

# Karinestova: A piece of Norwegian history for Syttende Mai

BY DARRELL HOVLAND

My name is Darrell Hovland and as you can probably tell from my last name, I am of Norwegian heritage. In fact all of my relatives came from Norway.

On my father's side they came from an island in Norway called Bømlø. It is about 45 minutes away from Bergen by boat. The specific community in Bømlø where they're from is called Hovland, which is a township. Bømlø is an island and is connected to the mainland via the Bømløbrua Bridge and the Bømløfjord Tunnel. The size of the island is 66 square miles; population is over 12,000. Bømlø today has industries of fishing, boating, trading posts, gold mines and tourism.

The main industries in Bømlø years ago were fishing, mason work and farming, although the farms in Norway are quite different than what we have in North Dakota. The farms were also referred to as gardens (rural farm), and they raised vegetables, fruits and livestock feed. The average farm in Norway is 16 acres. Farms had from one to a few cows, chickens, pigs, goats, sheep and maybe a horse or two.

In order to survive, people had to have several sources of income so besides farming they fished and had other side jobs. The climate in Bømlø is mild due to trade winds from the Gulf of Mexico. Most times in the winter you only need a shovel for snow removal.

This story is about the house where my grandfather, Severin Hovland, was raised in along with his seven brothers and how and why this house is now a museum. The story also tells how seven of the eight brothers emigrated to America and became successful farmers.

The story begins in 1811 when Paul Aadnesen Lonningnes became the owner of the farm on which the house stands. Paul bought the farm from Nils Olsen Vold on the condition that he marry Nils's stepdaughter, Marithe Andersdotter. Paul agreed to this and the purchase price was 200 Riksdalar.

A marriage such as this seems a little strange, but at that time access to land was so important that one could agree to such conditions. Strange as it is, apparently Paul and Marithe got along well together as they had a total of nine children. However, only three boys grew

up to adulthood.

Paul was 23 years old in 1811 when he bought the farm at Hovland. He ran the farm until 1838 and was then 50 years old. He built a small house for himself and Marithe and the house was nicknamed Padlastovo. It was common back then to name your house.

The living room part of the house is timber. In the northeast part of the house is a combined entrance area and kitchen. There is a large fireplace and some kitchen cupboards are placed on the floor along one wall. Open shelving hangs on two of the walls. Along the north side of the house, a loft has been built for storage and was also where the children slept. I do not know the dimensions of the house but it was very small for a large family.

Paul and Marithe lived in Padlastovo until they died, he in 1860 and she in 1875. One of their sons, Anders, then took over the house and lived there until he died in 1883.

New people then moved into Padlastovo: Johannes G. Gudmonson (born Aug. 16, 1840), who was my great-grandfather. Johannes came to the area of Hovland as a boy from Vandaskog in Sveio. There was good spring herring fishing at the end of the 19th century, so fisher farmers did well.

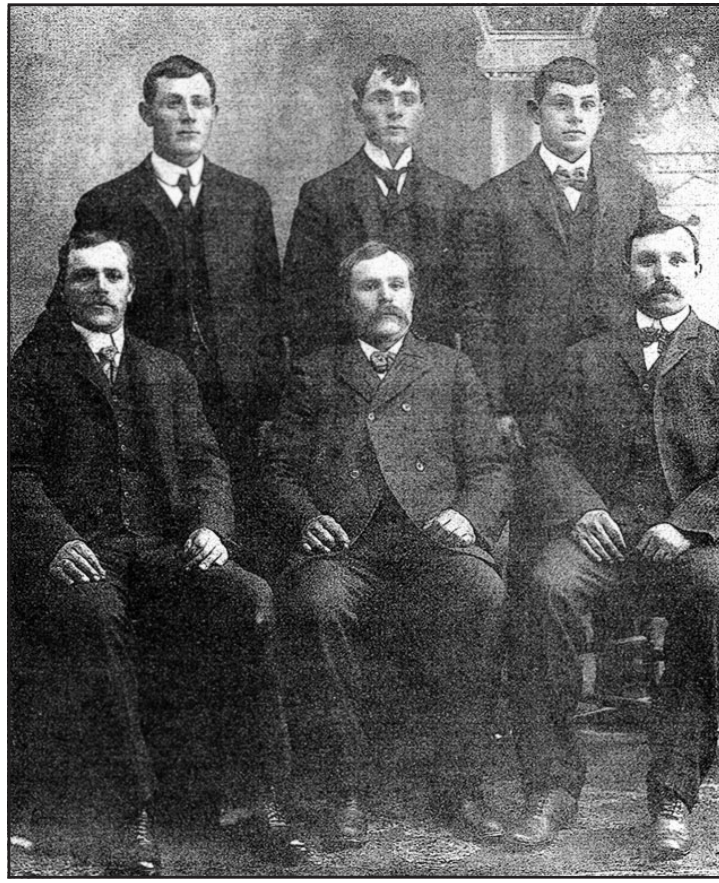
Johannes was married to Karine Oldstr Lonning (born Feb. 14, 1850), my great-grandmother. Johannes worked as an earth and stone worker and Karine had occasional jobs in the fields. Padlastova got a new nickname and was now called Karinestova (Karine's house).

A common practice at the time was for people to take their surname after the place where they lived, so the name Gudmonson was changed to Hovland. We have found that Hovland is a very common name in Norway.

Johannes and Karine had eight boys and despite the cramped and miserable conditions in the tiny living room, they all grew up. The boys were Ole John, Martin, Anton, Severin, Reinert, Matt, Christ and Johannes.

The firstborn son, John, was born Sept. 18, 1871 and the youngest, Johannes, was born July 22, 1892, so there were 21 years between the oldest and youngest boy; thus not everyone lived at home at the same time.

It was the custom back then



Six of the seven Hovland brothers who went to America. Front: Martin Gustav, Ole Johan, Anton Kornelius. Back: Vilhelm Severin, Hans Mathias, Reinert Andreas.

that when a boy reached his teens, he would be loaned out to learn a trade. Seven of the brothers emigrated to America and learned to be farmers. More on this later.

The youngest son, Johannes, did not go to America. Instead, he built a large house on Hovland and took his parents with him from Karinestova when he moved into the new house. This was in 1917. This house is still lived in.

As far as is known, no people lived in Karinestova after this. Johannes Gudmonson died Dec. 1, 1919 and Karine died April 27, 1922.

It was a practice in Norway back then that when the owners of a farm grew old and could no longer manage the farm, they would hand over the operation to the eldest of their children in exchange for the care of them until their death. This was recorded in a letter of terms and was registered with the court clerk and so was a public document binding for both parties. Now it is different; the government takes over the care of older people with social security, home care, housing, retirement

and nursing homes.

The youngest son, Johannes, married Anna Aanensdtr Tollevik and together they had two boys, Johan and Aanen.

Johan had two boys, JohnArne and Trygve, and a girl, Eva. Aanen had two girls, Annborge and Asa, and a son, Jan. These are my cousins. In 2019 my wife Linda, my sister Arlyss Bergrud and I went to Norway and met all our relatives and viewed the houses. It was a very emotional and overwhelming experience meeting all these wonderful people who are of the same blood as you but whose lives are half a world away from you. Our regret is that we did not schedule enough time to visit and share stories with them more.

After Johannes and Karine moved out, the house Karinestova now stood empty and was used for a time for storing mink fur and sometimes sheep. At other times it was used as a gathering place for the men at Hovland in the mornings every Sunday. They would sit and talk about the happenings in Hovland.

Karinestova's condition grad-



Johannes, who stayed in Norway. No photo was available of the eighth brother, John Christian.

ually got worse and worse. The plan was to demolish it but some thought it was a shame that a house with so much history should be lost. The Husmorlaget and the Fishermen's Association took over the house and restored it into a small museum. It is now safe and remains as a beautiful memory from the past.

Karinestova has now stood at Hovland for around 186 years and is probably one of the oldest houses in Bømlø. It is definitely a treasure.

There was not a lot of opportunities for a young man in Norway as available land for farming was very scarce. You could be a fisherman or work for someone. So the lure of America was very strong as the opportunities in America for a better life were many. You could also find land for farming there, so the Hovland brothers decided they would set course for the land "over there," one after the other.

How the immigration process worked was you entered America at Ellis Island. You had to have a sponsor and had to be able to prove you could provide for yourself and would not be a burden to the public.

From Ellis Island everyone traveled to the "Norwegian" areas in America -- North Dakota, Minnesota and Montana. Here there was enough land for everyone to become a farmer. But as there was actually very little farming in Norway, immigrants had to learn the trade of farm-

ing, so once they left Ellis Island they would go to prosperous farms in Minnesota and North Dakota to learn the trade.

One of these prosperous farms in Minnesota was owned by my other great-grandfather, Nils Vigen, and it was located in Stony Brook Township in Grant County, Minn. It is in the Elbow Lake, Fergus Falls area. Research shows that many Norwegians went through Stony Brook Township and many of them settled in Wells County, specifically the Wellsburg, Heimdal and Manfred areas.

In 1891 the first two Hovland brothers to travel to America were John and Martin. After they arrived in America and after they made some money, they would send tickets to another brother in Norway to come over. In this way, the oldest sent tickets to the younger until everyone had left Norway -- except for the youngest brother, Johannes, who chose to stay in Norway.

John and Martin came through Ellis Island, then to Stony Brook Township, then to the Hatton area where they worked for farmers. In 1894 they both homesteaded in the Wellsburg area, 160 acres each. Their land joined each other's.

To homestead you needed to build a house on the property, so they built a little house on the dividing line of their properties. You also had to improve the property by planting trees.

In 1899 John built a farmstead on his property located on the east side of Wellsburg. A large nice house, barn, granary, chicken house and machine shed were built. He also planted a huge grove of trees surrounding the farmstead which included berry and fruit trees. The farmstead and buildings are still standing today and belong to his grandson Jerry. This farm is 120 years old.

John married Bertha Vik in 1892; they had 10 children. John died on Jan. 1, 1925; Bertha died on March 3, 1948.

An interesting story about John: In 1911 he went back to Norway for a visit and he planned to return to America on a ship called the *Titanic*. But because of a delay he missed the ship. Turned out to be his lucky day!

Martin Hovland built a big house on his farmstead southeast of Wellsburg. He also

Continued on page B2

10239	
ABSTRACT OF STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023 of the	
SECURA Supreme Insurance Company	
In the state of Wisconsin	
Total Assets	206,885,678
Total Liabilities	129,987,172
Aggregate write-ins for special surplus funds	0
Common Capital Stock	6,000,000
Preferred Capital Stock	0
Aggregate write-ins for other than special surplus funds	0
Surplus notes	0
Gross paid in and contributed surplus	11,960,000
Unassigned funds (surplus)	58,938,506
Total capital and surplus	76,898,506
Total Liabilities, Capital and Surplus	206,885,678
<b>NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS ONLY FOR THE YEAR 2023</b>	
Total Direct Premiums Earned	11,803,931
Total Direct Losses Incurred	7,865,552
Total Accident & Health Direct Premiums Earned	0
Total Accident & Health Direct Losses Incurred	0
<b>STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE</b>	
I, Jon Godfread, Commissioner of Insurance of the State of North Dakota, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true Abstract of Statement, as officially filed by the Company in this office.	
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of this office at Bismarck, the first day of May, A.D. 2024. (SEAL)	
<b>JON GODFREAD</b> Commissioner of Insurance STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE COMPANY'S CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY	
WHEREAS, the above corporation duly organized under the laws of its state or country of domicile, has filed in this office a sworn statement exhibiting its condition and business for the year ending December 31, 2023 conformable to the requirements of the laws of this State regarding the business of insurance and	
WHEREAS, the said company has filed in this office a duly certified copy of its charter with certificate of organization in compliance with the requirements of insurance law aforesaid,	
NOW THEREFORE, I, JON GODFREAD, Commissioner of Insurance of the State of North Dakota, pursuant to the provisions of said laws, do hereby certify that the above named company is fully empowered through its authorized agents and representatives, to transact its appropriated business of authorized insurance in the state according to the laws thereof, until the 30th day of April, A.D. 2025.	
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Bismarck this first day of May, A.D., 2024. (SEAL)	
<b>JON GODFREAD</b> Commissioner of Insurance (Publish May 2, 9 & 16, 2024)	

10677	
ABSTRACT OF STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023 of the	
The Cincinnati Insurance Company	
In the state of Ohio	
Total Assets	19,791,935,858
Total Liabilities	12,497,981,859
Aggregate write-ins for special surplus funds	0
Common Capital Stock	3,586,355
Preferred Capital Stock	0
Aggregate write-ins for other than special surplus funds	0
Surplus notes	0
Gross paid in and contributed surplus	363,410,416
Unassigned funds (surplus)	6,926,957,228
Total capital and surplus	7,293,953,999
Total Liabilities, Capital and Surplus	19,791,935,858
<b>NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS ONLY FOR THE YEAR 2023</b>	
Total Direct Premiums Earned	16,015,717
Total Direct Losses Incurred	4,988,641
Total Accident & Health Direct Premiums Earned	0
Total Accident & Health Direct Losses Incurred	0
<b>STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE</b>	
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<b>JON GODFREAD</b> Commissioner of Insurance STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE COMPANY'S CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY	
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<b>JON GODFREAD</b> Commissioner of Insurance (Publish May 2, 9 & 16, 2024)	

10859	
ABSTRACT OF STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023 of the	
Park National Insurance Company	
In the state of Delaware	
Total Assets	20,999,461
Total Liabilities	1,464,968
Aggregate write-ins for special surplus funds	0
Common Capital Stock	5,000,000
Preferred Capital Stock	0
Aggregate write-ins for other than special surplus funds	0
Surplus notes	0
Gross paid in and contributed surplus	41,100,525
Unassigned funds (surplus)	-26,566,032
Total capital and surplus	19,534,493
Total Liabilities, Capital and Surplus	20,999,461
<b>NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS ONLY FOR THE YEAR 2023</b>	
Total Direct Premiums Earned	0
Total Direct Losses Incurred	-34,430
Total Accident & Health Direct Premiums Earned	0
Total Accident & Health Direct Losses Incurred	0
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11000	
ABSTRACT OF STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023 of the	
Sentinel Insurance Company Ltd	
In the state of Connecticut	
Total Assets	356,537,248
Total Liabilities	92,591,229
Aggregate write-ins for special surplus funds	0
Common Capital Stock	4,200,000
Preferred Capital Stock	0
Aggregate write-ins for other than special surplus funds	0
Surplus notes	0
Gross paid in and contributed surplus	15,787,500
Unassigned funds (surplus)	243,958,519
Total capital and surplus	263,946,019
Total Liabilities, Capital and Surplus	356,537,248
<b>NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS ONLY FOR THE YEAR 2023</b>	
Total Direct Premiums Earned	271,276
Total Direct Losses Incurred	18,479
Total Accident & Health Direct Premiums Earned	0
Total Accident & Health Direct Losses Incurred	0
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11215	
ABSTRACT OF STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023 of the	
SAFECO Insurance Company of Indiana	
In the state of Indiana	
Total Assets	17,368,943
Total Liabilities	76,907
Aggregate write-ins for special surplus funds	0
Common Capital Stock	3,300,000
Preferred Capital Stock	0
Aggregate write-ins for other than special surplus funds	0
Surplus notes	0
Gross paid in and contributed surplus	26,365,185
Unassigned funds (surplus)	-12,373,149
Total capital and surplus	17,292,036
Total Liabilities, Capital and Surplus	17,368,943
<b>NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS ONLY FOR THE YEAR 2023</b>	
Total Direct Premiums Earned	268,846
Total Direct Losses Incurred	130,778
Total Accident & Health Direct Premiums Earned	0
Total Accident & Health Direct Losses Incurred	0
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<b>JON GODFREAD</b> Commissioner of Insurance (Publish May 2, 9 & 16, 2024)	

11770	
ABSTRACT OF STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023 of the	
United Financial Casualty Company	
In the state of Ohio	
Total Assets	10,702,120,949
Total Liabilities	8,613,482,760
Aggregate write-ins for special surplus funds	0
Common Capital Stock	3,008,000
Preferred Capital Stock	0
Aggregate write-ins for other than special surplus funds	0
Surplus notes	0
Gross paid in and contributed surplus	336,373,432
Unassigned funds (surplus)	1,749,256,757
Total capital and surplus	2,088,638,189
Total Liabilities, Capital and Surplus	10,702,120,949
<b>NORTH DAKOTA BUSINESS ONLY FOR THE YEAR 2023</b>	
Total Direct Premiums Earned	27,332,997
Total Direct Losses Incurred	12,782,998
Total Accident & Health Direct Premiums Earned	0
Total Accident & Health Direct Losses Incurred	0
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