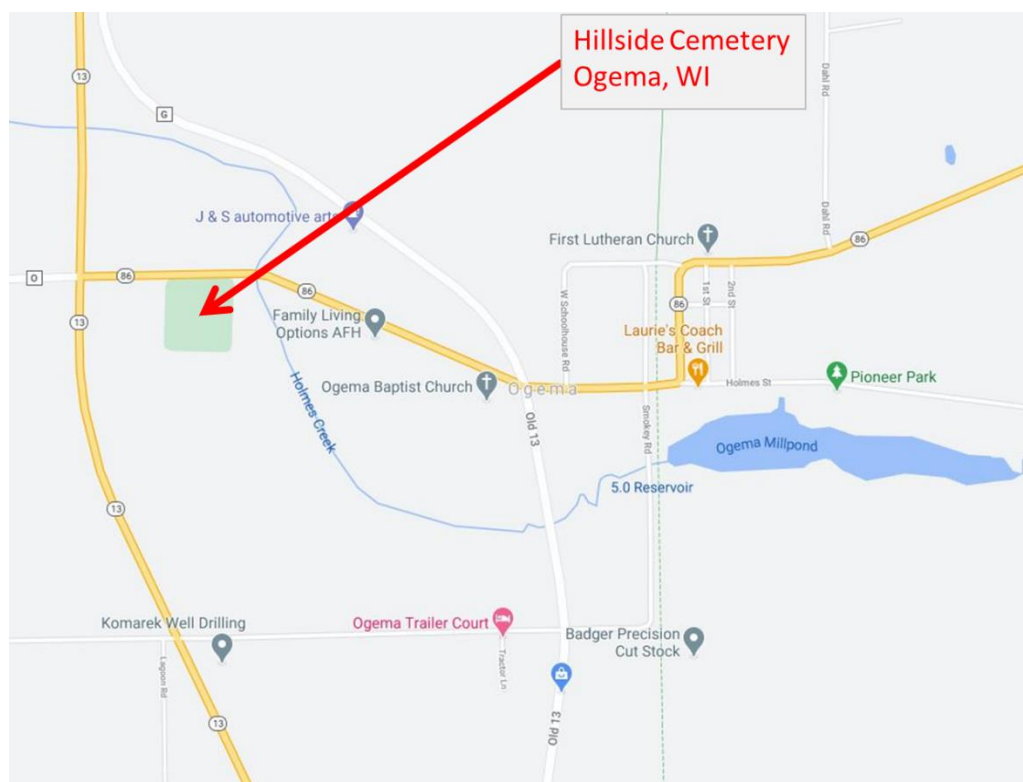
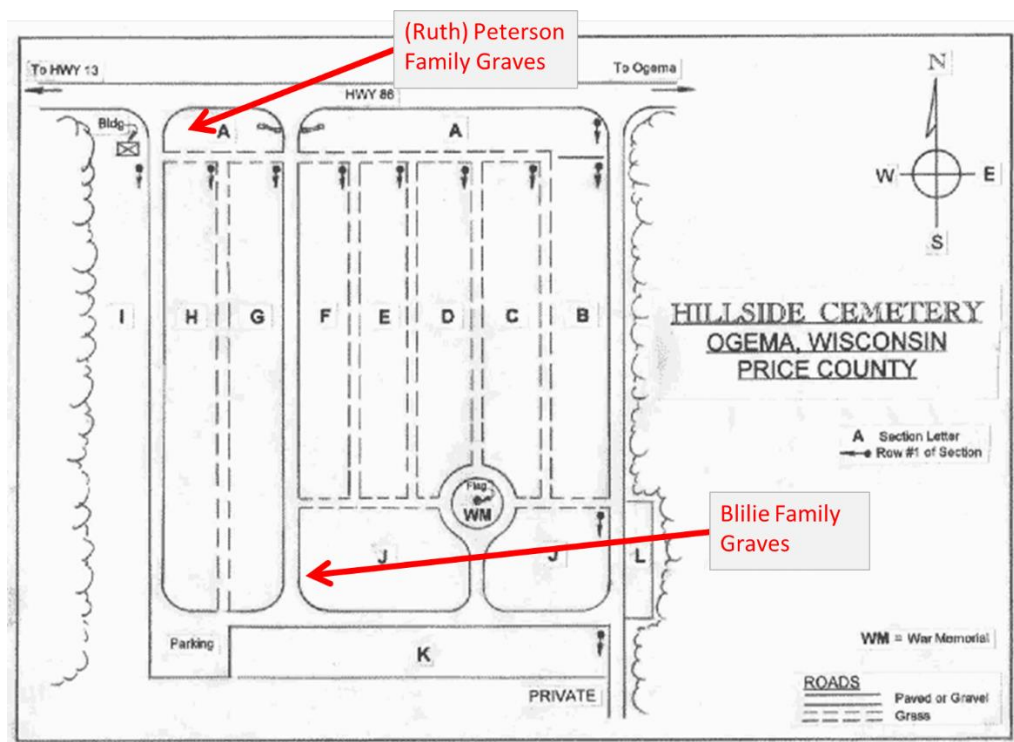


Figure 33 Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



All of the gravestone images show the markers after I had thoroughly cleaned them.

Figure 34 Blilie Family and Ruth Peterson Grave Locations, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 35 Hans Christian Blilie Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 36 Regine (Arnsen) Blilie Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 37 Maurice and John Blilie Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 38 General Views of the Blilie Family Gravesites, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 39 Ruth Victoria Peterson Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 40 Josephine A. Peterson Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 41 John and Christine Peterson Headstone, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI



Figure 42 General Views of the Peterson Family Gravesites, Hillside Cemetery, Ogema, WI

Louis Blilie as Told by James Louis Blilie

James L. Blilie, 1997

Born on September 1880 in La Crosse, Wisconsin, the oldest of three brothers: Louis, Maurice (also born in La Crosse) and John. Their parents (see file named Maurice) had emigrated from the place in Norway called Blilie, which means something like “pleasant meadow (“lie” is pronounced like English “lea” and means the same thing.) John, the youngest, was born near Ogema, Wisconsin, which a few miles south of Prentice, Wisconsin.

[Louis’ grandson, James William Blilie, visited Blilie-gaard in 1994(?). The current owners are named Narum, and are our relatives. But there are still Blilies in the area also.]

Hans Christian Blilie, Louis’ father, farmed near Ogema. He also became a member, and later chairman, of the Price County Board - [I think politics is in the blood.]

Louis was given the name Lars, Maurice was named Matias, and John was named Johann. At some time, all three of them changed their names to something they thought sounded more American: Louis, Maurice, and John. Louis did not have a middle name, and I think Maurice and John also had none.

There was no school in the area until Louis was nine years old. He and his brothers spoke nothing but Norwegian. Then a typical one-room, one-teacher school was set up. All three brothers enrolled at the same time. The only teacher was, as my father (Louis) told me “an Irish girl.” But they all learned to speak English well, with, at the earliest time I can remember (about 1928) no accent except that of a resident of Minnesota.

They also learned reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and a good deal more. Later in this first school year, Louis became sick with rheumatic fever, which, though no-one knew at the time, damaged his heart.

North-central Wisconsin in those days was heavily wooded with white pines and red pines, so lumbering was the main business. So naturally, all three brothers started work as lumberjacks. Louis also worked in a sawmill, and told me [his son JLB] of how he disliked stacking green [full of sap and thus heavy] lumber as it came off the saw. So he decided to go to a “business college.” There he learned bookkeeping, business letter writing, etc.

This led to a job in the offices of the streetcar company in Duluth [I think - but it might have been in St. Paul I’m not sure there were streetcars in Duluth]. While in this job he twice had pneumonia, in both lungs. A doctor told him that it would be better for him to work outside rather than in an office. So he became a streetcar conductor. (For those readers too young to

have traveled by streetcar - the conductor usually stood on the rear platform, which was under a roof, but in the fresh air.)

He either moved to St. Paul or had started work with the streetcar company (Twin Cities Rapid Transit) in St. Paul.

My mother, Julie Antonette Gunderson, was living in St. Paul around this time. Her sister, Selma, came to St. Paul a few years sooner. Selma had met another streetcar conductor, Ira Harrington. Ira had been in the U. S. Army cavalry (back when Army uniforms were still blue.) When he finished his duty in the Army he went to work for the streetcar company. Selma and Ira soon married. After my mother decided not to be a country “school-marm” any more, (more of this topic written elsewhere) she too came to St. Paul.

At some time Selma took her to a party or some kind of social gathering put on by the streetcar company. She spotted Louis, and (as she told me) said to Selma, “I want that one.” And that came to be. They were married in June 1915.

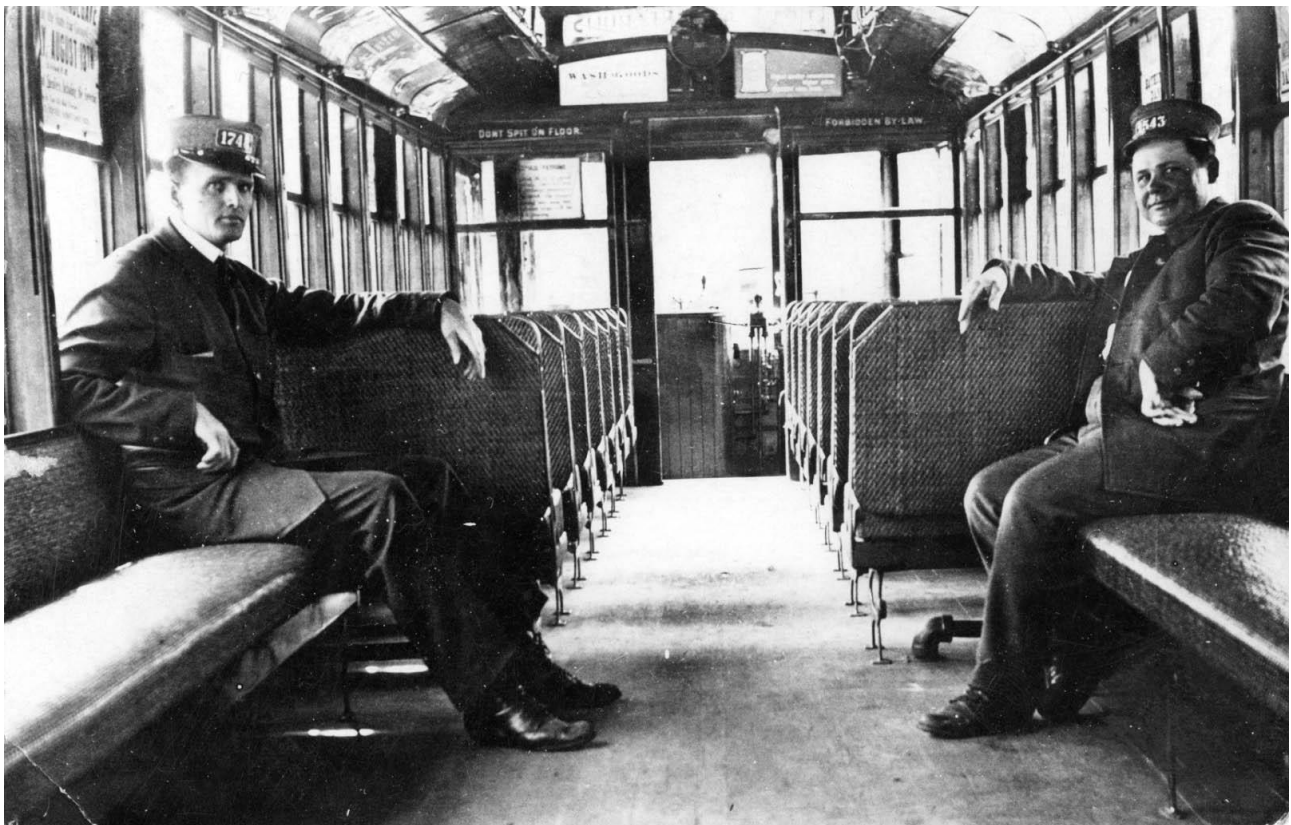


Figure 43 Louis Blilie on a St. Paul Street Car (at Left)

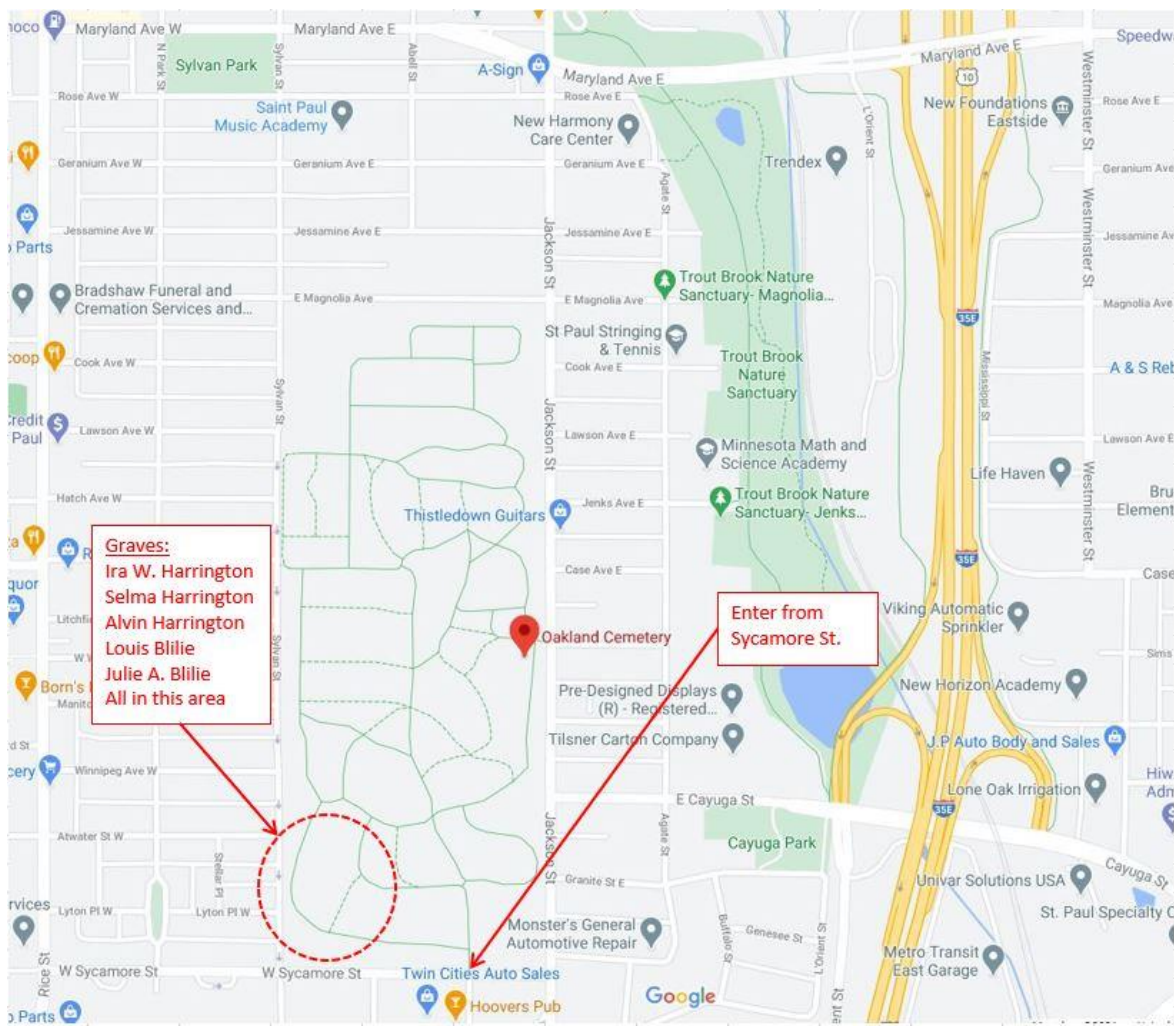


Figure 44 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map



Figure 45 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map



Figure 46 Louis Blilie Head Stone, Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul, Minnesota

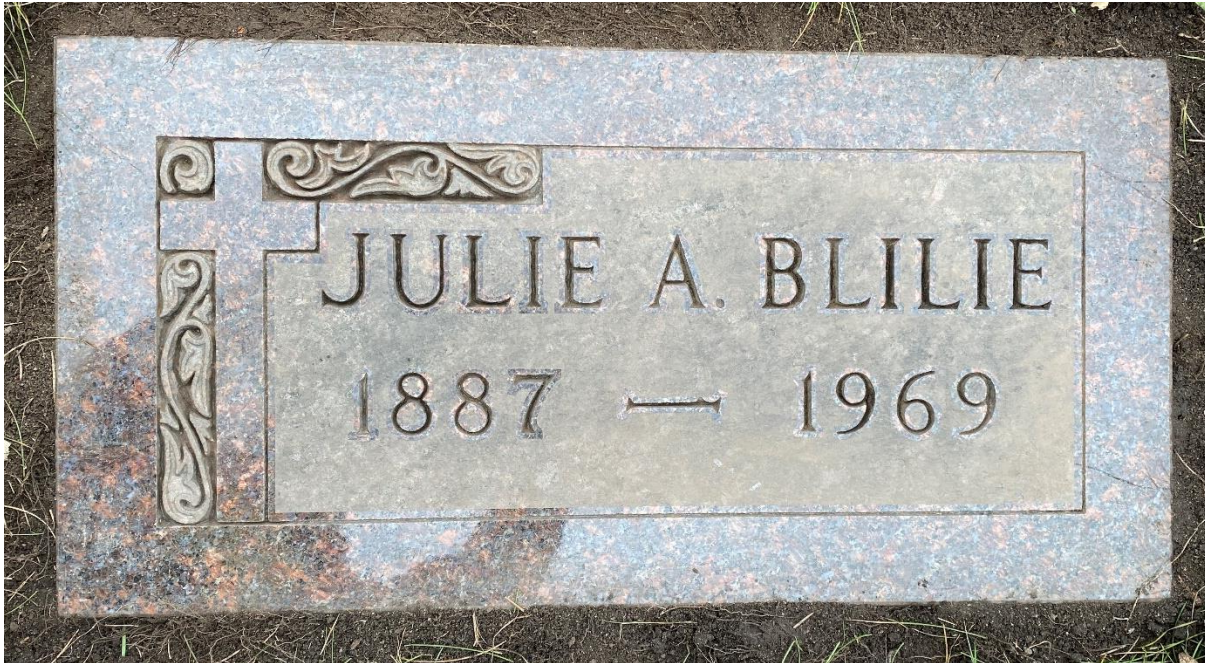


Figure 47 Julie Antonette Blilie Head Stone, Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul, Minnesota

The Birthday Club, As Told by James Louis Blilie

This story was written down by my father, James Louis Blilie in the late 1990s, about his family and childhood in St. Paul, Minnesota.

This little tale is about the Birthday Club. During the time my sisters (Antonette and Lorraine) and I (James) were born, and up until the time I was three or four, we lived in the Highland Park area of St. Paul, near the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Saratoga Street - not far from Calvary Lutheran Church, where we three siblings were baptized.

In those days there was no television and even radio was very primitive - consisting mostly of “crystal sets” with which one might, using earphones, faintly hear some kind of broadcast. And many families did not have a car. Consequently, I believe, there was a lot more socializing. People got together to do things and enjoy other’s company - usually neighbors.

Many of the parents living near us were of similar age to my parents, Louis and Julie Blilie. They were a sociable group. They decided to regularly have a party or get-together for each person’s birthday. They would gather in that person’s house for games, talk, and food. They called this the Birthday Club.

Some of the families of the club were: the Sheldons, who lived two or three houses south of us, the Kroghs (Art and Cora), the Bublitzes) the Stauffs, and the Kellys. There were more, but I can't remember the names.

Most of the families had children of ages much like the Blilies. I can remember a few. There were Dorothy, Doris, and Mary Kelly; Jerry Sheldon; Marvin and Luverne (a boy of my age - French names were popular this soon after WW1) Krogh; and Rolly Stauff; and more I can't remember.

The members would meet at the house of the person having the birthday, arriving after supper, carrying cakes, cookies, etc. As I remember, 12 to 20 people would usually show up. The ladies would really dress up, and the men would wear suits. They would form groups of four and sit down at card tables and play 500, which is something like bridge, but a bit simpler. It involved bidding and making the bid or going set. Score was kept, but the play was for fun.

Early on it seems the parties became monthly events rather than on exact birthdays - but rotated from home to home.

Game playing did not prevent conversation - frequently with persons at other tables. The mood was always very pleasant.

After a while some of the families moved to other locations in St. Paul - we moved to a house on Fry and Shields -not far from Midway hospital. In two or three years from then we moved south on Fry Street about half a block to 393 Fry. Later we moved a bit over a mile to 714 N. Hamline Avenue, where we stayed until I was 19 years old. The Stauffs moved to a house by the east end of Como Lake. Others may have moved as well. But the Birthday Club continued.

When they would meet at our house, I feasted on the goodies brought! After a while they decided to meet once a month - not on birthdays. The kids from each family soon knew the kids of all the others.

I think it is a shame that people don't fraternize like that anymore.

James Louis Blilie Obituary

James Louis Blilie, 86, passed away the night of 26-Mar-2010. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Harriet (Ventress) Blilie and three sons, Charles (wife Shelley and daughter Kirsten), James (wife Phyllis and sons Joe and Jamie), and Jon (wife Bobbi and son Kai).

He was a loving father and husband. He was born and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota where he graduated from Wilson High School, the grandson of immigrants from Norway.

He flew a full tour of 35 missions as a USAAF Lieutenant serving as navigator and bombardier in B-24s over Germany and occupied France in late 1944 as part of the 8th Air Force out of East Anglia, United Kingdom.

He graduated in 1948 from the University of Minnesota with a degree in electrical engineering. He served 21 years in the Air Force, serving in, among other places, Manila the Philippines, Thule Greenland, Japan, and many bases in the USA. You can read about his time in the Air Force in his memoir, [Quite by Chance](#). You can see his photos of Japan, Korea, and the Philippines [on this page about the Far East](#).

He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the Air Force in 1969, before having another career with UNISYS (was Sperry Univac) as a computer engineer and technical writer. He was a World War II veteran, Korean War veteran, and a Vietnam-Era veteran.

He was a talented painter, photographer, and writer. He also enjoyed amateur radio (HAM) building his own radio sets, art, travel, literature, politics, and his family. He is sorely missed.



Figure 48 James Louis Blilie (1923-2010) Head Stone, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota



Figure 49 Harriet Elizabeth Ventress Blilie (1935-2020) Head Stone, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota



Figure 50 Julie Elizabeth Blilie (1962-1997) Head Stone, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota



Figure 51 General Location, Blilie Graves, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota

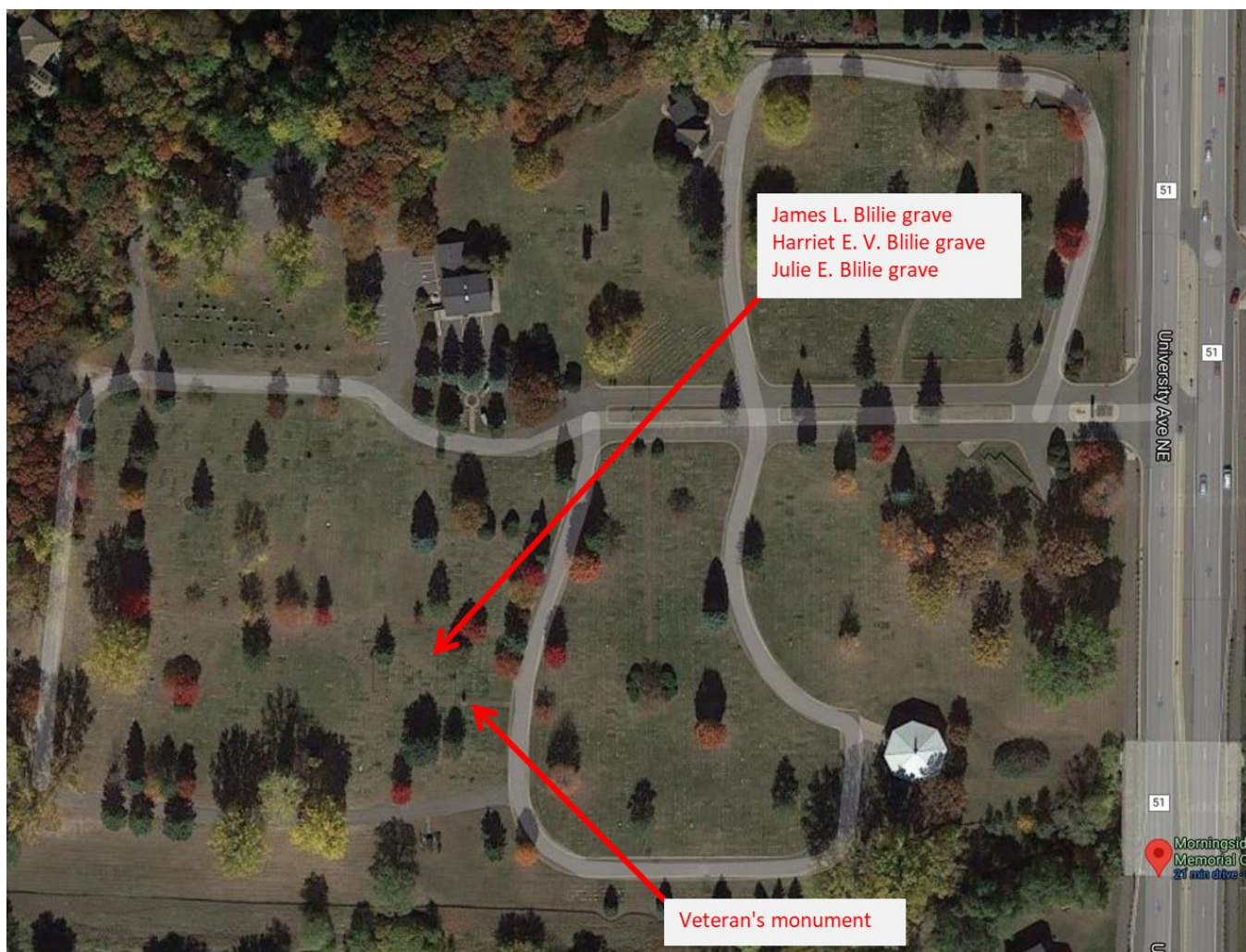


Figure 52 General Location, Blilie Graves, Morningside Memorial Gardens, Coon Rapids, Minnesota

A Visit to Blili, Norway, 1992 and 2012

James W. Blilie: [A Trip to My Ancestral Home in Blili, Norway](#), August, 1992. This was part of my [world tour in 1990-1992](#). I also [returned with my family in 2012](#).

Introduction

From Nov. 1990 to Oct. 1992, a friend, Jeff Mellor, and I travelled around the world, mostly by bicycle. We traveled through New Zealand, Australia, Asia, Africa, and Europe. We spent a total of nine months in Europe and Britain. While in Europe, it was important to me to visit my relations, seek out my roots, and find out as much as possible about my European ancestors.

I visited my aunt and uncle in Britain: Antonette and Brian Kelly and their son Chris and his wife Melanie. I also visited my distant cousin, Jan Bendiksen, a Norwegian, now living in Varberg, Sweden with his wife Kitty and children Benthe, Arild, and Jan-Erik. Jan and I are related by our great-grandmothers being sisters (Haanes, Norway; see brief family tree).

Jan had previously come to America and visited my father. And later, he was able to help us by locating information on our ancestors of the Blilie line. I am very grateful to Jan for all his help on this. My trip to Blili would not have been possible without his help. In fact, he found the farm from which my ancestors came and some of them continued to occupy; and he found the family that lives there today -- my cousin John Arne Narum and his family.

So, when we came to Norway, via Scotland and the Shetland Islands, I was able to locate the farm, called Bliligård (gård = gaard = farm, pronounced "gore"), in the tiny place (I hesitate to name it a town or even a village) called Blili, Norway. This is where my great-grandfather, Hans Christian Blilie, was born and raised, and wherefrom he emigrated to America in Sept. 1880. I went there and visited the Narums in August, 1992, by bicycle.

Jeff and I had a wonderful time visiting with the Narums. They were very hospitable and, I think, as excited about meeting me as I was about meeting them. They had a great deal of information about my family that I had never seen before. Likewise, they knew very little of their relations in America; and I was able to inform them of us.

The Land

Bliligård lies about 100 kilometers north of Oslo in a local region called Toten. (See Figure 53 and Figure 54) It is a hilly country, carved up into many, deep, north-south furrows. The ridges that divide these furrows are thickly forested with fir and birch and full of wildlife. (I think Scandinavia is about the only place remaining in Europe where you can see large tracts of land more-or-less untouched by

people.) Many of the valleys contain long, deep, lakes, usually called fjords for their resemblance to the real fjords of the west coast. Around the lakes and on the ridges lies a patchwork of small fields of wheat, barley, or oats, wooden farmhouses, and deep-red barns.

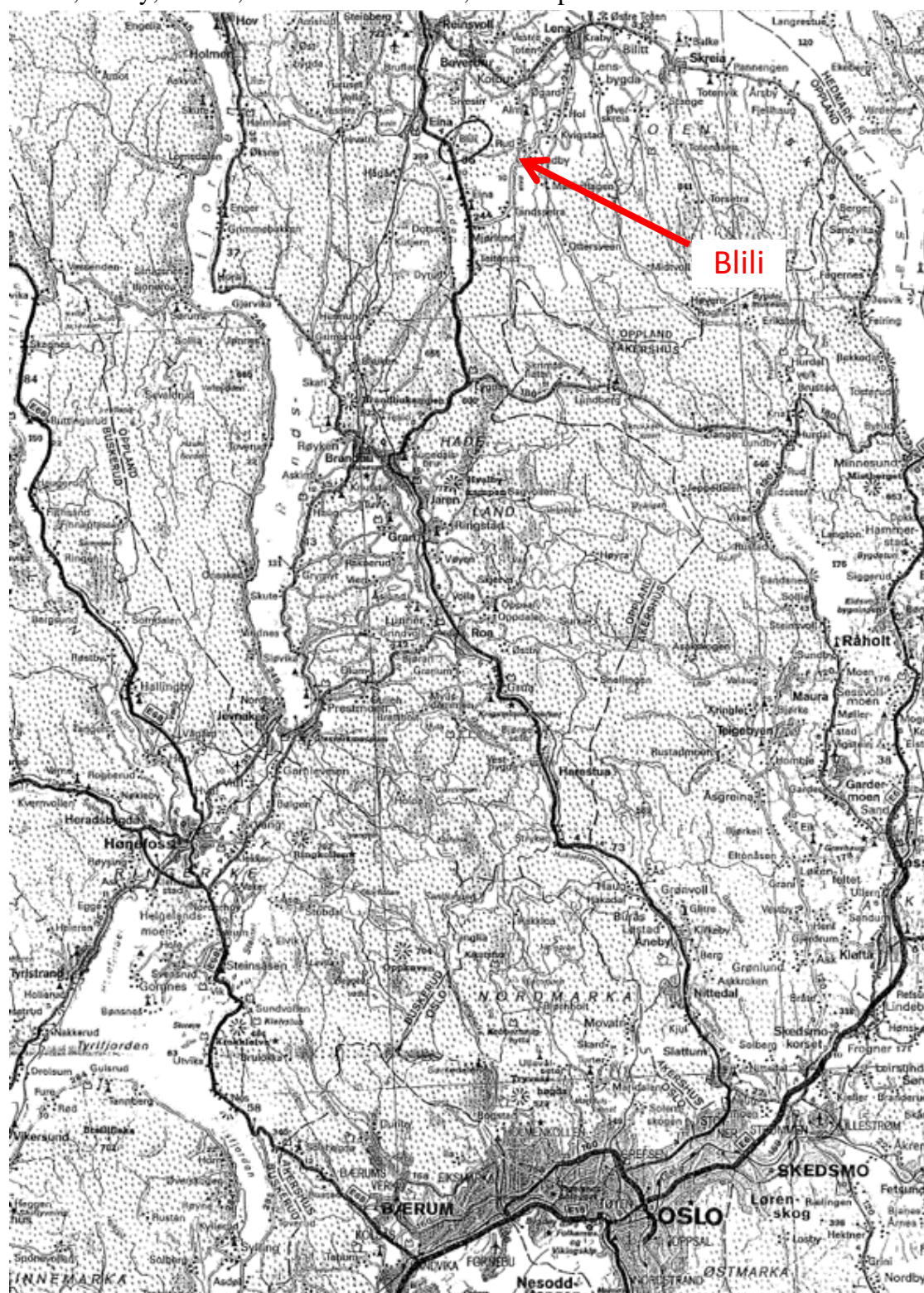


Figure 53 Blili in Relation to Oslo

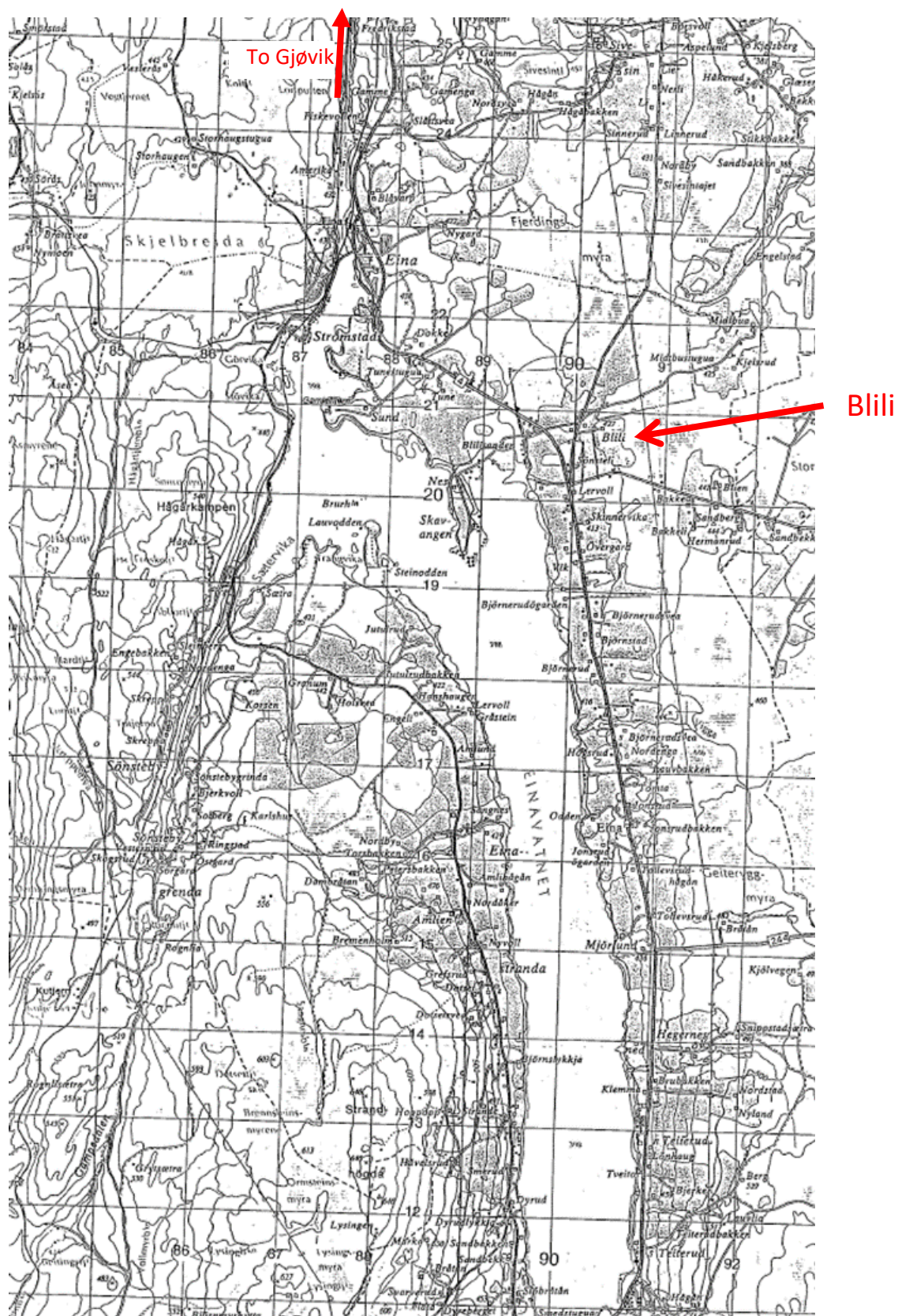


Figure 54 Blili Area (Eina, Eina Fjord)

Blili means "fair view" in Norwegian (or "fairfield"). And the farm does have a fair view, out over the Eina Fjord. The name Blili was originally attached to an important crossroads at this spot. There was once a roadhouse on the place. The farm took its name from the crossroads. The people who settled there also took their name from the place. The Narum's have records of the ownership of the farm -- continuous in the family -- back to the first of the family there in 1680. (I have this information in Norwegian; but I haven't yet translated it.)

Bliligård is farmland and forest totaling approximately a square-mile of area. Roughly half is cultivated in cereal grains and pasture and half is forest. It is about 400 meters (1300 ft.) elevation above sea level, just above and nearly touching the Eina Fjord -- named for the town of Eina which is two miles west of the farm. The farm straddles the main north-south road, Route 4. (See Figure 55) The farm lies in a region which is relatively flat compared to the large surrounding hills.

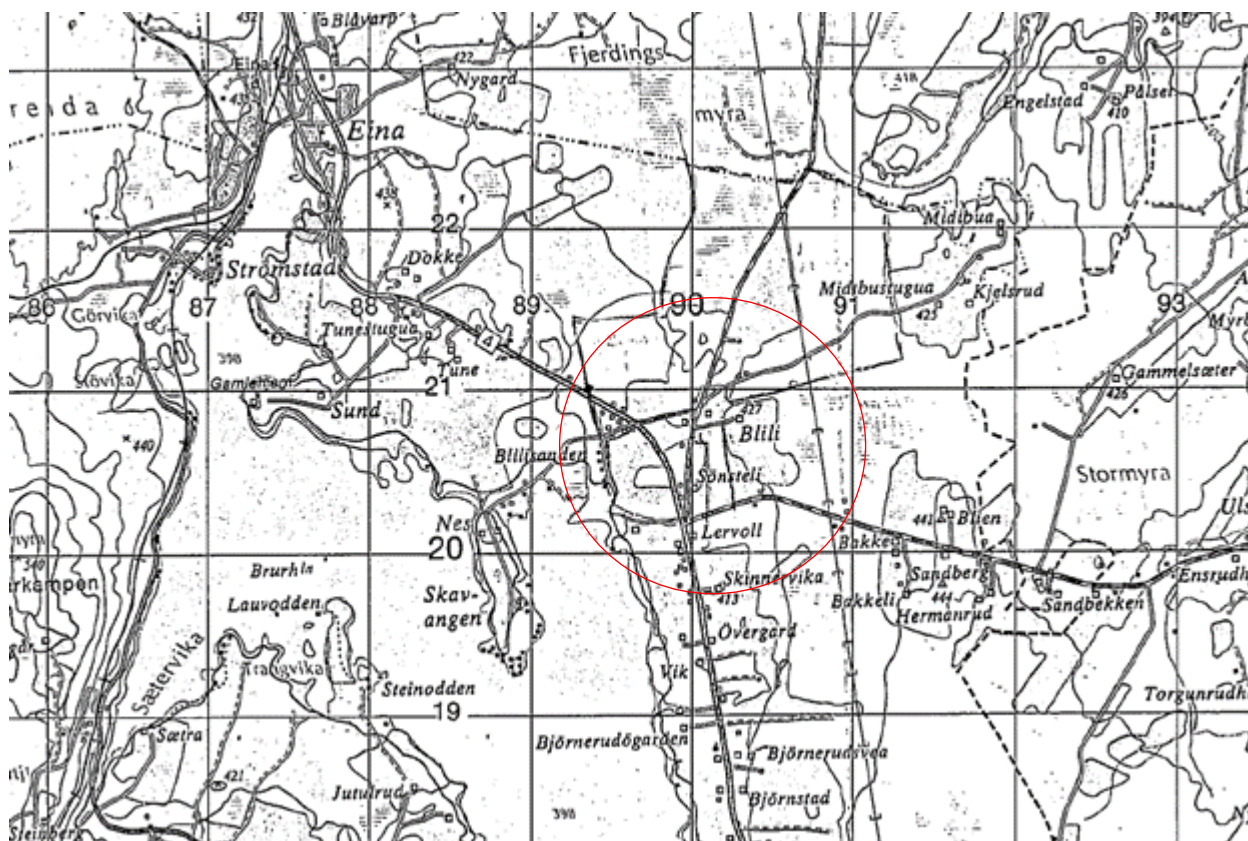


Figure 55 Blili and Eina

In Norway, especially around Blili, I was struck by how similar it seemed to Minnesota and Wisconsin. The trees, flowers, birds, deer, the very smell of the place was just like home. The same clearings in the forest, sheltering the same small fields and wooden farmhouses. Even the climate, in winter, is the same. No wonder my immigrant ancestors felt comfortable in their new surroundings in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The first farmer we know of on the Bliligård was actually a Finn. His family had emigrated from Finland to Sweden some time earlier, where they settled for a while in the forests of north-central Sweden. However, when the Swedish king wished to conscript these Finns (there was a fair-sized population of them) into his army, they moved on again -- over the hills into Norway. The Finn, Anders Heksum, bought the Blili farm in 1680. His children and his children's children were subsequently called after the place: surname Blilie.

The farm has passed down through this one family since then. Two generations back, a Blilie daughter, Johanne Mathiasdatter Blilie, inherited the farm and married Johann Narum. (see brief family tree) Thus, the present owners are now Narum's: John Arne Narum and his uncle Arne Narum. Each owns approximately half of the property.

The Family

The details of our family are contained in the extensive family tree diagram, which is included, so I will not go into detail on that. Please refer to the family tree. My great-great-grandfather, Lars Kristian Blilie was, as they told me in Blili, "a remarkable and well-known man." He was a Stortingsman: a member of the Norwegian legislative body. His son, Mathias Larsen Blilie was also a Stortingsman. Lars Kristian Blilie had a mechanical bent: I saw one of a number of "grandfather" clocks which he had built. He had a bell cast for the farm; and it still hangs in a belfry of one of the buildings at Bliligård, with his name and the date "Aar 1842" (aar = year) cast into it.

Lars Kristian and his wives (he was married twice: to Johanne Hansdatter then Augusta Kristiansdatter) had two sons, Hans Kristiansen (or Hans Christian) and Mathias Larsen, and one daughter, Karen Augusta. The elder son, Hans, emigrated with his wife, Regene Jonsdatter, to America in 1880. They settled near LaCrosse, Wisconsin where they had two sons: Louis (Lars), my father's father, and Maurice (Mathias). Later they moved to near Prentice, Wisconsin and had a third son, John (Johann). They farmed between Prentice and Ogema, Price County, Wisconsin.

My grandfather, Louis, took up the trade of bookkeeping and went to work for the streetcar company in Duluth, Minnesota. Later, his health suffered from the indoor work and he took a job as a street car conductor in St. Paul, Minnesota. Here, my father, James Louis Blilie, was born and raised. I was born in California where my father was stationed while serving in the U.S. Air Force. My parents now live north of St. Paul at Isanti, Minnesota.

Lars Kristian Blilie's second son, Mattias Larsen, inherited the farm at Blili and farmed and lived there through his life. He served as a Stortingsman as his father had. He and his wife Olean Hansdatter (from nearby Bjugstad) had seven children. The eldest was Johanne, who inherited the farm and married Johann Mathiasen Narum (from nearby Narum). They had seven children, the eldest of which

was Mathias. Mathias Narum was the father of John Arne Narum and his two brothers Henning Mathias and Eskild and sister Sissel. Mathias' younger brother, Arne, now owns half of the Blili farm.

John Arne Narum inherited the Blili farm in the 1960's and has been farming it since. He married Ingrid Ellen Klovborg Pedersen, originally from Denmark, in 1969. They have four children: Lars Christian, Jon Anders, Ellen Johanne, and Benedikte. We stayed in the Bliligård farmhouse, which was standing since at least the 1870's, with John Arne and Ingrid; and we had a wonderful time getting to know them and their children. They told me that they would be happy to meet, and have for guests, more of their American relatives. We also got to meet John Arne's siblings Sissel and Eskild.

Sissel lives next door to John Arne on the Bliligård property. She married Peder Bakken and had two sons, Eskild and Kjetil. Her son Eskild is now married to Sigrid, they have a son, Sander Eskild, and live on the West Coast of Norway, near Bergen. John Arne's brother Henning Mathias lives on the West Coast of Norway. Henning Mathias married Rosalin Gnyardi and they had three children: Andreas, Rune, and Kirsti and they adopted a fourth child: Paul. The third brother, Eskild lives with Anne Merete at Kapp, by the Mjosa fjord, about 20 km northeast of Blili.

History and Information from The Narum's/Bliligård

I received a fair amount of information from John Arne Narum and his family about our ancestors and the history of the Bliligård farm. As mentioned above, some of it is in Norwegian and hasn't been translated yet. Some of it is now contained in the updated family tree which is included. The rest is in this narrative, on the enclosed map number 3, or on black and white negatives in my files -- mostly copies of old photos and the local landscape. I also have a great number of color slides of the area (not to mention the rest of my travels). I would be happy to show my slides to any visitors.

There is much more to be learned. I was travelling by bicycle and was on a very low budget, so I couldn't do all that I wanted to. Go there and visit!

Family Tree and Photos

Here are a "brief" family tree (Figure 58) and a much more complete one (Figure 59). They are as complete and accurate as I can make them with the information I now have. I hope they are readable and informative. Before my visit to Blili, I knew nothing of Mathias Larsen's children or their further descendents nor anything about my ancestors further back than Lars Kristian Blilie's parents (on the Blilie side. We know a great deal more about the Ventress side of the family -- my mother's side.) Please forward any corrections to me.

The enclosed photos show the Bliligård farm and me with the John Narum family. The doorway in which we are standing for the group photo was existent as far back as the 1870's, at least. I copied a

photo of John Arne's which shows Lars Kristian Blilie (5-Apr-1820 – 17-Dec-1892), his wife (which one, we don't know, presumably, the second, Augusta Kristiansdatter), and their sons Hans Christian (also written Hans Kristian or Hans Kristiansen or Hans Christiansen) () and Mathias Larsen and daughter Karen Augusta (1843 – 12-May-1910) standing in the same doorway. That photo was taken ca. mid 1870's. Matthias (b. 1854) would have been in his late teens and Hans Christian (b. 1851) would have been in his early 20s and Karen Augusta perhaps 30. See Figure 56. In the 1992 photo: Left to right: Ingrid Narum, John Arne Narum, Lars Christian Narum, Benedikte Narum, Jon Anders Narum, Ellen Johanne Narum, James W. Blilie.



Figure 56 Two Groups in the Bliligård Doorway, 1870s? and 1992

The photo of the farm shows a barn, at left foreground, and the farmhouse (Figure 57). Both of these buildings were standing when Hans Christiansen Blilie and Mathias Larsen Blilie were growing up.



Figure 57 Bliligård, 1992

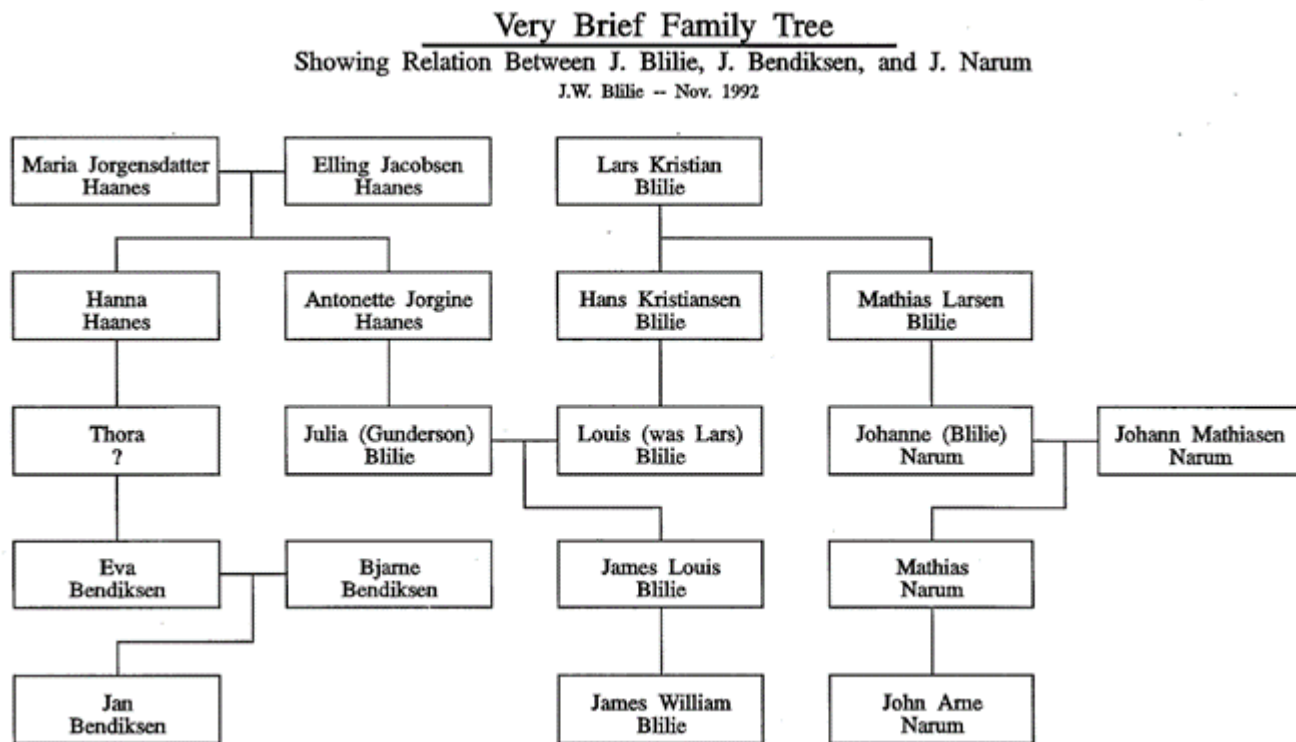


Figure 58 Brief Blilie-Bendiksen-Narum Family Tree

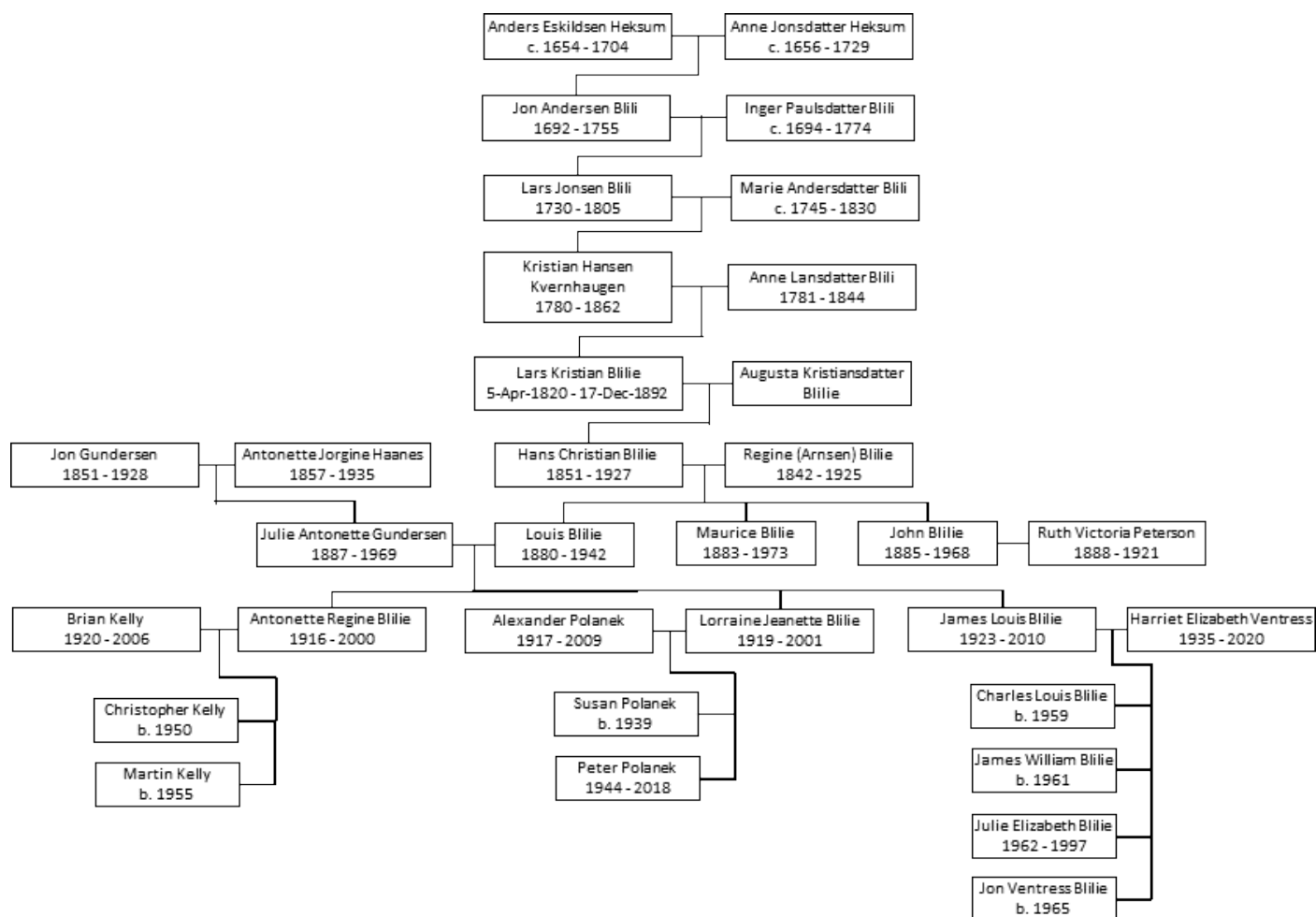


Figure 59 Larger Blilie Family Tree



Figure 60 Family Groups Bliligård Doorway and Yard, 2012

The Blilie and Kelly Families in the United Kingdom

As related by Martin Kelly:

Jan-2021: My grandfather Herbert Kelly was born 25 Feb 1883 and died in 1951. His wife was Florence Edith Lloyd, born 6 July 1889 and died in either 1983 or 1984 - Chris may know.

Mary Qualtrough Kelly b. 10 Feb 1876 d. 1955 was one of Herbert's two sisters, ie. my great-aunt. She married James William Hayes on 13 Sep 1913 who died in 1948.

Did you get my comment on your post about our great grandmother Antonette Jorgine Gundersen? The Facebook arrow seemed to have disappeared and my text just evaporated! It was to say that I visited the lighthouse where she grew up near Moskenes at the bottom of the Lofoten Islands in 2009. It is now a holiday home for the Norwegian Coastguard. I was allowed to look round. Original 19th century doors and quite spacious - families were usually large in those days. I also looked in the graveyard for any of her family - the Hånes - but couldn't find any. Didn't she marry a blacksmith from Trondheim [James W. Blilie: Jon Gundersen] before emigrating?

I looked up Woodville, Wisconsin, where I think he set up his blacksmith shop. Still a small village. I was curious to see if the school our grandmother taught at in 1907 was still there. I could find no picture of the building. However, I found a Baldwin-Woodville school for young children and that may be its successor.

Harrington Family

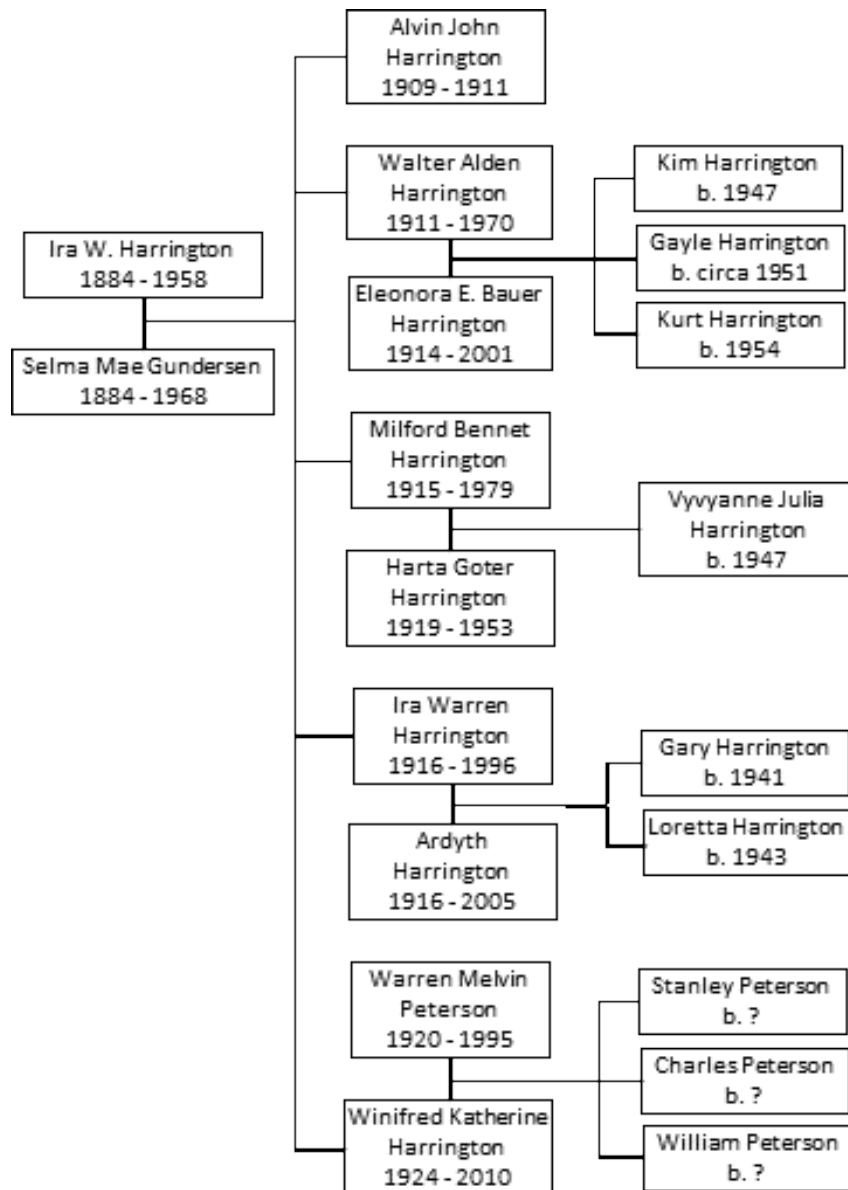


Figure 61 Harrington Family Tree

Selma Marie Gundersen, b. 1884

Marriage 29 April 1908 Woodville, Wisconsin, United States
They were living in Yankton, SD, in 1920 (census records)

Ira Washington Harrington, born 9-Jun-1884, Honey Creek, WI
Died 24-Aug-1958, St. Paul, MN

Ira Washington Harrington's parents (per the FamilySearch website):

A. L. Washington
Catherine Hoover

Alvin John Harrington
b. 5-Feb-1909, St. Paul, MN
d. 3-Dec-1911, St. Paul, MN

Walter Alden Harrington, b. 12-Sep-1911 (St. Paul Minnesota), d. 17-Apr-1970 (Lake Elmo, MN)
Married Eleonora Elizabeth Bauer (18-Oct-1914 to 2-Nov-2001)
 Kim Harrington, b. 1947
 Gayle Harrington, b. circa 1951
 Kurt Harrington, b. 1954

Milford Bennett Harrington, b. 8-Feb-1915 (St. Paul Minnesota), d. 11-Jan-1979, Pittsburg, CA
(Sergeant First Class, US 5th Army as of Feb 1953)
Marries Harta Goter, 18-May-1940, St. Paul, MN
Harta b. (born Haltha Goter) 17-Sep-1919, Woodworth, ND, d. 10-Oct-1953, Oakland, CA
 VyVyan, daughter, born circa 1946
Harta later married Henry Dale Tomlinson, 22-Jun-1950, Reno, NV

Ira Warren Harrington, 8-Oct-1916 (West Concord, MN), d. 16-May-1996 (Contra Costa County, CA)

Married Ardyth (Ardie), b. 15-May-1916, d. 23-Oct-2005, married 8-Feb-1939
 Gary Harrington, b. 21-Jun-1941
 Loretta Harrington (Street), b. 1943-Nov

Winifred Katherine (Winnie) Harrington, b. 01-Apr-1924 (Alpena South Dakota), d. 22-Aug-2010
(Oakdale, MN)
Married 1942 to Warren Melvin Peterson, b. 18-Apr-1920, (St. Paul, MN), d. 27-Aug-1995, (St. Paul, MN)
 Stanley Peterson, b. xx
 Charles Peterson, b. xx
 Billy Peterson, b. xx

Kim Harrington, 2021:

I'm going to have to share some of mine, including a 12-14 year old Ira W. Harrington when he ran away (from Elk Mound, WI) to join the circus! The circus put him to work for several weeks until they passed through Elk Mound again and sent him home.

Aunt Winnie (Harrington-Peterson) gave it to me back in the 1990s, and shared the history. Apparently, Ira's step-dad (named Cartwright) was abusive and after hiding in the woods for awhile, Grandpa Ira joined the circus!

Ira's mom was Katherine Hoover-Harrington, and his birth father was Alvin Harrington. Ira named his 1st born Alvin, but he died of scarlet fever at age of 2 (?) Our dad Walter became the eldest, followed by Milford, Ira Jr., and Winnifred.

Wish I had listened more closely to Dad and Mom's reminiscences when I was younger...

Great-grandma Katherine Hoover-Harrington liked to share that she was born 7 miles from the Blarney Stone (Blarney is now a suburb of Cork City—Beck and I spent a few days there when we had a 25th year anniversary/honeymoon in 1999).

Harrington name is also from County Cork, so Alvin Harrington was also from that area. Grandpa liked to refer to himself as an "Irisher," — I thought of him and his Irish pride often when we toured around the country in a rented car.

Kim Harrington, 2021:

Bert was my favorite, most beloved man, aside from my Dad, Walter Harrington. I was in love with Vallea Richards (Bert's daughter) until I met some girls a little closer to my age!

How I treasure those memories of working on the farm in the summers, Bert and Olga, Vallea coming down for the weekends. And even afterwards, helping Vallea to move, and other things, with my Dad. Until, in relatively quick succession, they all went to be with Jesus.

Both my Dad and Great uncle Bert were rather stoic, reserved men generally (unless you were blessed to watch professional wrestling with Bert) but their hearts were quite close to the surface when the rubber hit the road.

If you ever get to Woodville WI, check out the Gunderson family grave plots beginning with great-grandfather John Gunderson the local blacksmith (and who may have been the mentor to my wife Rebecca's grandfather, who was the blacksmith of nearby Emerald WI)... guess some of us don't fall too far from the tree after all, in spite of spending many years in Asia and other crazy places, guess I'll close this chapter on that note.

Loretta Harrington Street, 2021:

My mom's (Ardyth, Ardie Harrington) birthday is May 15, 1916 and died October 23, 2005.
My dad's (Ira Harrington (Jr)) birthday is October 8, 1916 and died May 16, 1996. They were married February 8, 1939.

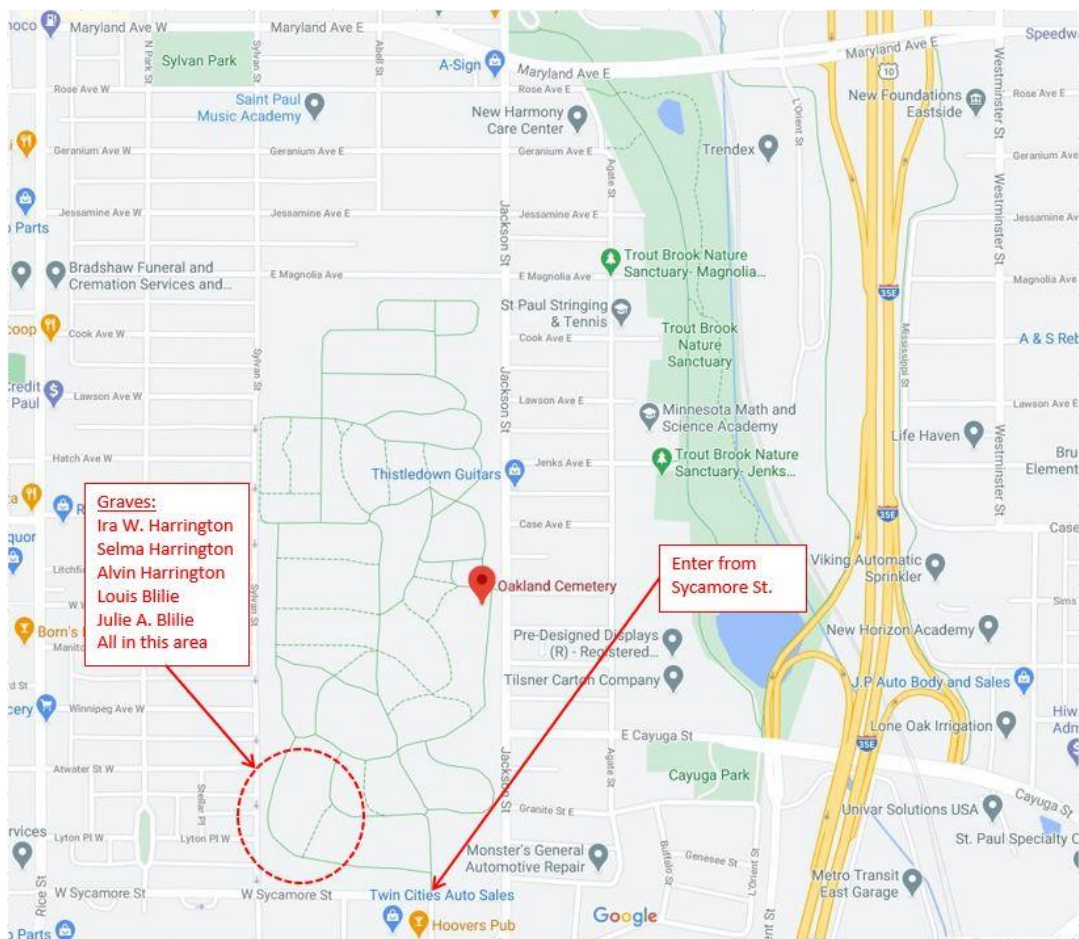


Figure 62 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map



Figure 63 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Locator Map



Figure 64 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Ira W. Harrington Gravestone



Figure 65 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Selma M. Harrington Gravestone



Figure 66 Oakland Cemetery, St. Paul Minnesota, Alvin John Harrington Gravestone

Kotts/Gregerson Family

Olga Gundersen married her first husband, Bernie (Bernard) Kotts (b. 21-Oct-1888, d. 1920, Baldwin, WI) in around 1915. They had two daughters, Marjorie Kotts (b. 27-Mar-1916 (Baldwin, WI), d. 9-Mar-2004 (La Plata, Charles County, Maryland)) and Anita Kotts (b. 1919, d. 1995). Olga became the housekeeper to Bert W. Richards in the 1920s¹⁷ They married some time after 1942, when Bert listed himself as single without dependents on his draft registration. Dora Gregerson was one of Julie A. Gundersen's pupils during her time teaching in the Woodville, Wisconsin area.¹⁸

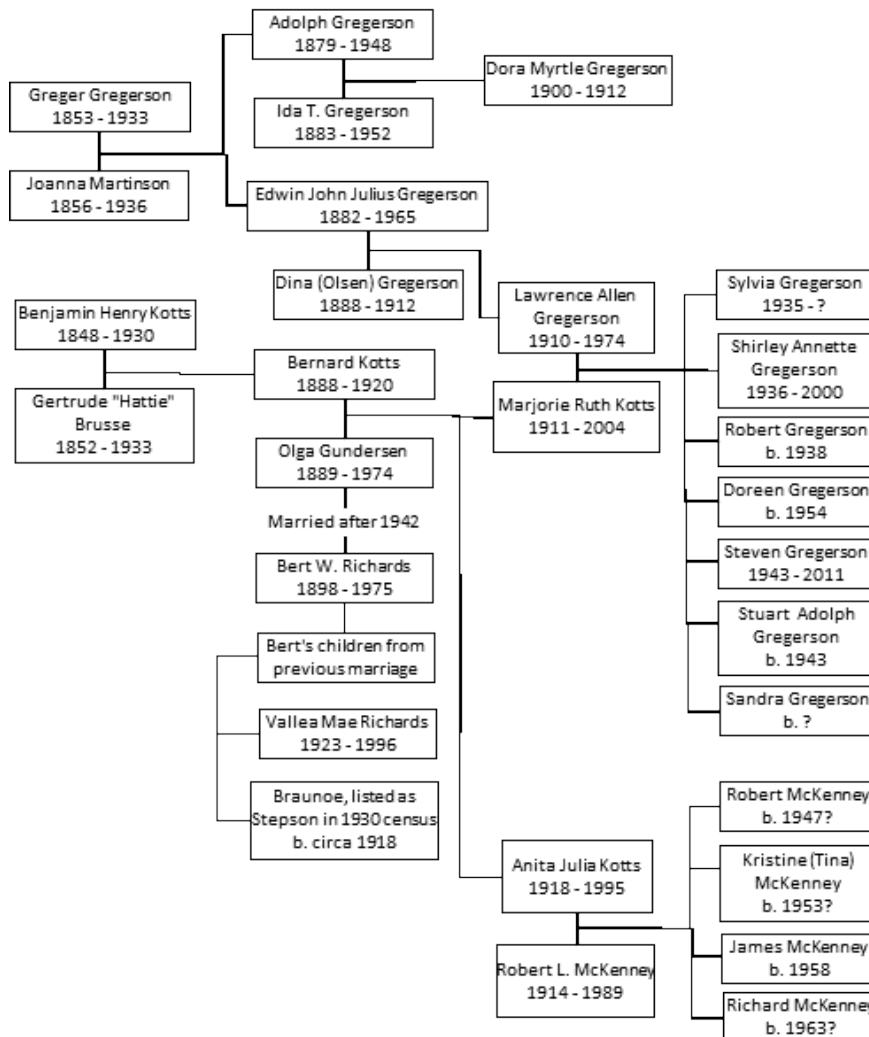


Figure 67 Kotts, Gregerson, McKenney Family Tree

¹⁷ 1930 census on Woodville, Wisconsin shows Olga Kotts, age 41, as "Housekeeper" and her daughters Marjorie (age 14) and Anita (age 11) as her daughters, along with Vallea (daughter age 7) "Braunoe" listed as "Step-son" (age 12), all in Bert Richards' (age 33) household. 1940 census shows Olga Kotts listed as "Housekeeper" (age 50) and Vallea Mae (age 17 as daughter. By then the Kotts daughters. Aged 24 and 21 had left home. Bert's service record lists him as widower without dependents on 4-Sep-1942. Note that census records from 1950 onwards are not available to the public (only to the person listed or their heirs).

¹⁸ She kept a list of her students, which I (James W. Blilie) found in January 2022.

The graves of the Gregerson Family (Laurence Gregerson's ancestors) and the Richards Family (Olga (Gundersen/Kotts) Richards and Bert Richards) are in the Sunset Cemetery, associated with Zion Lutheran Church, both in the town of Woodville, Wisconsin. (Cemetery maps can be viewed at Zion Lutheran Church.) Refer to Figure 68 through Figure 73.

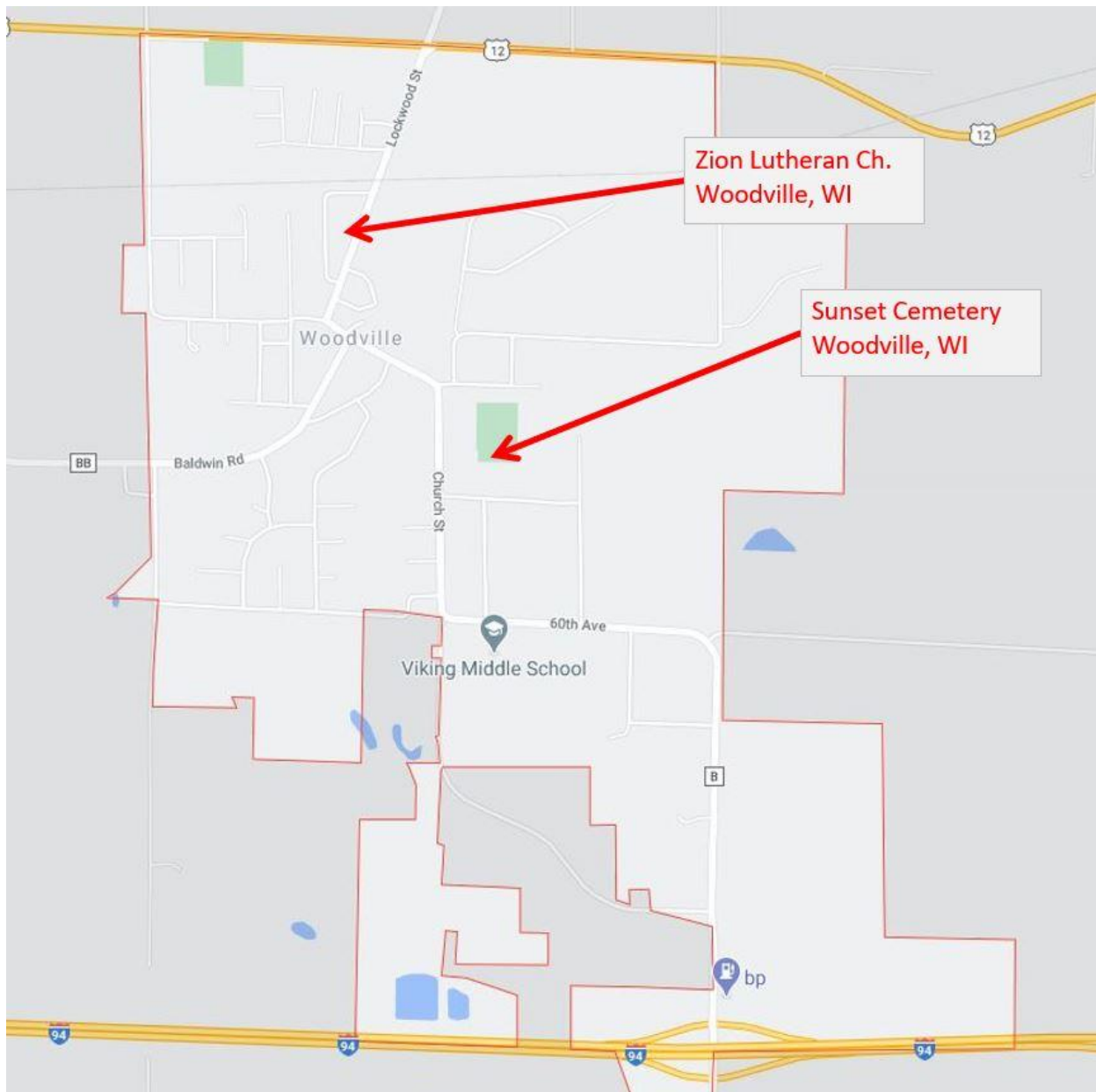


Figure 68 Gregerson Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI



Figure 69 Gregerson and Richards Family Grave Sites, Woodville, WI: Aerial View of Sunset Cemetery



Figure 70 Adolph and Ida Gregerson Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI



Figure 71 Adolph and Ida Gregerson Family Grave Site, Woodville, WI

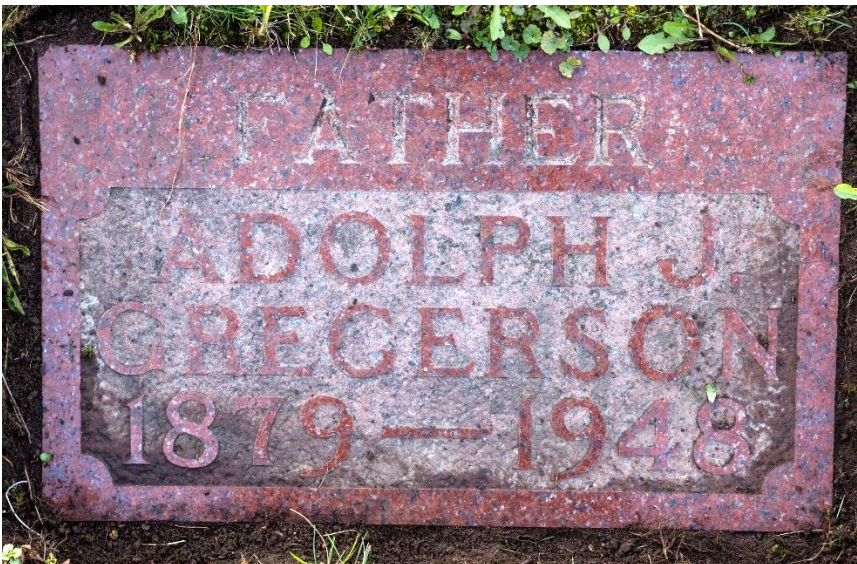


Figure 72 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Adolph Gregerson Head Stone, 1879-1948



Figure 73 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Ida Gregerson Head Stone, 1883-1952



Figure 74 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Bert (1898 – 1975) and Olga Richards (1889 – 1974) Head Stone



Figure 75 Sunset Cemetery, Woodville, WI, Bert Richards (1898 – 1975) Veteran's Medallion



Figure 76 Robert and Anita McKenney Grave Stones, Georgia Memorial Park, Marietta Georgia

Kotts Graves, Baldwin Cemetery

I was able to locate some of the Kotts family graves in Baldwin, Wisconsin, using Find A Grave website.

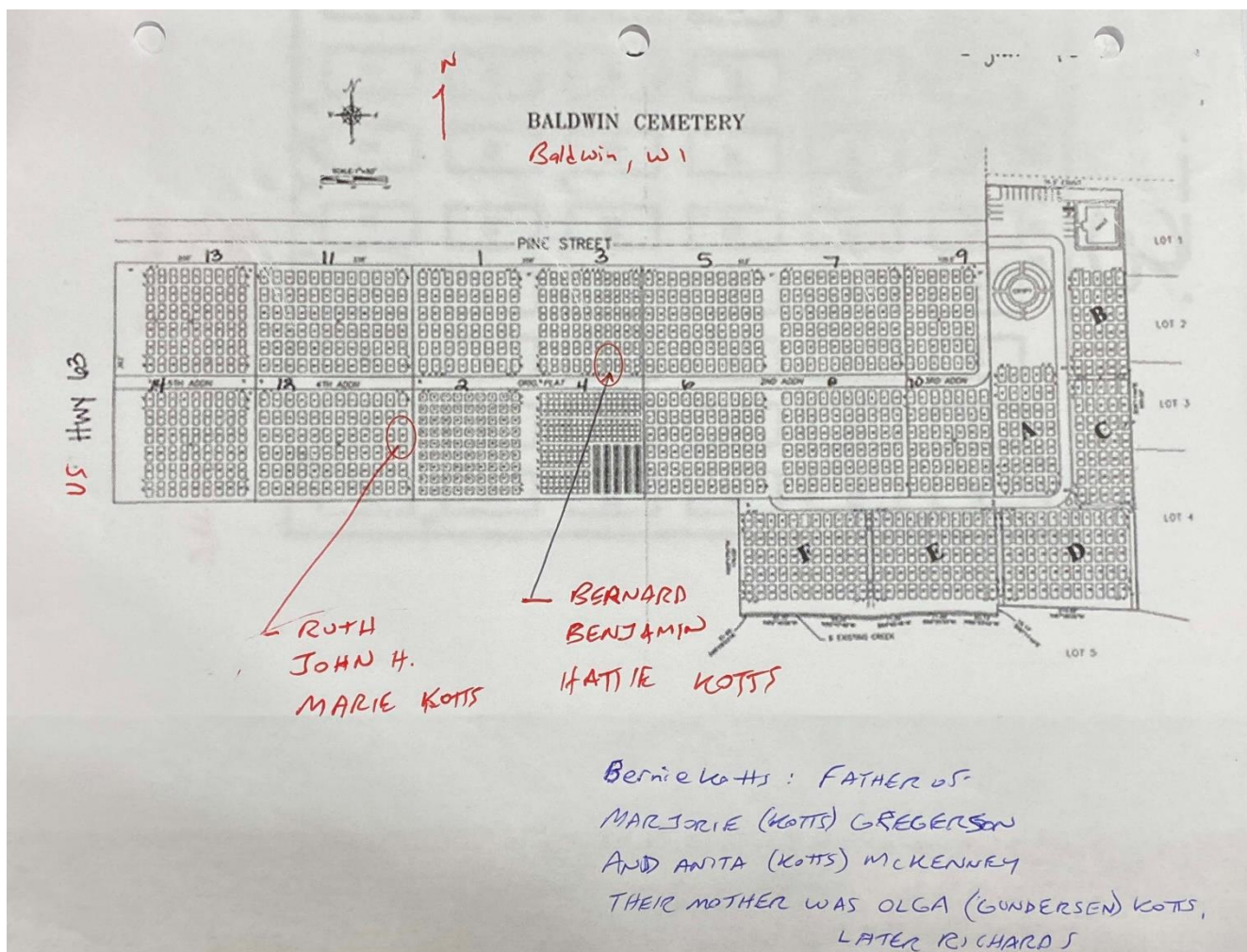


Figure 77 Baldwin Cemetery Map

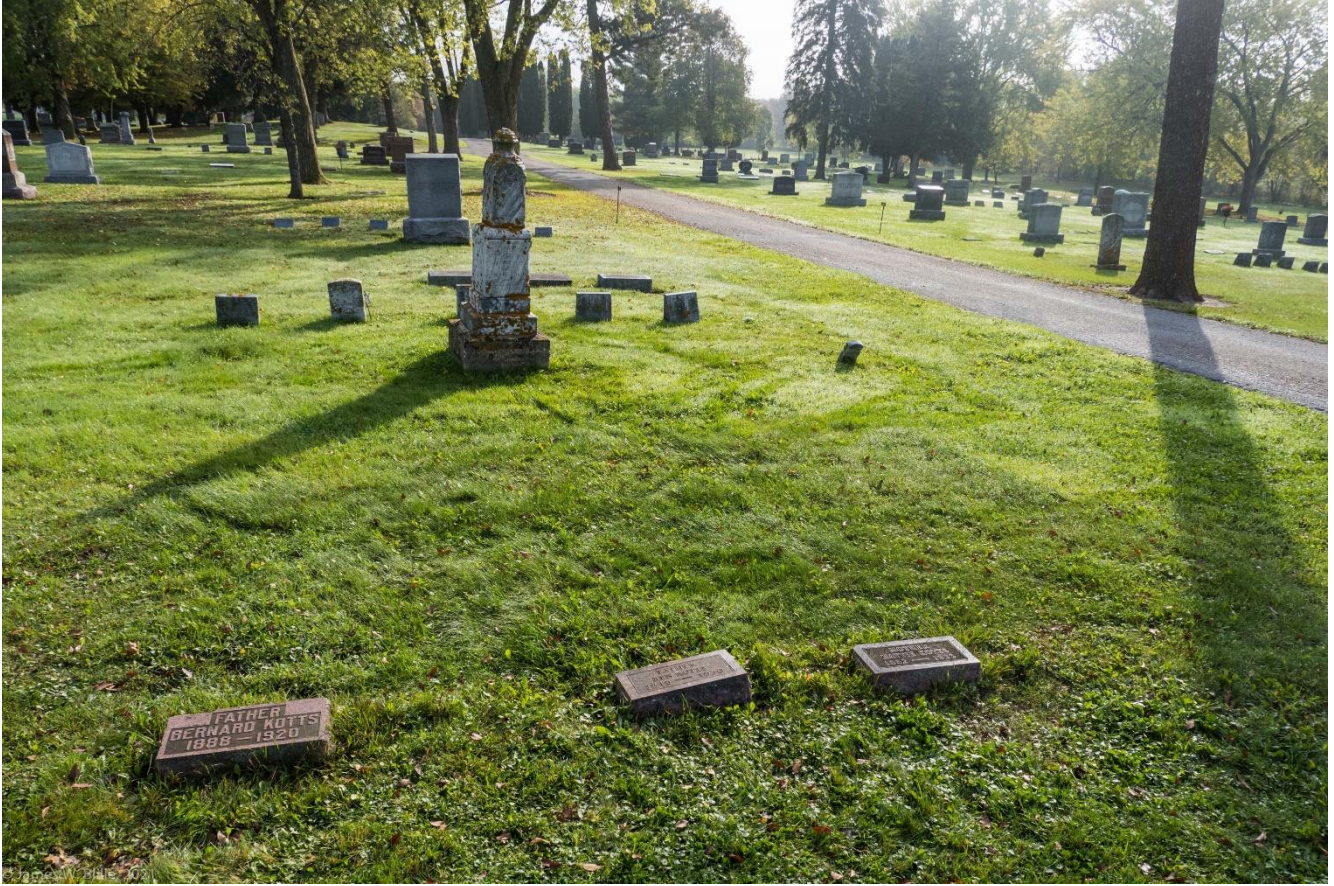


Figure 78 Benjamin Kotts Family Gravestone Group



Figure 79 Bernard (Bernie) Kotts Gravestone



Figure 80 Benjamin Kotts Gravestone



Figure 81 Hattie Kotts Gravestone



Figure 82 John, Ruth, and Marie Kotts Gravestone Group



Figure 83 Ruth Kotts Gravestone (Bernie's Sister)



Figure 84 John Kotts Gravestone (Bernie's Brother)



Figure 85 Marie Kotts Gravestone (John's Wife)