

# Memories

## **Roberta (Bobbie) Anderson Boehm**

Some of the incidents I can recall as a child while going to Sims are the Christmas programs we participated in. I also recall the Sunday School classes and the choir. Most of all I remember driving the horse and buggy to the summer Bible School classes. On the last night of the program, we had a picnic and all the parents came, along with all of the mosquitos.

## **Ruth Natalie (Pederson) Britton**

### **THOUGHTS FROM THE PAST**

A sudden thunderstorm on Memorial Day at the Sims Cemetery sent my little sisters and me running for shelter beneath our buggy standing nearby. We had come with our parents, Jonathan and Emelie Pederson for the annual gathering to care for the graves and then to enjoy refreshments and fellowship at the church basement. The aroma of food, the din of voices, the vigor and vitality of the people, the beauty of the buildings, the cemetery experience remain in my memory.

To me, Uncle Amund and my grandparents were only inscriptions on the gravestones for a time. Later, I knew they were pioneers of this Sims community and I learned of their contributions. Surely the children of Ole and Benedikte Pederson are one of them: Simon, David, Jonathan, Jacob, Lena, and Anna. This 100th anniversary celebration brings to mind the part this church, its parsonage, its cemetery had in our lives.

## **Alice Johnson Donnis**

I am one of eleven children of Albert and Elna Johnson. My dad was the first baby baptized in the Sims Lutheran Church. My brother, Earl, sister, Beatrice (deceased) and myself were all baptized in that church.

I have wonderful memories of the Sims Church, as I stayed, every summer, with my grandmother, Petrine Johnson and Aunt Inga until I was 14. I also remember Rev. and Mrs. Thornell and their daughter, Sylvia. My grandparents, Arjan and Petrine Johnson were both charter members.

Our immediate family all moved to Santa Monica, California in 1939 after our father passed away. He is buried in the Sims Cemetery. My mother died in 1968, and is buried in Santa Monica. There are still nine of us living, Earl, Arnold, Gaylord, Arion, Ronald, Mae Robinson, Muriel Sucher, Fern Sendt and myself. Jack Johnson and Beatrice Katzenberger are both dead.

## **Valborg Fisher**

I remember woman suffrage in 1921. My mother, Elora (Mrs. P. R. Peterson) was the first woman to hold an office in the Sims congregation. She was treasurer. I remember the day they came over and asked if she would take it. It was during this time too that she was janitor at the church. She would decorate the church for funerals in black and white steamers. She would line the graves with white muslin.

One Sunday morning Rev. Dordahl came to our house and told our mother he had forgotten to get some communion wine and wondered what could be done. This was shortly before church was to begin. Mother said Barney could ride his bike to Almont and find Ole Ellingson and get some grape juice. It was a windy day and the old road to Almont went over that high hill. Rev. Dordahl said he would preach until Barney returned. When he saw me come in he knew Barney was back and he could leave the pulpit and go on with his service. Barney was a very tired boy.

The basement under the church was made in 1915. Everything went fine until Theo. Feland's funeral in 1925. I was at the organ and Dad was sitting by my side. People were entering the church and more chairs were brought in as it was a very large funeral. Suddenly I heard a crack like the shot of a gun. Dad whispered, "Did you hear that?" I nodded. He left at once because he knew what it was. The floor stringers cracked and needed to be braced. He got John Jacobson, Oscar Thorson and several others to help and they got some railroad ties from the woodpile and braced the floor during the funeral. It could have been a catastrophe.

In June 1905 the members of the congregation decided the inside of the church and pews should be varnished with two coats of shiny clear varnish. Gabriel Peterson and P.H. Hoovestad were to do the job. I don't know what kind of varnish was used but the pews became so very sticky. They were especially bad in hot weather. As a child I don't ever remember a time when the pews were not sticky. Some people brought paper to put on the pews. I waited patiently every Sunday for the scratch, scratch, scratch as people would rise and wondering if some day part of a dress or the seat of a pair of pants would not rise with its owner.

## **Nettie Hansen**

I found this newspaper announcement of a party that was held for my parents amongst my belongings.

A surprise party was held for Mr. and Mrs Tobias Olson and six daughters by the Sims Church congregation, after services on Sunday morning (Spring of 1914). Olsons left for Norway a few days later. Their oldest son Arnold was born while they were in Norway. They returned in the spring of 1915. A gift was presented to them.



## Norman Hansen

We came out here in 1907. We lived 10 miles from the church and that was quite a ways to go by sleigh. So, the only time we went to church was for the Christmas program. We went with the sleigh and us kids didn't mind the ride at all. It was fun. We went to church with the neighbors, Oscar Olins and Walter Lundstrom's parents. We would take two sleighs, one behind the other. We sang Christmas carols on the way. We loved it! The Christmas program was always in the evening so we rode home with only moonlight to light our way. The kids were all excited during the program. After the program they would hand out treats. I remember one time a kid threw an apple up in the balcony and broke out one of the lights.

I remember when Rev. Breen (1912-1916) had church services at Sims in the morning and then he would walk out 10 miles to our school house (Peck School) and have services for us there. Somebody at church would give him a ride back to Sims. Sometimes someone would drive out to meet him.

## Doris Christianson Hickie

I have many fond memories of Sims Lutheran Church. Being baptized there in 1923 and confirmed in 1937. I remember the Christmas programs, Luther League parties, and being a member of the L.D.R. and church suppers. I enjoyed the days of Norwegian services and how the old timers would really sing out their praises to the Lord in their native tongue.

## Eleanor Pederson Hillmann

My parents, Jonathan and Emelie Pederson, and my grandparents, Ole and Bendikte Martine Pederson were members of the Sims Church, and though I was a member of the Almont Lutheran Church, on numerous occasions I had the opportunity to attend and participate in the services and social events of the Sims Lutheran Church.

I never knew my grandmother who joined the Sims Church in 1885, but an old newspaper clipping written at the time of her death in 1910, by A. Holritz, gave me an insight into her life and love of the church. I'd like to quote from that article:

*"Mrs. Pederson was a true Christian in every sense of the word and the Sims congregation will long feel the loss of one whose everyday life was an inspiration to higher motives and nobler lives to everyone with whom she came in contact....The funeral procession, consisting of about forty rigs....left the home of the mourners about 2:30 p.m., and gathered again in the church, where services were conducted by Rev. G. N. Isolany. Speeches were also made by Rev. Morstad and Messrs. Rasmusson and Simon Pederson, son of the deceased....The pallbearers were Theo. Feland, J. E. Olin, A. A. Johnson, J. O. Jacobson, John Jacobson, and Fred Holritz, Sr. The floral offerings were many and very beautiful."*

These thoughts have brought me closer to my grandmother and her church.

## Patty Feland Hinton

The earliest memory of my life is one of climbing over the benches up in the balcony during Sunday School. I remember in detail the red, ruffly dress I was wearing. My mother said I was 2 1/2 years old.

The basic childlike faith developed in Sims has never left me and has carried me through the ups and downs of my life. When Grandma Feland died, I thought the whole world had come to her funeral because I had never seen so many cars and people in one place before.

My dad would toll the bell on New Year's Eve and when someone died, one roll for each year of the deceased one's life.

The Ladies Aid meetings were all very special. Even running around the legs of grown-ups during the fifty year celebration is an outstanding memory.

We four children sat in the front row so our mother could keep an eye on us while she played the organ.

The Christmas programs, marching in, singing, saying our "pieces," the big Christmas tree with real candles on, summer school, and all the wonderful people of Sims Church are still a very important part of my life.

## Grant Johnson

Although it has been several years since I lived at home and attended the Sims Lutheran Church regularly, I still consider myself an active member of the church. Most of my memories of the church are from times when I was a young boy.

I remember Bible school, Sunday school, and church gatherings, especially Harvest Festival. Extra clothes were always taken along because we always expected to play a football game on the church lawn. It was always fun to sit upstairs during services. Hardly anyone sat up there but you still had to behave because the minister could easily see you and Willard was right behind you.

I have many fond memories of the Sims Church and am looking forward to many more in the future.

## A TRIBUTE TO JAMIE LARSON BAUER, 1960-1979

### by Kay Johnson

Jamie was a very special friend to me, in fact everyone who met her thought she was someone special. We grew up together and our experiences together were many, both in church and school. Jamie met everything she did with a challenge. She was very athletic and "tomboyish" in certain ways but also very lady-like and charming when the situation called for it.



I remember the many years we went to "Camp of the Cross" together. Jamie was the most popular camper, and I was proud to be her friend. In high school, she was captain of the girls' basketball team, a cheerleader, and Homecoming Queen. She treated all her classmates and underclassmen equal and had a special gift of making everyone feel good about themselves.

At first, I could not understand her illness and sudden death, and I cannot say I do now, especially for someone who played such a special role here on earth, but I accept God's ways.

### Lois (Larson) Klaudt

I remember Mom was a church organist. She started when P. R. Peterson was choir director. She played for church while we were growing up, and I know there were very few Sundays we missed - unless the roads were impassible. She was there to play for funerals also.

### Tillie Larson

#### SWEDEN TO SIMS TO MANDAN - "WONDERFUL YEARS" SAYS PIONEER *"I wish I could live them all over again".*

So states Mrs. Tillie Larson in telling of her more than 70 years in Morton county and Mandan where she now resides at 202 6th Ave. N.W. *"They were wonderful years, I wouldn't want to change one of them"* smilingly recalls the widow of the late Louis Larson, long time Northern Pacific passenger engineer.

To illustrate her point she proudly exhibits a gold charm bracelet containing a charm apiece for each of her seven grandchildren. The heart shaped charms are engraved with the names of the seven and on the opposite side with their birthdates. Sadly, however, she points to the charm bearing the name John Hunter, grandson from Missouri who lost his life in th Korean war. Two great grandchildren are sons and daughters of the Robert Larsons of Cody, Wyo., and two the son and daughter of Mrs. Lois Hunter of Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Mrs. Larson's story has its beginning in Sweden - her birthplace three quarters of a century ago. She was three months old when her parents, the Nels Swansons, made the Atlantic crossing to America. Her brother, Herman, also a resident of Mandan, was four years at the time.

Chicago was the Swanson's home for three years where Mr. Swanson worked in a pullman shop where railroad coaches were made. His training as a cabinet maker stood him in good stead all of his life - in building his home on the North Dakota prairie as well as fashioning caskets for the neighborhood when death struck.

Two more children were born to the family in Chicago - a son who died in infancy and the late Mrs. Michael Lang of Mandan.

In 1883 the family came to Sims where Mr. Swanson had already filed on a homestead three miles south of the booming town and built a small house. Neighborhood women looking at Mrs. Swanson's lace curtained windows prophesied *"You won't keep it like this long."* But she did - all her life - fondly remembers Mrs. Larson, and the house was thereby made a 'cozy home'. *"They were the best days of my life - those on the farm with my parents. Now they are called ranches - but in those days they were farms."*

Sims boasted a brick yard, a hotel, boarding houses, two stores owned by Holritz and Timmerman, a school, and a two story Lutheran pastor's house where church services were held in the second story until a church was built.

The Swanson children, including Andy and William who were born on the homestead, attended school in Sims although it necessitated a three mile walk each way every day. Two of the first teachers she calls to mind were Mrs. Gaustad, the pastor's wife, and Mrs. Wadeson.

Winters don't seem as cold now explains Mrs. Larson in recollecting the furious blizzards which at times claimed lives because unfenced prairies provided no guide posts to travelers. *"Now homes are modern, even in rural areas, and winters are nothing"*.

She tells how her father owed his life to a lantern hung on a post in a farmyard as he became lost and wandered in the opposite direction of his home when enroute from Sims in a blizzard. His faint cries for help were heard by members of the farm family who found him exhausted and assisted him into their home. The next day a messenger was sent on skis to tell Mrs. Swanson of the safety of her husband.

Summers sometimes also proved worrisome. A tornado ripped to pieces the home of a neighbor named Johnson, and one of the sons was flung into a tree and another lay in the yard with a broken leg. But no damage ever occurred to the Swansons although Mrs. Larson remembers how her brothers and sisters would all cuddle around the little pioneer mother in the basement as she prayed for her family's safety.

The Indian scare in 1890 wasn't so fearsome to the children though. They looked with so much fun to the time when they might be sent into the coal mine at the foot of a hill for safety should the Indians come, while the pioneer settlers were prepared to man the fort built on top of the same hill. But the occasion never arrived for either use of the fort or mine.

Death in the community was an occasion for haste in the Swanson family. As Mr. Swanson constructed the casket, always painted black, Mrs. Swanson with the aid of her daughters, made the white muslin lining and pillow with a ruffled edge.

The years passed, and in 1902 Tillie became the



bride of Louis Larson, whose parents lived two miles from the Swansons. Young Louis had gone to work for the railroad in Mandan in his teens 'wiping' engines. He progressed rapidly, says Mrs. Larson, *"But I told him I wouldn't marry him until he was an engineer"*.

The wedding at the Swanson home was followed by a charivari in which *"shingles on the house were shot through"* she laughingly recalls. A wedding trip to the west coast and San Francisco was a midwinter delight until they were plunged back to reality upon their return here on the coldest day of the winter and they saw the NP water tank as a solid mass of ice as the train pulled in.

The young couple set up housekeeping at 308 5th Avenue N. W. at the house later known for many years as the home of Martin Larson, a brother of Louis. Neighbors, recalls Mrs. Larson, were the Roy Countryman's who lived in the present James Stark house, the Beaudoins who lived in the present Lyman residence at north end of block, J. D. Allen, the taxidermist who lived on south corner of block, and Dr. Furness in the house across the street now occupied by the Charles Grastiers.

Mandan, with its wooden board walks, was a cosmopolitan center compared to Sims, and phone service was utilized to order groceries from O'Rourke's who made deliveries with a horse drawn wagon. Meat was purchased at McGillic's, and food bills were \$10 to \$15 a month, never more, laughs Mrs. Larson. *"I still love it here"*, she emphasizes, in comparing North Dakota's clear light air with other parts of the country she has visited.

## LOANN LEACH

An aunt of mine told me about the times Grandma and Grandpa Olin used to prepare the bodies for burial. She said they would first wash the bodies and comb and fix the hair. Then they would dress them and place them in the coffin or burial box. Both Grandma and Grandpa used to take care of persons who were sick.

## MEMORIES by Rory Leach

When I think of the Sims church, I get a vision of when I was young. What I remember from those years of my life fall into two distinct functions at the church - the Christmas Program and Bible School.

Every Christmas season all the mothers would drag their youngsters to the church to sing Christmas carols and recite Christmas recitations for the program. The best times, here, were the breaks when we could go outside and play football in the snow, decorate the Christmas tree, and—after the program when the presents were passed out accompanied by that huge bag of fruit and candy. Somehow they seemed to be the shortest times.

After a long wait, the snow would melt, and school would finally end for the summer. It was then time for Bible School. Bible School is that action packed week

right after school is out and before the sunshine of summer. It also united the Almontians and the New Salemites for a week straight. Bible School is like Christmas, only, without the snow and presents. The people were nearly all the same, except there were some extra friends thrown in. During this week, we would learn different Bible verses, sing different songs, and find new ways to get into trouble—like going over to Mrs. Grey's house or climbing up in the bell tower. The grand finale of this week was also a program.

Overall, my memories of the Sims church are all very positive, and I wouldn't trade them for anything. The friendships that were made through all the Christmas programs and Bible School sessions occurred because of the church. Weighing the bad times I had there against the good times, I realize there were no bad times. Pictures of us with those embarrassing haircuts and smiles at the church programs will be with me forever, but the carving in my mind of the Sims church, the parsonage, and the few trees around them will be with me just as long.

## Cora Monson

I remember going to church in the buggy with my family almost every Sunday. My dad was one of the last ones in the area to get a car. My parents were the first couple to start sitting together for the church services. Then other couples started to do the same thing. Before that, the women would sit on one side of the church with the children and the men would sit on the other side. I didn't get to go to Sunday School at Sims because church was at eleven and Sunday School was held before church. That was too early for us to get there because we had chores to do. After church we would stop over to my great grandmothers home for lunch before starting home. My great grandparents were Mr. and Mrs. Reinhardt Olson. This was a fond memory for me because we always had so much fun. There was lots of relatives and some bachelors that stopped there every Sunday. My Great grandmother, Tonette, must have spent all week getting ready for this. She had lots of good bread and potato cakes to eat. We all brought some food, and it sure took a lot.

I remember my grandpa, Rick Olson, talking about how he taught Sunday School upstairs in the parsonage. Peter Hoovestol taught too. At that time it was all one room upstairs and everyone had to bring their own chair. At that time, they did things the best they could.

## DeLoris Feland Morrell

As I look back on my early life, next to home and family, I think the Sims Lutheran Church was the most important thing in my formative years. It continued so until 1940.

The Bazaars or "Church Supper and Sale" as it was called, was really one of the high points of my childhood.

The Sunday School Picnics and Luther League were a constant source of entertainment. As a child I loved the "Covered Dish" meetings of the Ladies Aid and quilting in the church basement, on occasion.



But, most of all I remember the 11:00 o'clock services and my nursery services. At times it seemed I was the "Nursery". I was the youngest in my family and those babies were the joy of my life. I still remember the first names of the majority of those babies and to whom they belonged.

I also remember that Curlew Valley was always so well represented at services.

I can close my eyes and see the church as it was - interior and exterior.

#### **Delia (Jacobson) Olin**

I remember when Andrew Holritz was active in having the "Young Peoples Meetings" on Sunday evenings. There was special music and prayers, and it was held in the church basement. After the meeting we walked home in the dark. Anyone could come to these meetings and it was fun.

#### **Jack Olin**

Oh, Come to the church in the wildwood

Oh, Come to the church in the dale

No spot is so dear to my childhood

As the Little Brown (white) church in the vale.

I am sure that when the author penned the words to that song he must have had in his mind a place and a church much like the "Sims Church."

As one who grew up and left the Sims community, I can assure you that I did not lose my childhood memories of the church I knew as a child. Those memories followed me to England and Germany while I was in the service. They have followed me throughout the United States as I traveled about, and they have followed me throughout North Dakota, because I boast about my childhood heritage. Now those memories are with me as we approach the centennial year of this "LITTLE WHITE CHURCH IN THE VALE."

As I look back on those childhood years with the church, Sunday School, and Confirmation, I, as well as others, realize how fortunate we were to have had parents and teachers who have cared and have kept this church in bloom for one hundred years. The Sims congregation can be very proud.

#### **Mabel Christianson Olin**

I'll always remember when I was young and still living at home, going to church on Sundays in the old Model T car. Dad was the driver, and when we would come to that last long hill before we got to church, the car sometimes couldn't make it in high so we kids would get out and try to push, or else Dad would go up the hill in reverse.

#### **Evelyn Bateman Peterson**

The Sims Church has a special significance to me because my mother, Dena Bateman, my daughter, Janet, and I were all baptized in the church.

I remember a story Mom told me that I thought was interesting - she said that Uncle Ole Ramsland and she were the first two to be confirmed in the Sims Church. Mom's mother was afraid that Uncle Ole would not be able to answer all the minister's questions and she would be embarrassed so she sat in the back of the church so she could leave.

Uncle Ole and Mom walked to Sims from the Ramsland place when they "read" for the minister, and Ole studied his lesson as they walked so he was able to answer every question he was asked, much to the surprise and joy of Grandma.

#### **Lillian Pederson Peterson**

My first outing to the Sims Church was September 30, 1917, when at the age of one month, I was baptized by Rev. L. Dordahl. I was accompanied by my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Pederson, and sisters, Dagmar and Ruth, on the 16 mile trip from our farm south of Almont. Early that morning Papa and the hired man, Norman Hansen, went out to get the horses to harness for pulling the two-seated top buggy. Norman says Joe yelled "*come home Dan and Doc and get your feed*" and they left the herd of horses and came home on the run all set for church.

My great Uncle, Amund Pederson, was a charter member of the Sims Congregation, and my grandfather Ole Pederson became a member April 12, 1887, when he was also elected deacon. My parents were members of the Sims congregation until the Almont church was built in 1915, thus cutting down the distance to attend church from 16 to 3 miles. My father, having lived in Sims for years, kept a sacred place in his heart for the Sims church and never wanted to miss special doings there. The Memorial Day dinner and grave fixing was one of those times when he paid respect to the dead while he thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship with the living.

Congratulations to the oldest Lutheran church west of the Missouri on its 100 year journey from the pioneer era to the present. Your impressive and decorative steeple stands as a monument to the faithful pioneers whose struggles and devotion made it possible.

#### **Sig Peterson**

Congratulations to the Sims Congregation for having maintained regular religious services for the past 100 years and also for keeping the facilities in such good repair.

This church and congregation mean a lot to me as my grandfather, Gabriel, was a charter member, and Dad served as secretary when he was only 18 years of age and continued to serve in various capacities. All six of us children were baptized and confirmed here.

I am told that Dad led the congregational singing on his violin before there was an organ. I was very young when I remember singing tenor in the choir under Dad's direction. He, also, for a little while, conducted the Almont choir.



Living across the street from the Sims church, my family were much involved in all activities of which there were many, Young People's Association meetings, special gatherings, and the annual supper and fancy work auction were well attended. Basket and ice cream socials were also a common event.

I remember helping to polish the kerosene lamp globes which always seemed to get sooted up; the gas lights were a welcomed improvement. Mother was janitor so we all had to help.

When a person died, the church bell was tolled one toll for each year of the person's age. When World War I Armistice was signed, Dad and my two older brothers rang the bell all day. A neighbor came and wondered if another Methuselah had died. Funerals always drew a large attendance. I was interested in the horses, buggies, and wagons. The most elaborate was the Aanen Johnson surrey with the fringe on the top and lights on the sides. At one funeral there were 50 buggies. Our yard was a favorite place to tie up, and many stopped in for coffee after services, as some came from up to 12 or 14 miles distance. For funerals Mother would decorate the pulpit and altar railing by draping black and white cloth. She would also line the graves with white muslin as the undertaker had no greenery then. The undertaker's horse drawn hearse was interesting and usually drawn by a nice black team. The funeral services usually consisted of a short service at the house, then the procession would go to the church. The coffin was open during the service; after the service, everyone who desired would go up front and view the corpse; when the audience was all out, the doors were closed and the mourners got a last look at the body. During this time the organ kept playing. When the coffin was carried out of the church, the bell started tolling. It rang until the coffin was placed over the grave. This signal was given to the bell ringer by someone at the cemetery waving his hands. When the hearse was drawn by horses it took quite a long time. For lowering the coffin, in the early years, the harness reins were used. Rick Olson made strong leather straps for that purpose. They were stored in our house.

When Ma was treasurer, I remember taking her with single horse and buggy to many of the parishioners asking for the yearly contribution. As I remember it, \$10 was a large amount to receive from a family.

While Mr. Holmboe painted the picture at the back of the altar, he stayed at our home; for this favor, he painted a picture of my mother's parents and home in Norway. We still treasure this painting.

Dad came home from the 1924 yearly congregational meeting and said, "*Valborg, you were elected organist for the coming year.*"

Valborg said, "*No, I don't play well enough. I can't do it unless it would be okay if Sig plays along on his violin.*"

This stipulation was granted so we got by, after a fashion. We were only 15 and 16 years of age. In those days the minister and organist received offerings on the

three festive days; at one such offering we received more than the minister.

In 1921, confirmation instruction was held in the Benson (Curlew) School, alternating with Sims. To attend in Curlew, Melvin Jacobson and Nickolai Jacobson rode horseback. While Rev. Brecto served the congregation he also had vacation Bible school in Curlew. He had a small trailer which he pulled behind his auto. The pupils would wait by the road approaches for a ride in the trailer to and from school.

In about 1910, the P.H. Hoovestol family lived just south of the church. Pete was Sunday School superintendent. The Hoovestol boys rigged up a sort of merry-go-round which was quite an attraction for the kids. They would sell rides before Sunday School; Mr. Hoovestol soon realized that the Sunday School offering had diminished. He put a stop to the selling of rides on the Hoovestol Merry-Go-Round.

A few Pancake Socials were held in the church basement, with John Jacobson and Pete Peterson as cooks. They were well attended. The meal ended with the cooks singing "*Alting har en end, men 'Polsa den har to, men Panekake har ingen men alikevel by God - i sin ungdom.*" Everything has an end, but the sausage it has two but the pancake has none but just the same is good - in its youth.

I remember when Mark Willman's dad, Emil Margido, was buried. There were 50 buggies lined up from the church to the cemetery. It was a very large funeral. Mark's dad was Assistant County Superintendent and a wonderful teacher.

In 1937 when I got married, I transferred to the Almont Congregation but have followed with interest the continuation of worship services here at Sims.

Margie, Mrs. Sig Peterson, remembers walking to the Sims church in 1927 to witness the double wedding of Nettie and Gertie Olson to Norman Hansen and Alfred Telford.

### DOUBLE WEDDING

Nettie and Gertie Olson, daughters of Tobias and Olevine Olson were married at the Sims Sk. Ev. Lutheran Church in Sims, N.D. May 8, 1927 by Rev. J. Thornell. Both girls were ushered up to the altar at the same time by their father.

Nettie married Norman H. Hansen, attendants were Helga Olson, Rose Zemple, Ella Christiansen, Hans Hansen, Bennie Olson, and Nick Jacobson.

Gertie married Alfred W. Telford, Gorhom, N.D. Their attendants were Brenda Telford, Paul Hansen, Corrine Telford, Adolph Hoovestol, Ann Marie Smith, and Randeem Hoovestol.

The Wedding March was played by Grace Willman (Thor). A song by Raymond and Leon Jacobson and a solo by Mrs. Thornell. The reception was held at the Olson's farm home after the ceremony.



### **SELMA SEIM; (Notes from LoAnn Leach)**

Before the congregation purchased the altar railing and kneelers, Rick Olson brought his stock water trough to church to be used as a kneeler during Holy Communion. The trough was positioned up-side-down and covered with a white sheet. On this the communicants kneeled while they received the Eucharist.

### **Victoria Feland Schollert**

I remember my mother telling me the church was built of lumber from a big barn, without a basement. I can faintly recall the building being renovated and resting on heavy timbers. My Mother, Theodine Johnson Feland and Rachel Jacobson (then Johnson) sometimes walked from Caribou, where they lived, to clean church for Sunday services. They walked barefooted, to save on their shoes, until they got to town and then they put on their shoes.

### **Ella Smordahl Soresad**

The Sims Lutheran Evangelical Church means more to me than any other structure of wood and stone. It was here that I received some very important instructions in the Christian faith. It was here, I gave my life to Christ completely at my Confirmation rites. It was here, I received such blessed consolation and love from family and friends - from the "Body of Christ" as we had the Memorial service for my father, Eibert Smordahl. Yes, you members, those present and those who have gone Home to be with the Lord, make Sims Lutheran Evangelical Church a very important and lasting part of my life. I am certain I can say the same for my mother, Martha Smordahl, age 92, who lives with me.

### **Dagmar Pederson Stoeckel**

We extend our greetings and good wishes on this memorable occasion. I was baptized by Pastor L. Breen in May of 1914 in Sims. As a small child I remember going from Bluff Dale in the buggy with my mother and father, Jonathan and Emelie Pederson and my sister Ruth to Sims to the services, which were in Norwegian, as well as the hymns. Men and women were seated in pews on opposite sides of the church in those days. After the sermon and visiting with old friends outside the church we often stopped at P. R. Petersons, who lived near the church at that time, and at Cecelia Jacobsons. There was always coffee and goodies at these hospitable homes. Then back home in the buggy after a happy Sunday in Sims.

My grandparents Ole and Benedikte Pederson, who were born in Norway came to Sims from Minnesota in 1885 and became members of the church at that time. They and Uncle Jacob Pederson and my Great-uncle Amund Pederson are all buried in the Sims Cemetery.

In later years, I recall the good times at basket socials, concerts and programs there. Also there were happy

times visiting the parsonage with Rev. and Mrs. Thornell often as we came by from New Salem trips. Sims and the Lutheran Church there will always have a special place in our hearts.

### **Alice (Anderson) Ternstrom**

I was born in the little white house that stood in the grove of trees about one block back of the Sims Church on December 27, 1902. Later we moved over the hills to the farm now owned by Larvel Anderson.

Christmas at the church was always our happiest time of the year. The beautiful Christmas tree decorated in gold and silver tinsel, frail colored balls, the colored wax candels that burned so fragrantly when lit. There were always two young men that were called "Snuffer Bearers" that guarded the lit candles and snuffed them out when they burned low.

I recall the Christmas program when I was about five years old. My aunt, Clara Seim, and the pastor's wife, Mrs. Isolony, were in charge of the program that year. My sister Clara and I were to sing a Christmas duet. We were seated on the front seat in the church and told to sit quietly with the other kids. The tree was lit, the crowd was arriving--when suddenly a big black dog, that had followed a family, came running into the church. The two young men tried to get the dog out of the church. What excitement, what a sight! I, with some of the boys, jumped up and followed the dog running around the tree. The dog had an accident. And I, in my new red velvet dress, slipped and fell in the mess.

I was taken to the parsonage by an embarrassed Aunt Clara and cleaned up. My mother later said the accident didn't dampen my Christmas spirit--for when the delayed program started, I was there in my soiled red velvet dress, singing the Christmas song "*Je Ar Sa Gla Ver Yul Kveld*" which in English is "*I Am So Happy Each Christmas Eve*".

### **OUR NORWEGIAN PAROCHIAL SCHOOL**

Due to distance in the horse and buggy days, I never attended regular parochial school at Sims church; instead we attended Norwegian parochial school in the summer time some years at the old schoolhouse near our farm, the first Curlew School. The only teachers I remember were two brothers, the Braaten brothers. They stayed at our house part time and at Rick Olson's part time. They may have taught in Sims part time and in Curlew, part time.

I remember the following families attending school when I went to school: Melvin, Alvin, and Bennie Olson; Clara, Albert, Alice, and Oliver Anderson; Melvin and Willie Knutson.

Since all the Sims church services were in Norwegian at that time, our parents wanted us to learn the Norwegian language. The teachers made it a rule we had to talk Norwegian only, while in school and while on the school grounds.



### Gertrude Christianson Thiel

Our family belonged to the Sims Church and attended every Sunday. In the early years, we went with horse and buggy. On Sundays we would use the two-seated buggy so most of us could attend services. In the later years, we got a car so we were right in style! Many times our dad couldn't engage enough speed to make it up the Sims hill, so we'd all have to jump out and help by pushing it up the hill.

We would attend the Christmas programs by going with the sleigh and horses. One night the sled upset and dumped us in the ditch, so we got to the church program mighty wet and uncomfortable. We were dry by the time we were ready to go for home. The horses seemed to know the way even if it was dark.

When we were small we used to visit our Grandma just south of the church. Their house was built in the bank and it seemed like a dug-out affair. We also visited Ralph Bakkens, just west of the church. We attended many Ladies' Aids with our mother. All of our family was baptized in the Sims Church, most were confirmed and some were married there.

### Dorothy Lotspiech Williams

I remember my sister Luella and myself singing duets when I was seven and she was nine, about 1925 or 26. We were the Lotspiech sisters. Also, I remember the big Christmas tree they used to have with candles. They would hand out an orange and a stocking of candy to all after the Christmas program. I was baptized by Rev. L. D. Dordal, May 1918 and was confirmed by Rev. Nelson in the Sims church.

### Mrs. Erling (Clara) Willman (Erling Willman Family)

Erling had fond memories of his home church. His parents - Emil Margido and Olivia (Feland) William had settled in Sims before he was born. He was baptized and confirmed there. Our four children, Zoe Elaine, Erling Olaf, Jr., Russell Margido and Howard Rae were also baptized there. Erling enjoyed singing with the fine voices of the Jacobsons, Petersons, Olins, Felands, and many others he mentioned.

Erling enjoyed telling his children of an incident when he was about three years old. He had been taught a song for a Christmas program. When his number was announced he strode bravely to the platform - waiting for the accompanist to begin. His patience wore thin and he walked back to his parents. When the Pastor asked if he wouldn't please come back and sing, in a clear voice he answered in Norwegian: "*No - it's best to be by Mama!*" He said he thought the applause was greater than if he had sung.

My only regret is that he is not with us anymore. He passed away last December 30, 1982.

### Mark Willman

I remember going to church in Sims one Sunday with mother and family. I was about five years old. My mother told me to tie the horse to the fence in front of the church. I couldn't tie a knot so I just laid the lines over the fence. All during church, I was uncomfortable and worried because I thought the horse would be gone when church was over. As it was, the horse was still waiting when church was over.

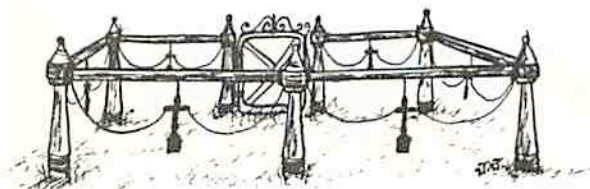
I remember a story that Martin Peterson told me about my mother, Polly Christianson and Beana Christianson, (Conrad's mother) Ben Olson sent Polly and Beana to haul a load of wood for the preacher. After they finished hauling the wood, the preacher invited them in for lunch. The preacher was grateful for the wood and said to the girls, "*Thank God for the wood.*" Polly said to him, "*That wasn't God, that was me and Beana*".

I only lived a few miles away from the church and one thing I'll always remember is the church bell ringing when someone died. Someone would ring the church bell, then stop and start to ring it again. The second time it rang, it tolled the persons age. My family and I would count out the persons age and then, try to figure out who could have died.

I remember lots of things when I think back to my memories of going to church at Sims. I remember sitting in church watching Reverend Larson preaching. I was fascinated with his long black beard heaving up and down as he talked. I enjoyed standing outside church after Sunday services listening to the older fellows talking. I remember one particular conversation between Joe Schollart and some guys discussing the railroad and how they used green lignite coal. The train was going up the grade through Sims. The green lignite was wet and wouldn't burn hot enough, so they would stop and steam up. The railroad was an interesting topic of conversation.







Sims Cemetery



Nels Olson funeral at Oscar Olin Home 1918



Funeral procession of buggies Background: Sims Brickyard Hill





# School Days







Old Settlers Picnic

# JOHN OLIN WOULD HOLD BIG SESSION OF FOLKS OF '87 AND PREVIOUS YEARS

John Olin, who came to North Dakota when the last wagon road to the west ended at Dickinson, is sponsoring a great picnic and meeting of old settlers of Morton and Grant county to be held at Almont some time in May.

When a year or so ago a meeting of pioneers who had been in the country in 1885 and previously was held at Bismarck there were 185 answered the roll call. Mr. Olin believes there was a great influx of settlers in 1887 and thinks that that year should be made the basis of "pioneerdom". He is making preliminary arrangements now and will shortly announce the date for the get-together of the pioneers of Morton and Grant counties of 1887 and earlier years.

It is possible an Old Settlers society of the two counties will be formed. Mr. Olin said. He has been in Mandan for several days coming here to bid in tracts of land for pasturage at the annual school land leasing.



1914 Gathering at the Sims Church



First Old Settlers Day Celebration in Almont





Honoring the Members who helped to start the congregation - 1946



Baptism at the 50th Anniversary Celebration

#### Service Honoring Older Members Of the Sims-Almont Congregation

A service honoring all the old members of the Sims and Almont congregations was held at Sims, Sunday

The morning service was conducted by Rev C J Fylling who spoke in the Norwegian language, followed by communion. Tobias Olson led in prayer.

Special musical numbers were: Duet, In The Garden, by Norida and Colenne Knutson

Norwegian Solo, Jeg er Fremmen, Jeg er en Pilgrim, Mrs Grace Nelson Choir Number, Break Thou the Bread of Life, by younger members of the Sims and Almont congregations

At noon a luncheon was served to about 200 people. The honor guests were seated at a table which was especially arranged for them

They each wore a carnation which was presented to them before the service

The afternoon service was as follows

Choir, Beautiful Savior. Scripture and Prayer, Mrs Becklund Norwegian Solo, Mrs Grace Nelson Short Talk, Willard Johnson, Supt of the Sims Sunday School

Song, Faith Of Our Fathers, Sims Sunday School

Vocal Trio, Mrs Orville Olson, Joyce and Audrey Willman

Sermon, Rev Adolph Johns, Bismarck Vocal Solo, There's Never A Day Without A Cloud, Vernon Knutson

Violin selections, Humoreske, The Rosary, Lorang Wang, Marlys Knutson accompanist

A short talk, Tobias Olson

Song, Choir, Savior Again In Thy Dead Name We Rise

Remarks and benediction, Rev Fylling

Among those from out of town who attended this service were: Rev and Mrs Adolph Johns and family, Mrs Fred Swenson, Mr and Mrs Ole Ellingson and daughter Norma, Shirley Olson and Laurence Ims, all of Bismarck; Mrs Albert Johnson, Calif., Mrs Henderickson, Mandan; Mrs Adam Hoffman and children of Mandan and Mrs Chas Larson and family of Kenmare, ND; Rickert Olson of Bismarck; Mrs A M Johnson of Bismarck; Mr and Mrs Chas Cunningham of Dickinson, and Lorang Wang

14. Charles Elliot	14 <sup>th</sup> August 1913.	11 <sup>th</sup> Sept 1913.	Carl Marthenus Smedstad
15. Palmer Arthur	8 <sup>th</sup> Sept 1913.	12 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1913.	Imbu: Semine Maria Smedstad
16. Agnis Gothe	29 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1912.	21 <sup>st</sup> Oct 1913.	Podt: Marstrand & Co. Tella
Adolph Edmund	30 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1913.	21 <sup>st</sup> Oct 1913.	Rudolph Sam Smedstad & Co. Tella
17. Inna Margaritha Delorece.	10 <sup>th</sup> Oct 1913.	21 <sup>st</sup> Oct 1913.	Andrew B. Rustoen
18. Olaf Aounsin	11 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1913.	25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1914.	Laura Rustoen & Co. Rustdahl
19. Clarence Oliver	Podt: 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 1913.	25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1914.	Edvard F. Skovitz & Co. Rusten
20. Carl Gustave	30 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1914.	25 <sup>th</sup> Jan 1914.	Genie & Amelia Skovitz & Co. Rusten
			Theodor O. Skrand & Co. Rusten
			Theolina O. Skrand & Co. Rusten
			Art H. Haugen & Co. Rusten
			Clara A. H. Haugen & Co. Rusten
			Antonie Thorgensen & Co. Rusten
			Anna Thorgensen, Podt: Ramland
			Martin Willmann & Co. Rusten





Theodore Feland Home



Theodore Feland Farm (Now the Eddie Jacobson Farm)



Tollef Christianson Home



John Olin Farm



Don Knaele Farm







John Olin



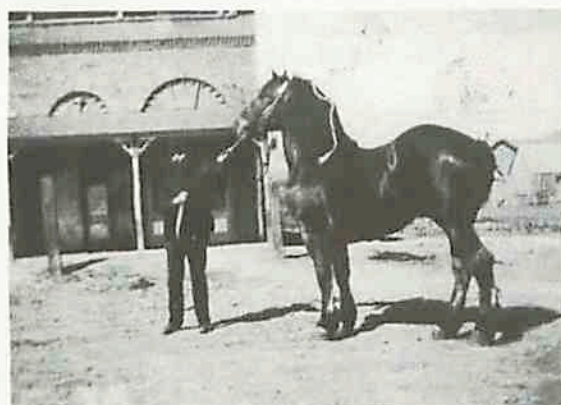
Buggy ride Winter



Catching the teams



Sims Depot



Hans Anderson Sims 1884



Raking Hay



Buggy ride Summer





Mary & Charley Jacobson



Gust Jacobson



Jake Olin and the Curlew Girls



Homestead



Winter travel



Oscar Feland (Sims)



Seeding time









Delia (Jacobson) Olin



Bertha (Austad) (Nilsen) Jacobson



Olga Feland & Alice Feland



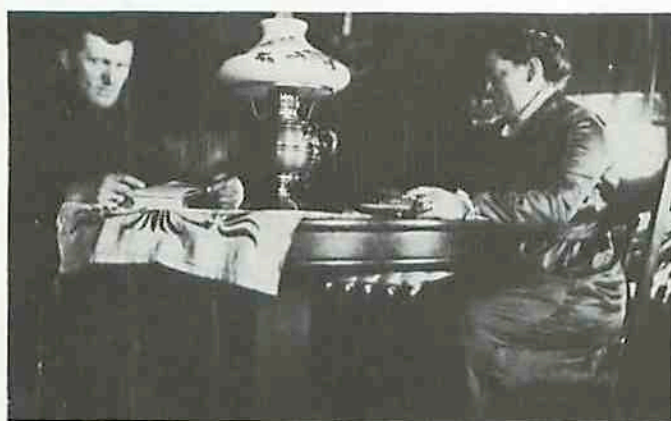
Tillie Larson



Julia (Jacobson) Leach



Anna Dordal



Theo O. Felands



Julia (Jacobson) Leach



