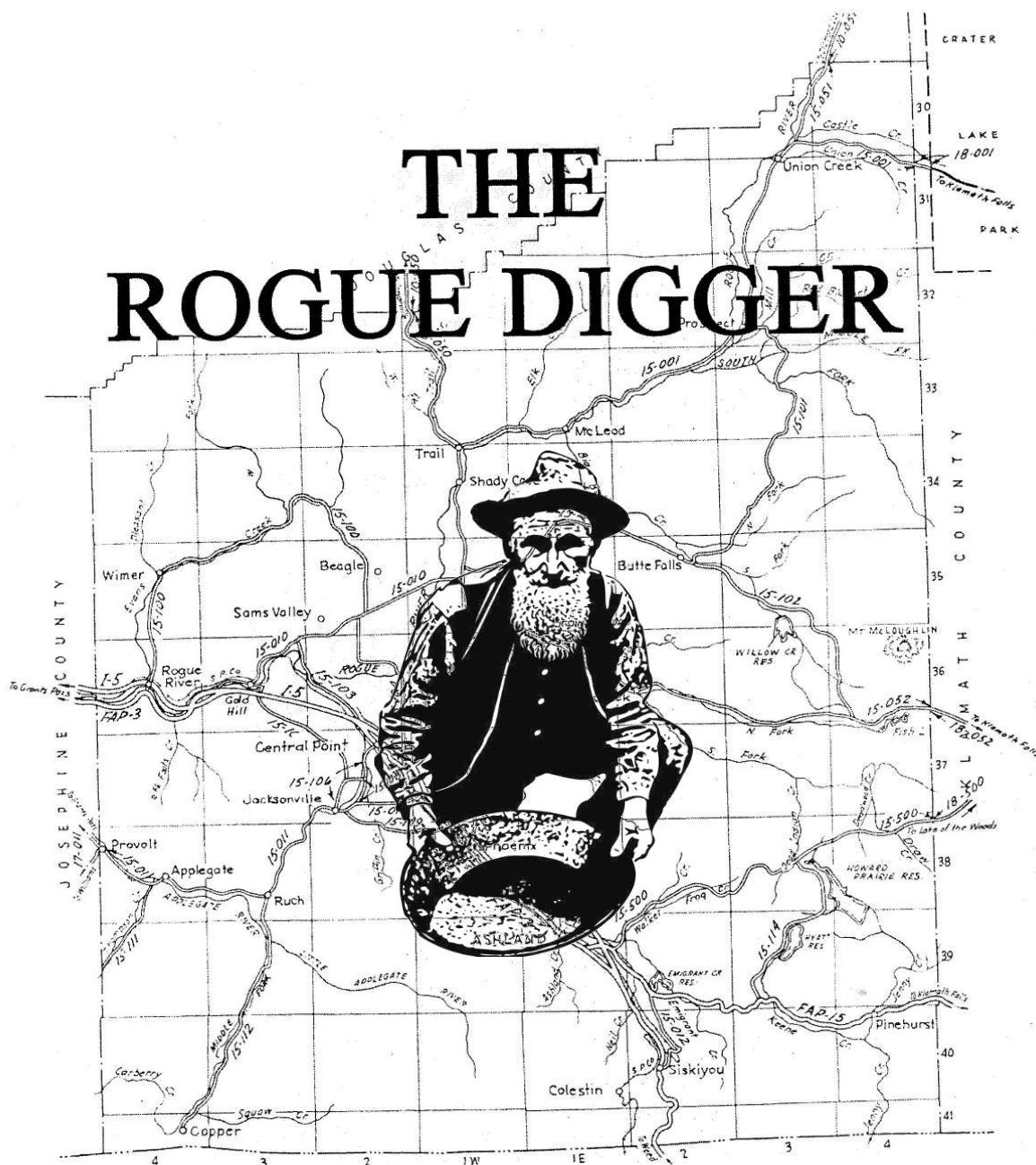


# THE ROGUE DIGGER



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*The Rogue Digger* is a publication of the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society ([www.rvgsociety.org](http://www.rvgsociety.org)), which is a non-profit organization governed by a thirteen-member Board consisting of elected officers, past president, and appointed directors of the Standing Committees, all with voting rights. A subscription to *The Rogue Digger* is included with membership. Annual dues are \$30 for an individual; additional members in the same household are \$15 each. Membership includes library checkout privileges. Our library website is [www.rvgslibrary.org](http://www.rvgslibrary.org). Background map of Jackson County, OR, and miner's image courtesy RVGS.

***Editor's Note:***

The Rogue Valley Genealogical Society is pleased to present in this issue the three winning entries in our Writing Contest, which was part of our recent 50th-year heritage celebration.

## MY JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

by Dianne Muller

~~March 15, 2014, Genealogy Library, Phoenix, Oregon~~

"I am so done with this! I give up!! I am never going to try this again," I thought angrily. What was I so upset about? I had tried many times over the last 20 years to ferret out new information about my family's genealogy, but I could never get anywhere. I certainly had tried. Using the four pages of handwritten family history that my mother received from a family member in the early 1990s, I hoped to add more data.

They state that John Sitlington, the ancestor of all the American Sitlingtons in my mother's family, lived in the 1600s and was a "full blood Scot." He had come to Ballyiston, Ireland (seven miles from Larne), and lived there running a "bleach green," a linen mill.<sup>1</sup>

In 2006, I had taken those papers to the Scottish Games in Pleasanton, California. I was so happy that I would learn which clan I belong to, and what my family's tartan looks like. The unhelpful person I talked with took a look at my papers and said, "These are not Scottish names. They might be from Normandy. You don't have a clan."

If John was a full blooded Scot, why didn't I have a clan? To say that I was disappointed is a major understatement. I spent the rest of the day at the Games feeling like a fraud. I had no clan; I looked longingly at the tartans for sale.

So I took classes at OLLI (Osher Life-long Learning Institute) about conducting genealogical research. In spite of my best efforts, I seldom found enough new information to keep me motivated. Over the next six years, I would occasionally sit down and try again. It usually only took a few days of work before I was completely frustrated and demoralized again.

But I couldn't let go of the nagging feeling that there was more to learn about my ancestors. So, in January of 2012, I took a DNA test. The results showed that I not only have 44% British and Irish DNA, but also 17% French and German, 31% Northern European, and 4% Scandinavian.<sup>2</sup>

Wow! Where the heck did the French and Scandinavian connections come from? I know those Norse invaders got around, but the French? The detective in me was reawakened. Now I had a real desire to follow the clues to find my ancestors.

So as I sat in the Genealogy Library in Phoenix, once again, I found it hard to admit defeat. The only reason I didn't gather up my papers and leave was because I had brought my friend Anita, who is a real genealogy enthusiast. She has been successfully gathering her family history for decades. I looked at the clock and realized that I would have to twiddle my thumbs for four hours until the library closed and Anita would be ready to leave.

With all this time available, I stopped my usual technique of looking for individual ancestors. Instead, I began browsing the public family trees on Ancestry. com. These trees contain the work of other amateur genealogists.

After a short time, I found the name John Sitlington, a name that I recognized. I opened the tree and saw the name as John Lamont Y Sitlington, Sr.<sup>3</sup>

Completely confused, I went to the lady at the reception desk and asked, "Does this make any sense to you? Is the Y a designation of a title, or is it like the 'de' in Spanish names?"

"I have never seen that before," she replied. "Why don't we Google it?"

I almost laughed. How many times has my daughter Tammy told me, "Just Google it, Mom." I almost told her not to bother, as I was sure that I didn't have any famous ancestors. I was just hoping to find the clan where my family were serfs.

I was stunned when the name we entered into the Google search engine pulled up an avalanche of information. It felt as though the doors to the vault had been thrown open, revealing the secrets that had been lost to my family for 350 years!

I have a clan! I have a clan. The Lamonts of Scotland. But why have I never heard this name in the family history? It took a trip to Scotland to uncover all the historical details to reveal this story:

*Ascog Castle, June 3, 1646*

*Mary Young Lamont, 23, stood on the Isle of Bute, gazing across the Firth of Clyde. She could see the Castle of Toward at the edge of the water. She pulled the green and blue plaid of the Lamont clan tightly around her. Protecting her from the wind whipping her hair, it provided no protection against what was happening at the Castle Toward.*

*From across the water she could hear the sounds that had terrified her for the last three days. The Campbells had mounted a siege on the Castle. She could hear the sound of swords clashing, the screams of pain and outrage as her clansmen were murdered. Women, children and men were being sacrificed in the name of revenge. It was a common occurrence in Scotland.*

*A week before, a group of Lamont men returned to the Castle courtyard, boasting that they had struck down thirty-three men, women and children in a Campbell village. She and her husband John knew there would be swift retribution from the Campbells. Therefore, she had quickly moved her children across the firth to the Isle of Bute, hoping that the barrier of the water would provide them with safety. If necessary, it would give them time to escape.*

*Only her anger kept her standing. She knew that if she sank to the ground sobbing, she might never be able to get up. These men, these stupid men, had so little regard for the lives of their fellow countrymen. They resorted to murder and mayhem to resolve every disagreement.*

*Like most women, Mary knew that she was expendable. If she died in childbirth, her husband would likely have a new wife in a short time. Now twenty-three, she had risked her life four times in the last seven years to provide her husband with the heirs to carry on the proud Lamont name. But she was not going to allow her precious sons—John, William, Hugh, and Andrew—to be murdered as she stood idly by. She stiffened her spine and unwound the plaid from her body. The wind caught the fabric and she watched as it spun away. She had to leave all evidence of her Lamont identity behind. Then she turned with her four little boys and made her way to where a boat was waiting.*

*Caught up in the adventure, the boys had no idea of the danger that they were in. Mary, with a small contingent of Lamont servants, managed the small craft across thirty-nine miles of open water, through the Firth of Clyde then across the North Channel. They landed at Larne, Ireland, with nothing to identify them as Lamonts.*

*Fearful that the Campbells might track them down, Mary changed their last names. John Lamont became John Sitlington, after the name of a small burn, or creek, on the Lamont land. His brothers became William White, Andrew Young, and Hugh Green; they never returned to Scotland. The family survived in Ireland, running a “bleach green,” manufacturing linen.<sup>4</sup>*

*In the 1740s, their descendants made their way to America from Ireland. They settled in the western mountains of Virginia, isolated and secure. If they knew this history, it was not passed on.*

*Like the tumblers in a lock sliding into place, things that had puzzled me for years began to finally make sense. I had never understood why the Sitlingtons had settled in such a remote place. Was the beauty of the countryside a reminder of the beauty of Scotland and Ireland? Or was the location chosen because it could be easily defended? Were the Campbells still considered a threat in the mid 1700s? Or were the echoes of a violent past still resonating with the settlers?*

I was so overwhelmed with this shocking information that it took me several weeks to assimilate it. For the first time I realized that as much as I love studying history, it takes on a whole new meaning when it is family history.

As I continued my research in the following months, there were surprising revelations. For example, Campbell women have been marrying the Lamonts for generations. In fact, some of the men killed in 1646 were grandchildren of Marjory Campbell.

To determine what information is accurate takes more research. So the hard slog began—separating the wheat from the chaff, the facts from the fiction. I Googled the Lamont and Campbell clan websites, as well as famous Scottish people. Historical information helped to confirm dates and events, especially marriages.

When my husband and I decided to travel to Europe in September 2015, my first commitment was to make stops in Scotland and Ireland. I hoped to learn more about my ancestor Mary Young Lamont. Without her daring escape to Ireland with her four boys, I would not be here to tell her story.

We took the ferry from Gourock, west of Glasgow, to Dunoon, Scotland. Our first stop was a castle that sits on a hill just above the ferry landing. Inside is the Castle House Museum, featuring the history of the town.

I was surprised when the elderly docent at the information desk looked at me curiously and said, “You look really familiar to me. Have we met before?” I smiled and told him it was my first visit to Dunoon. When I told him that I am a descendent of the Lamont clan, he sprang into action, in spite of his advanced age.

He took me on a tour of the museum, showing me the display about the June 3, 1646, attack on the Lamont clan. There were pictures showing the destroyed castle. And just steps away from the museum, the churchyard where Mary’s husband John, and thirty-five other Lamont clan leaders had been hung. Their bodies had been thrown into a mass grave, with some of the men still breathing.<sup>5</sup>

Settling me at a desk, he quickly found the book, *The Lamont Clan from 1215 to 1935*. As I reviewed this book, he continued to pile volumes on Scottish and Irish history on the desk. I laughingly called a halt due to the fact that we only had a few hours before we needed to board the ferry.

When we were ready to leave, I thanked him profusely. Once again he studied my face. After a few moments he declared triumphantly, “I know who you remind me of.”

“Who would that be?” I asked with a smile.

“Ann Young! She lives just outside of Dunoon.”

I was stunned. I have never felt that I look like anyone in my family...not my parents, brothers, aunts or cousins. That I may bear some resemblance to the descendants of Mary Young Lamont's clan, the Youngs, is truly gratifying. I never felt that I truly belonged in this family.

Maybe it is time to change that perception.

My journey into the past has led me to a history that I might never have known were it not for my genealogy research. The popular PBS series "Who Do You Think You Are?" asks the question that I have been asking myself for many years. I know who I am in my present life, with all its current history. But the richness of my identity has been discovered in the archives of the past. And the connections to my ancestors are alive within my genes. I am humbled and made grateful by the stories of their sacrifice and bravery.

I now have more information than I ever dreamed of acquiring. Genealogy has given me a peek into the past, and at the same time has provided a combining of the present and the past. Is there more research that needs to be done? Absolutely.

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from The Sitlington Family, Virginia Maclay Dickinson

<sup>2</sup> 23andme.com/you/ancestry/composition/

<sup>3</sup> Sourced from RobertAYoungFamilyTree2012

<sup>4</sup> Sourced from Castle House Museum, Dunoon, Scotland

<sup>5</sup> Sourced from Castle House Museum, Dunoon, Scotland

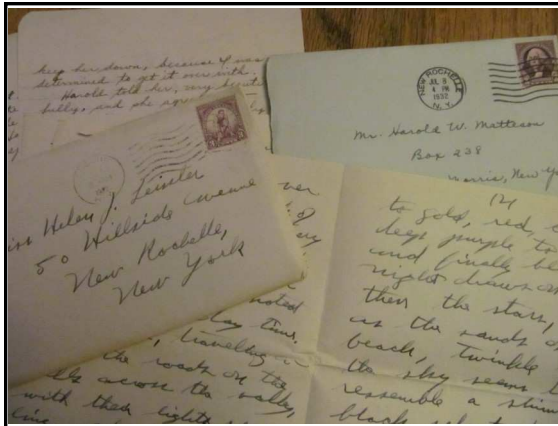


*Lamont Crest & Toward Castle*



*Research in Dunoon Castle Museum*





## THE MARRIAGE THAT ALMOST DIDN'T HAPPEN

by Lynn Leissler

Helen craned her neck, looking out her bedroom window and down the street, as she did each day that summer. When the mailman rounded the corner toward her house, she hurried downstairs to intercept him so her grandmother wouldn't hear the mail as it dropped in the letterbox. Gram had not yet seen the letters addressed to Helen, nor had she wondered at her granddaughter's sudden interest in mail retrieval. Just as Helen found what she sought, she heard her grandmother's heavy shoes on the wood floor. She quickly stuffed the envelope down the front of her dress then relinquished the rest of the pile. Back in her room, she closed the door and lay across her bed, hugging Harold's letter to her heart before slitting open the envelope with her father's ornate letter opener.

July 9, 1932

Dear Helen:

*Received your letter at 11 and answering at 12:30. I could not answer sooner because it took me an hour & fifteen minutes to get up enough courage to start the walk up here and 15 minutes to walk the half mile up the hill. It seems that 1 and 1/2 hours is the limit for a speedy answer. So let it be.*

*As re photo of myself. I have none here so as soon as I have one taken I'll send it along. That will be tomorrow as I only dress up once a week, Sunday. Besides an exchange of our photos cannot be a fair exchange. The quality of your photo will surpass by far the quality of mine. (Later he wrote, I had a photo taken of myself but it is terrible. If I look like it I'll jump in the lake three times and come out twice.)*

She read and reread his three or four scrawled pages. He asked her to forgive his miserable handwriting. She told him she found it easy to read, not mentioning that it had taken a bit of getting used to.

July 11, 1932

Dear Harold:

*Here is more speed, as you requested. Uncle Sam must be helping us, for I received your letter at nine o'clock this morning.*

*I am sorry about the photo as I cannot send it for quite some time. We have not yet taken all the pictures on the roll, and therefore cannot have it developed yet. As soon as I get a picture, I will send it to you. This will be in about a week. Thank you for the promise of your photo.*

At seventeen, Helen had never kissed a boy, nor even dated. She had experienced a few girlhood crushes,

but lacked the confidence to play the coquette. When she and Harold were introduced at a mutual friend's party two months before Helen's high school graduation, she felt an instant attraction. The twinkle in his eye captivated her, love at first sight, she would later claim. They danced that night, and though normally shy with boys to the point of avoidance, she felt comfortable in his arms.

He took her to Playland Amusement Park at Rye Beach, calling at her home and meeting Gram. Their families weren't acquainted, but after questioning Harold, Gram seemed content with an innocent outing. However, Helen's aunt Blanche warned her Gram would block a developing relationship, so when he asked her to the movies, she told her grandmother she was going with a girlfriend. A boy and girl alone in a darkened movie theater would be considered inappropriate.

Each summer Harold's family rented rooms at a farm near Morris, New York, a town Helen had never heard of. Twenty-one and unemployed, Harold went with them. According to his description, *Morris is a town of about 700. No railroad. It has 4 corners and a traffic light, a hotel, two feed stores, 4 churches & etc.* As to the farm, he wrote, *Just in passing I'll list the livestock on the farm: 4 cows, 1 calf, 6 rabbits, 20 chickens, 17 pheasants, 1 dog, 1 pig, and 9 so-called human beings.*

They kept the post office busy with what Harold called a letter-writing speed contest. They wrote about the movies they saw, about swimming, him near Morris, her at beaches on Long Island Sound. He expressed boredom in his tiny town, while she complained of the doldrums in New Rochelle, a suburb of New York City. They continued to promise photographs, but neither felt he or she possessed one decent enough. The final exchange came wrapped in apologies from the giver, reassurances from the recipient.

She kept his letters buried deep in her closet, fearing Gram might go through her drawers again. A few years earlier, a schoolmate had told Helen the facts of life and Helen foolishly wrote down her tantalizing, newfound information. Gram found the piece of paper in Helen's dressing table drawer and forbade her granddaughter to ever speak to the girl again. There was much more at stake in Helen's current secret. If Gram didn't allow her to write to Harold, she wasn't sure she had the courage for defiance.

Gram ruled the household with an iron fist, and clung to the Victorian ideas that had formed her girlhood and by which she raised her two daughters, now grown women still single, still living at home. Helen became part of the household when her mother died in childbirth. She had been four. Her father had to work, so he left his daughter in his mother's care. Word by word, incident by incident, Gram pushed her son out of the picture and took over. Grief rendered him helpless to fight, and in the end he thought Helen would be better off in a family setting.

Helen continued to live for Harold's letters. When he described the surrounding Mohawk Valley, she thought she might swoon at the beauty of his words, knowing she'd seen beyond his lighthearted banter and gaining a glimpse into his soul.



*I wish you were here. I could give you rides on empty roads through the prettiest section of the country you could imagine. The hills on the horizon; the farms with their fields and buildings; cattle here and there on the slopes; the valley with the river winding through it, roads crossing and re-crossing; a train tiny as a toy, running along. Just to sit there and gaze at the landscape as a whole; the immensity of it; the peaceful tranquility. The crowning glory of it all is the scene bathed in the reddish gold of a sunset. The colors range from yellow to gold, red, cerise, deep purple to blue and finally black as night draws on. It is then that all Nature and Man are at peace with one another.*

*And then the stars, countless as the sands on the beach, twinkle until the sky seems to resemble a shimmering black velvet drape thickly studded with pearls. Occasionally, a star leaps from its place and plunges into oblivion in a blaze of light. And the moon, stealing over the hill, sheds its silvery light over the fields until they take on a clarity of detail noted only in the daytime. The cars, traveling along the roads across the valley, with their lights resembling huge fireflies as they disappear and reappear behind trees and knolls. And a great quiet descends on the valley broken only by the occasional lowing of a cow far off on a hill.*

Between the lines of their hesitant disclosure, affection grew, but neither gave expression to those feelings. Declaration came in the Fall when he returned to New Rochelle and they started seeing each other regularly.

It was as autumn leaves fell that Helen secretly practiced writing *Helen J. Matteson* and *Mrs. Harold W. Matteson*.

Aunt Blanche had confronted Gram, saying Helen should be allowed the opportunities she and her sister, Jessie, had been denied. Gram relented, but only to a point, so when Harold proposed, the couple kept their engagement a secret. Helen knew that when her aunts had turned twenty-one, their mother gave them each a diamond ring, implying a man could give them nothing more.

Gram, however, could see the relationship was growing serious and fearing loss of control, she employed a harsh means of control. She stopped speaking to Helen, unless absolutely necessary. As an exception, however, she accused Harold's mother of trying to make a match between Harold and Helen because of Gram's money. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Nor was Helen's family rich, although with four employed people in the house, it appeared the family was well off.

The two young people were totally besotted, and desperately hatched one plan after another, but concluded in the end to wait, hoping and praying things would get better. As the Depression raged on, Harold struggled to find work, once landing a job at a Pontiac dealership where he sold one car. To his father.

Things came to a head on a warm August evening in 1933. Harold took Helen to Diehl's for ice cream, and they decided he would announce their engagement to her family that evening.

Later that night she wrote in her journal:

*When we got home the whole family sat on the porch and talked. Harold and I were on pins and needles. Finally*

*everyone went to bed and even Gram was going, but I managed to keep her down[stairs], because I was determined to get it over with. Harold told her, very beautifully, and she agreed right away. We were both terribly surprised. She said he [Harold] would have to speak to my father, and as soon as he came in, Harold spoke to him and he approved immediately. Helen ended her entry, I was never so happy in my whole life.*

Gram resumed speaking to them.

Instead of their usual Saturday night movie that week, they selected an engagement ring, which she wore with her wedding band for over forty years, until arthritis twisted her fingers and the ring no longer fit.

They planned to marry within a year, but Harold still struggled to find steady work. They wanted to set up their first home with everything new and have some savings. In 1934 they saw each other almost daily, but wrote impassioned letters to help fill the lonely hours between visits. A missed visit was close to tragic, from reading their professions of love.

Harold wrote, *Goodnight dear! I love you. I'll always love you. I adore you. I'll soon see you. Not soon enough but as soon as possible. Good night dear. My Helen, I love you.*

Helen responded, *"Every waking moment I think of you, and when I am asleep, I dream of you. All my love and kisses to the most wonderful man in the world. Your sweetheart, Helen."*

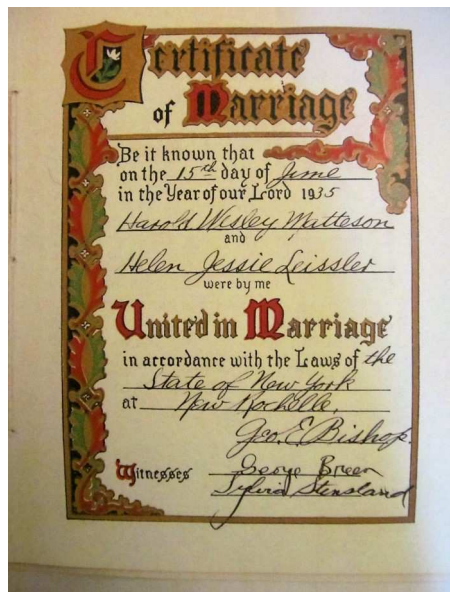
And so the letters went, their pens swiftly recording their love, both romantic and practical. He spoke of how it would be when they both worked in the kitchen using the pots and pans they bought together, adding, *It is such a nice feeling to debate as to whether we should stock celery soup in our pantry or not.* She spoke of making a home for them and raising their future children to be fine people and good citizens.

Finally, in 1935, three years and two months after they met, Harold and Helen married in her grandmother's home. The living room resembled a forest of potted palms and flowers. The nervous bride and groom exchanged their vows, anxious to be done with the festivities and start the new life they had so long envisioned.

They had fifty-nine years of ever-deepening love, parted only by Harold's death. There were challenges, too. They paid a contractor to build a house, and the man absconded with their funds.

Until they repaid Harold's father the money they had borrowed, they lived on a tighter than usual budget, even giving up the newspaper. They had surprises, too, like a third child when they had only planned on two. And they had adventure. When Harold proposed, he promised to take her to California, and she thought it a nice sentiment, but an unlikely reality. Not only did he take her to the west coast, but in their forties they moved to Oregon, and eventually traveled to every continent but Antarctica. Their marriage worked as well as they dreamed it would, for they learned the give and take of a good relationship. She was overly practical, he a dreamer. She offered an anchor, he wings. They loved and respected each other enough not to tread where wounds might destroy. Helen declared theirs had been a perfect marriage.

Author's note: Once Harold and Helen married, Gram came around and loved Harold dearly. She treasured her three greatgrandchildren, and we kids have sweet memories of her. She called me her Little Rosebud and died the summer after my ninth-grade year.



### Sources/Endnotes:

Excerpts [in italics] from original letters (including postmarked envelopes) between Harold Matteson and Helen Leissler, dated 1932 and 1934. [These letters are in the possession of Lynn Matteson Leissler.]

Excerpts [in italics] from Helen Jessie Leissler's handwritten journals, dated 1933 and 1934. [These journals are in the possession of Lynn Matteson Leissler.]

Photograph, wedding, taken in June of 1935 in Bernstein's Studio, New Rochelle, Westchester, New York, USA. [Several originals in possession of Lynn Matteson Leissler.]

Pictures from family photo albums, as well as descriptions, i.e., the living room at the wedding. [Original albums in possession of Lynn Matteson Leissler.]

Wedding certificate of Harold Wesley Matteson and Helen Jessie Leissler, from a wedding booklet, signed by George E. Bishop, minister, witnessed by George Breen and Sylvia Stensland, dated 15 June 1935. [Booklet in possession of Lynn Matteson Leissler.]



*Beret Kyllø Husby Moe*

*"Let us not forget our ancestors during all the things that happen to us  
because they give us an inheritance to keep which is much greater than  
many of us will believe."*

*-Ivar Aasen*

By Mary Bertrand (Granddaughter)  
February 2016

# THE WEDDING RING

By Mary L. Bertrand

"Med denner ringer tar jeg til ekte" <sup>1</sup>

(With this ring, I thee Wed)

## A Symbol of a Dedicated Life

My maternal grandmother, as a widow, was living with our family where my father farmed in Howard, South Dakota. I was born in that family home in 1932, so from the very first, Grandma Moe was an important part of my life. It seems we never realize how important until many years later. For example, what did I really know about her and/or her past history? I do remember that she lived with us when we moved to Bremerton, Washington, and that I was just a teenager when she passed away in 1949. But it was not until the 1970s that my mother received a book from her cousin, Reidar Kylo who lived in Hell, Norway, that I really knew about her background. Gard Og Slekt, a.k.a. Farm and Family<sup>2</sup>, is a beautiful, comprehensive collection of information about our grandmother's ancestors dating back to the Middle Ages. It seems that at that time the farm, Kylo, was actually an entire hamlet. Reading it now, I realize the book is a valuable resource of family connections. But it is also a fascinating history of the Kylo farm lands and how they were divided over the centuries and changed ownership many times. This account is an intriguing story listing owners from the cloistered monks at the Cathedral in Trondheim in 1363, to church ownership prior to the Reformation, to the present-day division into numerous farms.<sup>3</sup>

But I will limit this story to the families of the lower Kylo farm who were direct descendants of Gunnar Halvorsen Ingstadness Kylo, who in 1825 "med denner ringer tar jeg til ekte" Beret Oldstr Avelsgaard.<sup>4</sup>

Gunnar took over the farm and together they had six children. Unfortunately he only lived to be 37 years old. Beret operated the farm with her six unsupported children for awhile, and then married Torstein T. Roan, who purchased the farm. Four more children were born to this couple before he passed away at the age of 49. So it was that half of the farm now went to Hagen Gunderson Kylo, Beret's son from her first marriage and the other part went to Torstein and Beret's first born son. We now learn that Hagen was Reidar Kylo's grandfather and Hagen's sister, Sigrid, was Grandmother Moe's mother.<sup>5</sup>

The going-to-America fever was rampant as the word to get free farm land to cultivate was offered. Beret did not give up her portion of the farm before she left for America, at the age of 62 in 1866, with three of her children.

Sigrid Gunnarstr Kylo—Beret and Hagen's second child, born February 16, 1827—had married Gunnar Arnstsen Husby in the Vaernes Church when she was 27 years old. Six of their children were born in Norway. But by 1866 "like many others at this time, they were gripped with "America fever" and they sold the farm and went west across the Atlantic to America."<sup>6</sup>

Four years after they arrived in America, their seventh child, Beret, my Grandmother Moe, was born in Jackson, Minnesota, on April 15, 1870. I regret not asking Grandma Moe about her life in Jackson and how she met Ole. But recently I did discover that they lived next door to each other. From the Minnesota State Census (1895) I learned that the Huseby's neighbor had a boarder named Ole Neilson. Beret was 15 at the time and Ole was 17.<sup>7</sup> Mother had told us that it was common to take the father's name, and Nelson was Ole's father. We were told that Ole later changed his last name to Moe.

We also know that by the time Beret Huseby was at least eighteen years old, she was standing next to Ole Moe on May 9, 1889, as he solemnly pledged, "With this ring I thee Wed" as he placed it on her finger. Little did he realize at the time that the loving sentiment, "fra Ole" he had engraved inside this symbol of their marriage would become a very important part of its journey.<sup>8</sup>

"In Norway, it is a custom to place the wedding ring on the right hand. This custom is based on a spiritual commitment. In the Bible, it was the practice to wear rings on the right hand, the hand of authority and power, completing the pledge of commitment. The Power and Authority came from the right hand of God, the Right Hand meaning Christ. Therefore, wearing the ring on the right hand in Christ and through Christ blessed the marriage."<sup>9</sup>

Although I do not know, even to this day, whether Grandma Moe wore the ring on her right or left hand, I do know that the meaning described in Norwegian folklore was not lost on Grandma Moe. She, indeed, was a faithful servant and truly believed in the power and authority of God Almighty. She was a hard worker totally dedicated to her husband and children, as they often moved from one place to another.

I can surmise that she wore this ring for several years while living in Jackson, Minnesota, where seven of her children were born. Moving must have been incredibly difficult in those times because I remember my mother telling us that they traveled to North Dakota by covered wagon. We know that this must have been at least by 1907, as her son Oscar was born that year in Lamore, North Dakota. Our mother Sarah was born in 1895, so as a twelve year old she related many memories of that trip to her children.

According to the 1910 census,<sup>10</sup> the Moe family had moved to Howard, South Dakota, where three more children were born. And it is in Howard, South Dakota, that the mystery of the wedding ring occurs. Presumably they lived there at least for the next nine years. Unfortunately, Ole Moe was killed by a runaway horse in 1919.<sup>11</sup>

It must have been difficult for the young widow with small children to manage the farm by herself, so they must have moved, as there is no listing of the Moe family at this place on the 1920 census. My guess is that sometime during this period before they moved, our dear grandmother lost her ring.

Although I have no knowledge of Grandma's life for the next ten or so years, I do know that sometime in the 1930s (and perhaps even before that) she was living with my parents on their property in Howard, South Dakota. I also know that she lived with our family when we moved to Minnesota and later by the 1940s, she moved to be with my family in the state of Washington. I'm sure that during all these moves, she must have wondered about her lost ring, but unfortunately she passed away in 1949, so she would never know that the mystery of the lost ring would be solved.



Naturally other occupants had come to live on that farm in Howard, South Dakota, where Ole Moe and family had previously lived. I do not know if the next residents were the Noble family, but we know now that Mrs. E.J. Noble happened to find the ring out by the granary still in excellent condition some 30 years after the Moe family resided there. It is not uncommon for folks to know who lived on the property prior to their move. That was the case regarding the farm, since the Nobles did know that Ole Moe and family had lived there at one time. So when Mrs. Noble found the ring with the engraving "fra Ole," she knew to whom it belonged, but had no idea how to find members of this family. The thoughtful lady kept it in hopes that someday she truly could return it to someone in the Moe family.

Amazing to think about, but thirty years after Mrs. Noble found the ring, she heard that Sarah Pinsch, Ole Moe's daughter, would be in Madison, South Dakota. What a blessing in these small rural areas that everyone forms a community and pretty much knows each other. Because of this, she was able to connect with Sarah Pinsch and return the ring. The following newspaper article tells the story:



Now this heirloom will be cherished by the generations who have been born since she lived with us those many years ago. This precious wedding ring represents not only a dear Grandmother who gave us so much love and loyalty, but also a symbol of a lineage that can be traced back to the village Kylo in the Middle Ages.

