

HISTORY OF
S W A N J O H N S O N F A M I L Y
of
NANCE COUNTY, NEBRASKA

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MR. AND MRS. SWAN JOHNSON AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

Swan Johnson was born in Walby near Cimbrisham, Sweden, February 28, 1826. His mother died a few years later and his father married again. There were several other sons in the family, brothers and stepbrothers. As Swan grew up he learned the carpenter trade, specializing in mill work, building and maintaining the old type mills with their upper and nether millstones which were then in use.

In 1853 Swan Johnson was married to Kjerstin Vesterson, of Wiby, Sweden, and as Kjerstin was the oldest of the living children, they lived in her home and took care of her mother for fourteen years. Six of their children were born there--Thilda, Peter, John, Nels, Ida and Eric. They were a saving and industrious family. Mr. Johnson was always busy and received good wages, and they prospered there, but seeking better opportunities for their already large family, they immigrated to America in May 1868, locating at and living in Chicago for two years. Here another son was born, William, on January 30, 1870. Leaving Chicago they moved to Bement, Piatt County, Illinois, where Mr. Johnson worked eight years for a wealthy landowner, William Vorhies, erecting and maintaining the improvements on his numerous farms. Three more children were born to them at Bement--Victor, Oscar and Ellen.

Considering that the West offered better opportunities for expansion and education, Mr. Johnson, without seeing it, bought a farm where Salem Church and Village of the same name is now located in Nebraska, west of Methodist Looking Glass Church. In 1878 they loaded their belongings into four covered wagons drawn by horses, left Bement and steered their course westward toward the new land of promise. John and Jim Atkins and Hans Johnson (my father) helped drive the teams. They brought a good milk cow with them so as to have milk for the family on the long journey. They also brought a Singer sewing machine with them which was very useful in later years. The Atkins boys brought a "dresser" along which the John Atkins later used. Mother stated that they enjoyed the long trip across Illinois, Iowa and into Nebraska, as the weather and roads were fine, and all kinds of fruit, fowl, meat and vegetables were available. Every day was a picnic, as they did not hurry, and would "stop" a day or two at pleasant camping places.

They crossed the Missouri River on a ferry at Plattsmouth. The country here looked too rough so they continued the trip in search of smoother land and rolling prairies. Mr. Johnson inspected the land as they progressed, and many pleasant memories linger in the minds of the children of this protracted and wonderful trip.

They stopped at Columbus a few days, then moved on into Nance County, locating temporarily near the Postoffice at Keatskotoos, just over the line in Platte County, where they rented a house from Lafayette Anderson, about one and a half miles east of Genoa. Here they lived about eighteen months.

Mr. Johnson bought a farm of four hundred acres, one and one-half miles west of Genoa and here they built their home, the largest and best in that part of the country, with cattle and horse barn, granaries, corn cribs, chicken house, ice house, smoke house, well and deep cave. They set out a large orchard, layed out a large garden and otherwise improved the place.

Grandmother always had a drove of turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens, as well as a large garden where all types of vegetables were raised for summer and winter use. The late summers were always busy with cooking and stirring the large copper kettles while making different kinds of apple, plum, peach and gooseberry jams and jellies, together with pickles and relish. Of course watermelons and muskmelons (did not know about cantaloupes in those days) were a favorite with everybody, especially on Sunday afternoons. In the spring beef and hogs were butchered and smoked or salted for summer use. Sausage was made, fried and packed in stone jars, and the cave was always well stocked with food of all types.

In addition to farming those 400 acres of the home place they also, for some years, farmed the place at Salem Church. Later Mr. Johnson disposed of it. He also built many of the homes, stores, and the Congregational Church at Genoa.

Minnie was born at Keatskotoos, and Mary at the home west of Genoa.

Swan Johnson passed away January 26, 1894, from a heart attack at his home one and one-half miles west of Genoa, Nebraska, and was laid to rest at the Genoa, Nebraska Valley View cemetery. Will Johnson took over and operated the farm for two years and at the end of that time--the fall of 1896--had a sale and disposed of all the farm livestock, machinery and incidentals.

MRS. KJERSTIN JOHNSON, NEE VESTERSON

Kjerstin Vesterson was born in Wiby, Sweden, November 6, 1834, the eldest living child of a family of nine, five of them dying in infancy. The family was outstanding in education and accomplishment; one brother was a Marshal of Sweden, an uncle was a Bishop, and a cousin a Missionary. Grandmother's people lived at Walby, Christianstad County. In 1853, Kjerstin was united in marriage with Swan Johnson, of Walby, Sweden, a carpenter and millwright. For fourteen years they made their home at Walby, living with and caring for her aged mother.

Kjerstin who was a very small person and less than five feet tall, was noted as a wonderful mother, untiring in her loving care for her family, sympathetic and understanding, a friend of everyone with whom she came in contact. As a cook her fame was known all over the County, and her home was the gathering place for young and old. Everybody was welcome there.

With her husband she immigrated to America in May 1868, eventually locating on a 400 acre farm one and one-half miles west of Genoa, Nebraska. She was now the mother of twelve children, all living to maturity except one who died at the age of nine months. With endless energy she cared for her large family, took care of the garden, assisted with the stock, and kept everything going and harmonious. They raised, prepared and preserved all the vegetables that were used and needed. Even in the years of the grasshoppers they had plenty for themselves and enough to help their neighbors. They killed and cured all meat needed for the entire year, milked ten to twenty cows, sold much butter, raised turkeys, geese and hundreds of chickens. They were a very busy and very happy family, setting a high standard for life and living up to it. That included going to church in Sweden and Nebraska.

Kjerstin Johnson passed away at the age of almost ninety-three years at the home of her daughter, Mrs. John E. Young, at Genoa, Nebraska, where she had gone for a week's visit. This was August 30, 1927.

SWAN JOHNSON

Swan Johnson's mother died when he was six and his father apprenticed him out until he was thirteen years old and then he was apprenticed out to a carpenter who was a master builder. From him Swan learned the carpenter trade. Swan repaired many big buildings and was sent out to fix a barn that was split in the center by a storm. This was at Bement, near Chicago. Later he did a great deal of carpenter work for a Mr. Vorhies, of Bement, where Swan Johnson had moved his family from Chicago, building up the many farms of Mr. Vorhies.

Swan Johnson was the son born of the second marriage of his father and he had older step-brothers, also one brother. It was a letter from his brother from whom he had not heard for fifteen years which overjoyed him, causing a heart attack which resulted in his death. He was called for breakfast and when he didn't come, Mrs. Johnson went to see about him, and there he was, one sock on and the other in his hand as he had fallen back on the bed.

Swan Johnson went on a land excursion to Nebraska, Platte County, in 1877 with the B & M Railroad. Mr. Byron was the Land Agent. Swan Johnson, Johnny Lawson and Hans Johnson (the latter became Thilda's husband) went from Bement, Illinois. Swan Johnson gave a span of mules in first payment for his land. Johnny Lawson and Hans Johnson gave a team of horses each as first payment on their 160 acres of land. Each sold a set of harness for \$25.00 for the horses and mules, and Nels Johnson, a thirteen year old son of Swan Johnson, rode a horse bareback and led the mules. They got another fellow to ride a horse and lead a team fifteen miles to Lovington, Illinois, where the horses and mules were loaded into a car and shipped to Kearney County, Nebraska. Nels rode back from Lovington to Bement on a train. Mr. Byron gave Nels his ticket but the conductor never took the ticket.

Swan Johnson died January 26, 1894, from a heart attack caused by a letter from his only brother after fifteen years' silence. He was so overjoyed he read and reread it.

The Johnson sale of personal property was in the spring of 1896, and Will took over the farming for two years with the help of Harry Carpenter and Harry Coyle.

Mrs. Swan Johnson's last name was Vesterson. Bothilda was Thilda's name but she never liked it. Peter went to Omaha to business college where he received the nickname of "Rock". When he got home he liked to write "Peter Rock", then "P. R.", and he liked to call himself "P.R.", so it became his name. Nels assumed the middle initial "E" because another Nels Johnson got his mail. Eric put an "E" in his name when he was to be married.

Nels says that a practical nurse who came to care for Mrs. Swan Johnson at Bement by the name of Katie Baird, named Ellen "Louellen" all one word, but the family called her Ellen. Mrs. Swan Johnson

wished to name her daughter "Mimie Elizabeth", but her sons wanted to call her "Minnie Elizabeth" after a girl by the name of Minnie who they thought was pretty and very attractive, so her name was, to the family, Minnie Elizabeth. She was born at Keatskootoos on February 16, 1879. Minnie celebrated January 16th until Andersons, at Keatskootoos, found it was February 16th. Victor was born January 1, 1872, and Mary on July 4, 1881. Oscar died at Bement at the age of nine months.

There were several Swedish families who lived at Bement who followed Swan Johnson to Nebraska: (1) Nels Larson, an uncle of Rena Hoffstein (of Elgin), a brother to her mother; (2) John Larson, Rena's father; (3) Johnny Lawson of Genoa, whose children Albert, Charles, Minnie, Gladys, Nellie, Ida, etc., lived east of Genoa; (4) John Anderson (Mrs. Lottie Willard's father), and (5) the Swan Johnsons. These five families always celebrated Christmas, New Years, Easter, etc., together at one place while at Bement, and again when they came to Genoa they did the same for years.

Rena stayed with the Johnson family and went to school. When Rena Larson's folks moved to Elgin, Nebraska, there were no schools, so she lived during the school year at the Swan Johnson home. She also liked to spend the summers there as she and Ida were good friends. In the family it was a lively place to be. Victor, Will, Ida, Rena and Eric had many happy times together. When Ida was married her husband, John Johnson, sent Rena a railroad ticket to come down to Arlington and take care of Ida and the first baby, Mabel. After Rena's mother's death, Rena stayed at the Johnson home. She found work, but all weekends were spent at the Johnson home.

There were nine children born to Kjerstin's mother, but five died in childhood. Kjerstin's father was a carpenter and cabinet maker but he always had a class of seven or eight young men who met together to read the Bible every night. He was a tall, light complected, slender young man much like Victor. Kjerstin was the oldest of the four living children. She had two brothers and one sister:

Nels Wecelius who was appointed a Judge by the King of Sweden. He had several children.

1. Mrs. Hilma Haak, address, Ostermalm, Sundsvall, Sweden. She lives in the old home, and address is always the same.

2. Ellen, single, who lived at home and kept house for Nels Wecelius, her brother.

Two sons came to America about the age of sixty who live in Minnesota, one a contractor and builder, and the other has a chicken ranch.

3. Mr. Oscar Wecelius, Gheen, Minnesota, Box 46.

4. Robert Wecelius who must live near but doesn't write to his sisters so often.

Wviclius is the way the name was spelled in Swedish. Uncle John always spelled it Wescelius. Thilda had one cousin, her father's nephew, tall, red haired, on her father's side of the house who was educated for a missionary. He lived in Legvig near Swan Johnson's home, but went to the University in Stockholm. He came home for a visit and returned to Stockholm to board a ship for his mission field. As he stepped on the ship he fell into the sea and was never seen or heard of again. He always preached in the neighborhood when he came home on vacations.

When the Johnson family left Sweden for America, Thilda was thirteen, Peter ten, John seven, Nels five, Ida Two, and Eric three months. Chicago was their first new home. Kjerstin's sister Kana, or Karen--as we now call it--who came with her family here has a daughter, Mrs. Ellen Long, of Kimball, Nebraska, and a son, John Ahlm. John Ahlm lives in Nebraska, and another daughter, Karine, lives in California. She did live in Ong, Nebraska. Another daughter, Anna, (single) died.

Swan Johnson sent tickets for all of them to come to the United States, but Nels Ahlm was a fancy dresser and spent the money on fine clothes instead of buying his passage tickets, so the next time grandfather sent the tickets to Nels and his son John, and they later arrived in America, going on to Genoa, Nebraska.

Later, grandfather sent tickets to Kana, a sister of Kjerstin, and the three girls to come to Genoa. This Aunt Kana was a tiny little woman, less than one hundred pounds in weight, four feet eight inches tall.

Kana Ahlm had three daughters and one son, John, who later married Dora Magnuson, of Genoa. Ellen married Wesley Long, of Genoa, and they also had three lovely daughters and a son, Amos. The family moved to Kimball County, Nebraska.

The son, John, also moved his family to Kimball County. One daughter, Karen, married an older man at Ong, Nebraska, and later moved to Los Angeles.

Peter, Kjerstin's brother, learned the tailor's trade and went to England to live, married an English lady and once came home to Sweden to visit. He had four children. Peter died in England.

Kana, Kjerstin's sister, or Karine as we called her, married Nels Ahlm. They immigrated to America. She was a very small, thin person. They had three daughters and one son. They settled in Genoa, and Nels Ahlm did carpenter work with Swan Johnson. Kjerstin's two brothers went off to the University at Stockholm. They were gone a couple of years and when they returned they stopped to see Kjerstin and inquire the way. She didn't recognize them until they told her who they were.

CHILDREN OF MR. AND MRS. SWAN JOHNSON

The children of Mr. and Mrs. Swan Johnson are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
1. Thilda	Wiby, Sweden	Aug. 26, 1854	June 20, 1938
2. Peter	Wiby, Sweden	Oct. 19, 1857	Feb. 11, 1924
3. John	Wiby, Sweden	Oct. 6, 1860	Sept. 22, 1925
4. Nels	Wiby, Sweden	Oct. 24, 1863	June 9, 1946
5. Ida	Wiby, Sweden	Oct. 20, 1865	May 5, 1903
6. Eric	Wiby, Sweden	Jan. 24, 1868	Sept. 8, 1930
7. William	Chicago, Ill.	Jan. 30, 1870	Aug. 22, 1942
8. Victor Oscar	Bement, Ill.	Jan. 1, 1872	Jan. 5, 1915
9. Ellen (Mrs. John E. Young)	Bement, Ill.	July 16, 1874	Jan. 27, 1953
10. Oscar	Bement, Ill	? 1876	Age of 9 months
11. Minnie Elizabeth (Mrs. Frank Baker)	Keatskotoos, Nebr.	Feb. 16, 1879	
12. Mary Hilma	Genoa, Nebr.	July 4, 1881	July 25, 1913

THILDA JOHNSON, first of the children of Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born at Wiby, Sweden, August 26, 1854. She got her schooling in Sweden. A lady lived in the schoolhouse teaching sewing and cooking, a man teacher coming in during school hours to teach reading, writing and arithmetic. In 1868 she went with the family to America, stopping with them in Chicago. Here she took employment in a tailor shop, learning the trade and made such good progress that she was soon put in charge of the coattrimming, pockets and finishing coats. In after years she did all of the sewing for the family.

After two years in Chicago she followed her parents to Bement, Illinois, tarrying there eight years. She then came west with them and made her home with them near Genoa, Nebraska.

In those early days she usually went calling or to parties on horseback. She often visited a friend, Anna Munson, at West Hill, several miles north of Genoa, Nebraska.

Indians used to set up their teepees and camp along Skeedee Creek on the Johnson homestead. A report was current that at some prior time a great battle had been fought along here. Anyway, the children used to pick up large numbers of choice arrowheads in that locality for many years. It is believed Uncle Eric gathered up many of them and took them to John Sterling's home at Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Thilda joined in marriage with Hans Julius Johnson, of the Looking Glass Country near St. Edward, Nebraska, April 1, 1882. A home was prepared and ready for them on a very good farm on Looking Glass, purchased from the Rock Island Railroad Company at \$3.00 per acre, and here they lived happily for seven years. A fine orchard was set out. It provided them with an abundance of all sorts of fruit, large and small; they always had enough and to spare, sharing liberally with neighbors. No one thought of selling fruit in those days. Hans brought the trees and shrubs with him when he came to Nebraska with the Johnson family. To this union were born five children: Lena Elizabeth, Elmer Wescellious, John William, Hans Julius who died in infancy, and Lily Victoria.

Hans Johnson passed away April 13, 1889, from a very painful illness that seemed to be centered in the region behind his ear. It was very painful and a hemorrhage was the result and caused his death. Mother stated that there was no prescribed method of treatment for such ailments, and especially in such small communities where there was a scarcity of competent doctors, but she learned in later years that the direct cause of death was a mastoid which could have been avoided in later years. He is buried in the cemetery at the Looking Glass Methodist Church.

After managing the farm for two years following her husband's death she had a farm sale, disposing of all of the livestock, farm machinery and tools, and rented the farm and moved back to Genoa in order to give her children a better opportunity for education and to be near her relatives.

She purchased two town lots and built a home, using funds as she received from her sale, making a loan for the balance. Her only income being the rent from the farm, and having a number of bad drought years, she received very little revenue. One year I recall she received only \$20.00, so in order to support her family of four children it was necessary for her to find other means of revenue. Having tailoring experience, she did a great deal of sewing for different people.

Coming from such a large family she naturally was a good practical nurse and was in constant demand from the different families to assist during periods of illness. She was especially in demand for childbirth, and many are the children she attended at their advent into this world.

She was always an ardent member of the Methodist Church and for her seventh-fifth birthday the minister, Reverend Reich, announced that the Church would sponsor an anniversary celebration in her honor, the affair to be held in the Church. As she was visiting in a neighboring town, one of the ladies was delegated to notify her so that she would be sure and be at home, but the party failed to notify her and the reception was held without the honored guest. She was very disappointed, of course, when she found out the facts of the case, as she always enjoyed meeting her friends, and nearly everyone in the town was numbered among them.

Resembling her mother, Kjerstin Johnson, in many ways Thilda was and is a great mother, giving endless energy and care to her children and her home. So strong was the mother instinct in her that after successfully raising her own flock, she took in the youngest child of her deceased sister, Ida, when he was but a year old, loved him and cared for him as only a true mother can. As a living evidence of her efforts Norman Johnson now, at the age of 35, is well over six feet tall, weighs near two hundred pounds, and is a dentist in Rutland, Vermont.

This being 1936, Thilda is long past eighty-one years of age and is in remarkable health. She is keenly interested in the large Johnson family and her own children and grandchildren, as ever. This would be a better and kindlier world if there were many more like her.

Thilda spent the winters and the last ten years with her daughter Lena, at Nehawka, Nebraska, on the farm. Thilda became ill in May 1937, but made a nice recovery. Again she became ill in May 1938 with gallstone trouble. She died June 20, 1938, and is buried in Nehawka Cemetery. She had wished to move her husband's remains to Genoa, so Ben Pearson had a State undertaker come to Genoa and they, together with Uncle Peter, Uncle John Young and Thilda, went to Looking Glass Cemetery and decided against it as they could find no remains suitable to move, only the tombstone remaining to mark the location of burial. So my (Lena) boys wanted to keep their grandmother at Nehawka as there would be someone for years there who would want to care for her grave, so Elmer and Billie (the children of Lena) decided that was best, and she was laid to rest in our lot at Nehawka Cemetery.

Children of Thilda Johnson, grandchildren of Swan & Kjerstin Johnson

All of Thilda's children were born on the Looking Glass farm, later moving to Genoa, Nebraska, where all the children graduated from Genoa High School. Miss Eliza Kennedy was their primary and first grade teacher, and W. H. Steinbach was superintendent when each graduated.

Lena Elizabeth attended Nebraska Wesleyan at Lincoln on a scholarship, then one year at the University of Chicago for Ph. B. in Education, and returned to Nebraska Wesleyan for her A.B. degree. She taught schools in Nebraska and at Eugene, Oregon, for about ten years. On April 15, 1914, she was united in marriage to Omer Schlichtemeier, of Nehawka, Nebraska. They located on an excellent farm where they still live. Three children were born to them: Robert Johnson on January 10, 1916; Ellis Omer on March 6, 1918; and Stuart Taylor on February 28, 1920.

Elmer Wecelius after graduating from high school worked in the Johnson Brothers' store at Genoa, Nebraska. In the fall of 1910 he went to Casper, Wyoming, where he now lives. He is employed in the office of the Ohio Oil Company. On November 25, 1915, he was united in marriage with Frances Lewis, of Walnut, Iowa, a teacher in the Casper schools. Two children were born to them: Frances on September 30, 1916, who passed away on September 12, 1928; and Mary Ellen, born November 7, 1918.

John William (Billie), after graduating from high school at Genoa, Nebraska, attended Shurtliff Collage at Alton, Illinois, one year, and later took a business course at Lincoln, Nebraska, Business College. He took a position with the Bank of Commerce at Lincoln, Nebraska. In 1908 he accepted a position as bookkeeper with the Webel Commercial Company at Casper, Wyoming, later becoming a partner in the Campbell-Johnson Clothing Company.

In August 1919, he was married in Rockport, New York, to Marguerite Barkley, a teacher in the Casper, Wyoming schools. Three children were born to them, Sybil Barkley on July 20, 1920; Barbara Jane on January 8, 1924; and Sarah Marguerite on July 12, 1934.

Billy served the people as a State Representative two terms and as State Senator two terms. He is now in the clothing business for himself in Casper, Wyoming.

Hans Julius died in infancy and is buried at the cemetery at Swedish Methodist Church at Looking Glass.

Lily Victoria, after graduating at Genoa, Nebraska High School, took instruction in art and music at the Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, afterwards teaching school for a few years.

On October 4, 1916, she joined in marriage with Warren Bailey, of Casper, Wyoming. Two children were born to them, Don Warren, on December 11, 1917, and Louis William on July 15, 1920. Lily was very ill after the birth of Louis W. and passed away at the age of thirty-two on August 19, 1920, and was laid to rest at Casper, Wyo.

PETER R. JOHNSON, second of the children born to Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born October 19, 1857, in Wiby, Sweden. In 1868 he came to America with his parents and lived with them two years in Chicago, eight years at Bement, Illinois, then moved to the farm home near Genoa, Nebraska.

Being the eldest son, much of the work and much of the responsibility fell to him, and he accepted it manfully always.

On March 31, 1885, he joined in marriage with Lydia B. Anderson of Genoa, Nebraska, locating at Grant, Nebraska, where he engaged in banking. Favorable years with good crops caused a considerable boom in land values and Peter went into it heavily. This was followed by drought, deflation and depression. The bank closed; business was at a standstill, so Peter left Grant and, incidentally, twenty-seven quarter sections of land that he had accumulated.

They located at St. Edward, Nebraska, where he was engaged in the general merchandise business for some time, later joining in the general merchandise business with his younger brother, Eric, who had previously located at Genoa, Nebraska. Here they operated the Johnson Brothers General Store till his death which occurred at the Swedish Methodist Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska, February 11, 1924, from cerebral hemorrhage. He is buried in Valley View Cemetery, Genoa, Nebraska.

Six children were born to Lydia and Peter Johnson: Florence, Mrs. Gladys Pierce, Mrs. Eunice Penningroth, Mrs. Dolly Marie MacQueen, Deweese and Clifford.

Peter was an outstanding citizen, liked and trusted by everybody. At different times he served as member of the town board, member of the school board and secretary to the board. A good father, a true and sincere Christian -- he was devoted to the Methodist Church in Genoa, Nebraska.

Florence married Clifford R. Wood and they reside in Glendale, California.

Eunice married Ed Penningroth and they reside in Tipton, Iowa, on a farm.

Deweese lives in Peoria, Illinois, and is affiliated with the Rueling & Williams Insurance Company.

Gladys married Dan Pearse, of Genoa, and they are now living in Golden, Colorado.

Marie, lovingly nicknamed "Doll", married Glen MacQueen, of Silver Creek, Nebraska, and is now living in Greeley, Colorado.

Clifford, the youngest, married Julia Reddin and is now living in Cody, Wyoming, where he is in charge of the Stanolind Oil & Gas Company's operations and office, covering a large territory.

JOHN JOHNSON, third of the children of Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born at Wiby, Sweden, on October 6, 1860. He followed his parents on their various journeys -- to Chicago in 1868, to Bement, Illinois in 1870, and to Genoa, Nebraska in 1878, living on the farm home one and one-half miles west of Genoa until after his father's death when he, his mother and younger unmarried children moved to Genoa.

Quite early in life, when about sixteen, he was afflicted with rheumatism. This condition finally became chronic and he was confined to the use of a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

He had a very cheerful disposition, a very keen mind and a large stock of humor. He always seemed the center of the family, and everybody brought their problems to him. He kept up the correspondence for the family, kept the books and accounts for his two brothers in the general store there, and also for many years kept books for a lumber yard in Genoa.

He drove a horse and buggy around town for many years, and as he was a great friend of all children, he generally had a load of them with him.

His mother cared for him faithfully and lovingly for forty-seven years until he passed away on September 22, 1925. He had a gall bladder operation at Columbus.

John was a devout Christian, a faithful member of the Methodist Church, always attending their services as long as it was possible for him to do so. He was missed more than most of us will be. Someone always pushed his wheelchair to church and wherever he wanted to go. He is buried in the Valley View Cemetery at Genoa, Nebraska.

NELS JOHNSON, fourth in the line of children of Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born October 24, 1863, at Wiby, Christanstad, Sweden. At the age of five years (in 1868) he and the family immigrated to America, locating in Chicago, Illinois, for two years, then living in Bement, Piatt County, Illinois for eight years, and finally moving out west. They settled at Keatskotoos, in Platte County, Nebraska, for one and one-half years. On March 1, 1880, the family moved to settle permanently on their four hundred acre farm near Genoa, Nebraska. This was farmed by the boys and help, as their father, Swan, did carpenter work.

Here Nels grew to manhood and assisted in the work of the farm. On September 26, 1888, he united in marriage with Alice M. Gregg, of Alliance, Nebraska. He bought a farm a mile west of his father's place, farming there some years. He sold it and moved to Ord, Nebraska, in December, 1901, where he bought a farm of five hundred ten acres four miles north of Ord, in Valley County.

Three children were born to them: Bethene, Helen and a son, Wallace.

Mrs. Nels Johnson passed away March 29, 1919, during the flu epidemic, as did their daughter Bethene, who died April 1, 1919, and a double funeral was conducted for them. The baby son was adopted by a sister of Nels Johnson, Mrs. Ellen Young.

Nels was always an active, successful man. He retired from active farm work in 1919 and moved to Ord in October of that year where he now lives, together with his daughter Helen, and granddaughter Alice May.

After Nels retired he went out to the ranch to mow hay for Will Gregg, his brother-in-law. The team got scared and Nels was badly cut up in the mowing machine. It was a long time before he was out of danger, but he was determined to get well and he did, although he was left somewhat crippled.

Nels died in the Mary Lanning Hospital in Hastings, Nebraska, on June 9, 1946, following a long illness. He attained the age of 82 years, 5 months and 16 days. He was buried June 13, 1946, in the Ord, Nebraska Cemetery beside his wife.

Children of Nels Johnson and Grandchildren of Swan and Kjerstin Johnson

Bethene Blanch Johnson was born at Genoa, Nance County, Nebraska, November 6, 1892. She moved with her parents to Ord, Nebraska, in December of 1901, attended the rural school near home, graduated from Ord High School in 1912, and then taught school.

She was married to Frederic Ralph Harris September 28, 1913. They had a lovely home in Lincoln, Nebraska, at 1758 Franklin. To them a son was born March 3, 1917, named Frederic Ralph Harris, Jr. In 1919 they moved to her father's farm near Ord.

Bethene Johnson Harris passed away April 1, 1919, and was buried in the Ord Cemetery. The small son, Frederic Ralph, was adopted by his great aunt and uncle, Ellen and John Young, of Genoa, Nebraska. Nels' sister, Thilda, went to Ord to the funeral and brought Freddie to Genoa to the Young home where he was later adopted. He graduated from the Genoa High School, attended Nebraska Wesleyan University two years, and is attending Corvallis Agricultural College in Oregon, where he will graduate in the spring of 1938.

Helen Kjerstine Johnson was born June 18, 1894, at the farm home near Genoa, Nebraska. She graduated from Ord High School in 1914, and the Peru State Normal in 1918. Helen was married to Ernest Melvin Hill on November 24, 1924. To them one daughter was born, Alice May, March 16, 1928. Ernest Hill died of a throat infection July 24, 1933.

Helen J. Hill lives in Ord, Nebraska with her father Nels Johnson, and he cares for the granddaughter, Alice May, while Helen works in a Sewing Unit. Helen also keeps the "home fires burning."

Wallace was born in Ord, Nebraska, March 20, 1903. He finished the rural school, attended Ord High School, graduated from the Kearney Military School in 1922, and from the Kirkville School of Osteopathy in 1924. He practiced in Fairbury and Burwell, Nebraska. He married a Kirkville girl in 1924, and to this union one daughter, Sharon Lea, was born in July 1929. He is now an Osteopath Doctor in Los Angeles, where he, his wife and daughter have made their home since the fall of 1936.

IDA JOHNSON, fifth in the line of children of Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born October 20, 1865, at Wiby, Sweden. Following the family in its immigrations and journeys westward, she lived at Chicago, Illinois, Bement, Illinois, and at the farm home near Genoa, Nebraska, where she grew to womanhood. She had a happy, sunny disposition, and the early years in the midst of their large family were joyous with song, play and work.

On December 27, 1891, she was united in marriage with John W. Johnson, of Arlington, Nebraska. To them were born five children: Mabel Evelyn, now teaching in the Shorewood School at Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Earle Edward, leading Dentist of Rutland, Vermont; Walter Johnson, operating a store in Lincoln, Nebraska; Gladys Marie who is now Mrs. Albert M. Hinman, of Newman Grove, Nebraska, and Norman Floyd associated with Earle E. as Dentist in Rutland, Vermont.

Earle E. united in marriage with Katherine Kinsman, of Rutland, Vermont. They have three children: Lorraine, Marilyn and Carolyn.

Walter married Gladys Thompson, of Lincoln, Nebraska, and they have an adopted daughter, Patricia Ann.

Gladys, with Albert M. Hinman, has two children -- Arthur Lee and John Stuart.

Norman Floyd united in marriage with Katherine King, of Lincoln, Nebraska. They have three children -- Raymond Earle, Lyman Walter, and Carlene King Johnson.

Ida--Mrs. John W. Johnson--passed away May 5, 1903, in Genoa, Nebraska, and was laid to rest in the Valley View Cemetery at Genoa.

Ida was a sweet singer. Almost every evening the family gathered around the organ or melodeon which Ida played, and they sang hymns. "The Sweet Bye and Bye" was Ida's favorite.

ERIC JOHNSON, sixth in the line of children of Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born in Wiby, Sweden, January 24, 1868. The following May the family immigrated to America where they located at Chicago, living there two years. They moved to Bement, Illinois, tarrying there for eight years, and then moved to Nebraska, locating on a farm near Genoa, in Platte County, for one and one-half years, later moving to their own farm west of Genoa.

Here Eric grew to manhood, later entering the general merchandise business in Genoa, Nebraska, where shortly after his elder brother, Peter, joined him in the establishing of The Johnson Brothers general store which he operated for thirty years.

On January 1, 1908, he united in marriage with Dora M. Johnson, of Genoa, Nebraska. To them were born three children -- two daughters, Frances and Carol, and one son, Richard Eric.

In June, 1928, they moved to Eugene, Oregon, where he engaged in the grocery business until his death which came on September 8, 1930. He is buried in a new cemetery in Eugene, Oregon.

Eric was a true Christian, an indulgent father, a good citizen, and was loved by all who knew him.

Frances married Carl Knowles. They have Carol Ann (by a former marriage), Katherine, and a son--Charles, I believe--about 5 years old. They live at Eugene, Oregon, now where Carl is employed. Frances has been a devoted member of the Order of Eastern Star.

Carol is Mrs. Sam Hutchings, and resides at 3717 Pioneer Avenue, Cheyenne, Wyoming. She had two adopted children, David and Jane. Her husband, Sam, is a very successful architect, and they have a fine home there.

Richard Eric lives in Eugene, is connected with the Johnson Furniture Company of which Edwin is the proprietor. He is also married and has a family.

WILLIAM JOHNSON, seventh in the line of children of Swan and Kjers-tine Johnson, was born in Chicago, Illinois, on January 30, 1870. He followed the family first to Bement, Illinois, then to Genoa, Nebraska. He grew up on the farm one and one-half miles west of Genoa.

After his father's death he managed the farm until about the age of 26, at which time the family moved into Genoa where he associated with his brothers Peter and Eric who were already established in the mercantile business.

He enlisted with the First Nebraska Volunteers for the Spanish American War June 20, 1898. He served in the Philippines. Harry Coil, Lue Gable, and John Gardner were other Genoa boys who went in the same regiment, while his brother, Victor, went as Lieutenant to W. J. Bryan to Cuba. Will was discharged March 15, 1899, his services no longer being required, and he returned to Genoa and again entered the Johnson Brothers general store.

Will married Lottie L. Smith on November 29, 1900. They left Genoa September 3, 1907, for Portland, Oregon, and moved to Eugene in May 1908. In 1910 he associated with E. L. Dorr in the furniture business, bought Dorr's interest in 1920, continuing to operate in the same location.

Four children were born to Will and Lottie Johnson: Cecile Lucille, Victor Edwin, William W. and Dorothy Louise.

Cecile Lucille was born October 17, 1901, at Genoa, Nebraska, and married Stanley R. Summers on August 22, 1925. They now live at Eugene, Oregon. Three children were born to this union - Larcia Louis on July 20, 1927; Mary Joanne on November 10, 1928, and Stanley Robert, Jr. on June 1, 1931.

Victor Edwin was born December 23, 1903, at Genoa, Nebraska, and married Nellie Fennell on February 28, 1936. He became associated with his parents in the furniture business at Eugene, Oregon. At a later date Edwin became Mayor of Eugene and has been interested in politics.

William W. was born December 10, 1907 in Portland, Oregon, and died October 12, 1908, at Eugene.

Dorothy Louise was born June 7, 1913, in Eugene, and died July 5, 1926. She was a very lovable girl.

The following obituary appeared in one of the Eugene newspapers:

"WILLIAM JOHNSON RITES WILL BE HELD MONDAY

"William Johnson, 1763 Olive Street, died in Eugene Saturday, August 22, at the age of 72. He was born January 30, 1870, in Chicago, Illinois. He married Lottie

Luella Smith in Genoa, Nebraska, November 29, 1900. He came to Portland from Nebraska in 1907, then to Eugene in 1908.

"Funeral services will be held at 10:30 A.M. Monday at the Branstetter-Simon chapel, with Dr. B. Earle Parker officiating. Interment will be in Rest Haven cemetery.

"In 1910, he became associated with E. L. Dorr in the furniture business. From 1914 to 1920, he operated the Creswell branch of the firm.

"In 1921, he purchased Mr. Dorr's interest, and has since been managing-owner of the Johnson Furniture Company of Eugene.

"He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church board of trustees, as well as the official board. He was a charter member of the McKenzie River lodge A.F. & A.M. and a Nebraska volunteer in the Spanish-American war.

"He was also a member of the board of directors of the Retail Furniture Association here.

"Survivors are one daughter, Mrs. Cecile Johnson Summers, and a son, V. Edwin Johnson of Eugene; six grandchildren; two sisters, Mrs. Ellen Follis of Los Angeles, and Mrs. Frank Baker, Seattle; a brother, Nels Johnson of Wyoming."

VICTOR O. JOHNSON, eighth in the line of children of Swan and Kjers-tin Johnson, was born January 1, 1872, at Bement, Illinois.

Coming to Nebraska in 1878, he obtained his preliminary education in the grade and high school of Genoa, Nebraska. He was always an outstanding scholar in public and preparatory schools, in college and the university. He graduated from the University of Chicago in 1896 with high honors, receiving a reward for high merits in scholarship. Victor received the first key issued by the University of Chicago for high scholastic standing. He then entered the Law School at the University of Nebraska and graduated from there with high honors in 1898, and was admitted to the Nebraska Bar Association.

On July 12, 1898, he united in marriage with Dora Sprague, of Blair, Nebraska. Immediately thereafter he enlisted in military service for the Spanish American War. He went as far as Florida where he contracted typhoid fever. He was finally sent home on sick leave. After a long illness he partially recovered, but he carried the marks and effects of the disease throughout life, including partial loss of hearing.

Victor located and practiced law at Ord, Nebraska, then seeking a climate that might be beneficial to the health of his wife, they moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was a prominent and successful practitioner at law here for some years, but failing to find the healthful environment they were seeking they moved to Shoshone, Idaho, in 1909. Here he entered into a partnership as the senior partner of the law firm of Victor O. Johnson and Paul Haddock, continuing until he passed away after a year's illness on January 5, 1915, at Shoshone, Idaho.

Four children were born to them -- Chester, Victor, Eric and May.

They are now located at LaCrescenta, California, 2708 Foothills Boulevard.

Victor was laid to rest in the Valley View Cemetery at Genoa, Nebraska.

ELLEN JOHNSON, ninth of the children born to Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born at Bement, Illinois, on July 16, 1874. At the age of four years the family moved to Nebraska, making their permanent home on a large farm one and one-half miles west of Genoa, Nebraska.

She attended school at Genoa, graduating there from the High School, taught school one year, then took a position in the Johnson Brothers General Store at Genoa, Nebraska.

On October 30, 1900, she united in marriage with John E. Young, of Genoa, Nebraska, a splendid young man, a successful business man, a prominent citizen, loved and respected by all.

Two children were born to them, both dying in infancy.

In 1903 they took into their home Gladys Marie Johnson, four-year-old Daughter of her sister Ida and J. W. Johnson of Arlington, Nebraska (Ida having passed away at that time). They raised Gladys and educated her, sending her to Iowa State College at Ames, Iowa, after her graduation from High School at Genoa, Nebraska. She graduated in Home Economics from Ames, Iowa, taught school five years, then joined in marriage with Albert M. Hinman, of Newman Grove, Nebraska.

When Gladys was eighteen yeard old the Youngs adopted Fred, son of Ralph Harris and Bethene Harris, nee Johnson, and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Nels Johnson (Bethene Harris, had just passed away). Fred is now a sophmore at Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska.

John E. Young passed away December 18, 1932, and was laid to rest in the cemetery at Genoa, Nebraska.

Ellen resides in Genoa, Nebraska.

In the fall of 1936 Ellen left Nebraska to make her home in the west. She went to Eugene, Oregon, where she lived about two years. Later she went to Los Angeles where she met Robert Follis and they were married about 1941. He was a carpenter and a soloist singing in the Evangelical Church at Inglewood Park which he had built as well as his home and much of his furniture.

Robert Follis passed away about 1951 while sitting on the davenport, evidently from a heart attack. Ellen passed away in January 1953, in Westview Sanitarium, Los Angeles. They were buried side by side.

OSCAR JOHNSON, tenth in the line of children born to Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born at Bement, Illinois, in 1876.

He passed away at the age of nine months, and was buried at Bement, Illinois.

MINNIE E. JOHNSON, eleventh child born to Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born February 16, 1879, at Keatskotoos, one and one-half miles east of Genoa, Nebraska.

Shortly after her birth the family moved to a farm one and one-half miles west of Genoa, Nebraska, where she grew up, attended school at Genoa, graduating from the Genoa High School. After graduation she attended Nebraska Wesleyan University at Lincoln, Nebraska. She was in her senior year when she went west and was offered a school in Centralia, Washington. Her Eighth Grade friend was the Superintendent of this school. She taught school for several years in Nebraska and Washington, finally going to Eugene, Oregon.

In Eugene Minnie met and was united in marriage with Frank Baker, an architect. They build a home at Seattle, Washington, and have lived there for many years.

Three children were born to them -- Elizabeth, Robert and Frances.

Elizabeth is now Mrs. Howard H. Hardy, 5712 Greenwood Ave., Seattle, Washington.

Frances is Mrs. Dan Bonnell, of 1549 Roosevelt Street, Pasadena, California.

Robert A. Baker is engaged in banking in Alaska.

*Minnie had a stroke April 23, 1954
Elizabeth wrote Sept 21, 1955 and told
me her mother passed away - she was
so shocked after losing Frances in February
about 2 months later Elizabeth was so shocked
to have lost her mother & just didn't write us.
Minnie is the last to pass away in this big
wonderful family*

MARY JOHNSON, the twelfth and last child born to Swan and Kjerstin Johnson, was born July 4, 1881, at their farm home west of Genoa, Nebraska.

She attended school at Genoa, graduating from the High School in 1901 there, and then teaching a few years.

About two years after the death of her father, Swan Johnson, the family moved to Genoa, Nebraska.

After Mary graduated she filled a position in the Johnson Brothers General Store in Genoa until her death which occurred July 25, 1913.

Mary was a devoted Methodist, Eastern Star, Good Templar and Community Worker.

She died suddenly from an ear ailment and was laid to rest in the Valley View Cemetery at Genoa, Nebraska.

Billy Johnson dies at 88

CASPER — Billy Johnson who died in La Jolla, Calif. Tuesday at the age of 88, probably outfitted more cowboys and ranch hands than any other clothier in Casper during more than 40 years of doing business on South Center St.

And he left his mark on the future of the town, serving on the Natrona County Library Board from 1918 to 1965. Billy, as everyone called him by first name, insisted on keeping the public library location downtown at Second and Durbin — overcoming a group headed by Ernest Wilkerson, Casper lawyer and former gubernatorial candidate, who wanted to relocate the structure on the old city hall property — present site of the Board of Public Utilities.

That's when the decrepit old library had an "ostrich egg" dome that leaked and ruined books and furnishings from time to time. It was replaced a few years ago by a new addition.

Billy served so faithfully on the library board that county commissioners kept reappointing him.

But he was best known for his clothing store on the east side of Center Street, which has been taken over by a municipal parking lot.

He started in the clothing business back in 1914, when the firm was known as Campbell-Johnson Clothing Co. It carried a complete line of clothing and shoes, for city dudes as well as the ranch trade.

In 1908, Billy came from Lincoln, Neb. to Casper to become office manager of the Webel Commercial Co. Six years later he entered into partnership with George Campbell on the forming of the Campbell-Johnson Clothing Co. They operated as a partnership until 1935, when Billy opened a clothing store under his own name at 221 South Center, the site of the former Gamble Store.

Billy personally waited on the ranchers, whether it was fitting a 20-gallon 3X Beaver Stetson or taking a ranch hand down to the basement to find a pair of irrigatin' boots.

It came as a surprise to the business community when the short, affable clothier decided to quit business, move to California and retire. He lost the lease to part of his store. His many friends had taken it for granted that he would always live in Casper.

He was married to Marguerite Barkley in 1919 at Brockport, N. Y. That same year he was elected to the Wyoming State Legislature for a two-year term on the Republican ticket. In 1921, he was elected to a four-year term in the state senate.

Survivors include the widow, Marguerite, of La Jolla; and three daughters, Mrs. Sybil Dray, Mrs. Barbara Penhallow, and Sally Johnson.

Funeral arrangements are pending in La Jolla.