

HUXLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Website: www.huxleyhistoricalsociety.org

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2022

*** Board of Directors ***

President—Jolene Lettow

Vice President—Delila Roberts

Treas. & Hist—Nels Nord

Secretary—Nancy Neilsen

Publishing— Michele Kalsem

Online on Facebook
www.HuxleyHistoricalSociety.org

PH: 515-231-9174

Email:

4HuxleyHistory@gmail.com

In person

“The Hub” museum is located at 515 N. Main in the 3C’s building or make an appointment to visit the Nord-Kalsem Shelter House.

Hours; M-F 8:30-10:30 AM
or call to make an appointment.

Huxley High Class Photos



Years ago when the school was cleaning (and throwing things out) Nels realized the value of the Huxley High graduating class' photos and managed to save them from the dumpster!

These class photos, from the graduating classes of 1922 to 1958, have been displayed most recently on the walls inside the office at the Hub. When people stop by and reminisce these photos are often the subject of great conversations and stories.

Over the years the frames of these photos have succumbed to the ravages of time. Despite our best efforts to preserve them, in most cases it was not possible, so we uniformly reframed and matted all of them.

In addition, we have made 11x14, high quality duplicates of each photo. The duplicates will be included in a flip style mobile display stand to be located at The Nord Kalsem Shelter.

We are looking forward to sharing these restored photos with the public in both the Hub, the Shelter and other occasions.

~end~

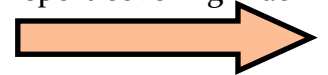
Mission Statement: To engage and support the community of Huxley, Iowa in the preservation, education and celebration of our heritage and ancestry. To preserve for research and education, the artifacts, information, and verbal histories about the lives of the people of Huxley from its pioneer origins to the present day and into our future.

The Annual Meeting of the Huxley Historical Society April 18, 2022, 6 PM.

The meeting was held via Zoom again as a health, safety precaution as well as offering long-distance members the opportunity to attend. Date, time and zoom address were emailed prior to the meeting and a reminder sent.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM. The following board members were in attendance: President, Jolene Lettow; Vice-President, Delila Roberts; Treasurer-Historian, Nels Nord; Communications Tech, Michele Kalsem; and Secretary, Nancy Neilsen. Each board member prepared a report for the annual meeting.

President, Jolene Lettow offered greetings, introductions and proceeded with a report covering activities and accomplishments for the previous year.



Vice-President, Delila Roberts followed with a brief report on plans for the Huxley High School Reunion: dates, times, planned location and an invitation. A report and/or results will be included in an upcoming newsletter. (at bottom of this page)

Secretary, Nancy Neilsen, referred to the minutes of the 2021 annual meeting and reminded members that minutes and treasurer's reports are on the website throughout the year. She also called member's attention to the updated bylaws for the Huxley Historical Society. The current bylaws are also online for review.

Secretary Neilsen also read the report on spending for 2021 as well as the planned budget for 2022.

Michele Kalsem, Communications Tech, reported on updates for online availability as well as purchase of equipment for presentations and meetings. The projector purchased has already been used in the instance of our membership dinner earlier this year.

Reports in their detail are included online for your information and review.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Neilsen, Recording Secretary

~end~

The Huxley High Reunion was held at the Shelter House at Nord- Kalsem Park on June 11th,2022. Fifty Huxley High graduates and spouses attended and Comfort Foods supplied the dinner. A good time was had reminiscing old times of Huxley and Huxley High school.



Mark Nord, Desnnis Soderstrum, Karen Holland
Soderstrum, Don Nord, David Tesdal



Mark Nord, Gary Thompson, Janet Sydnes
Thompson



Art Gumtua, Virginia Peterson Anderson and
Spouse

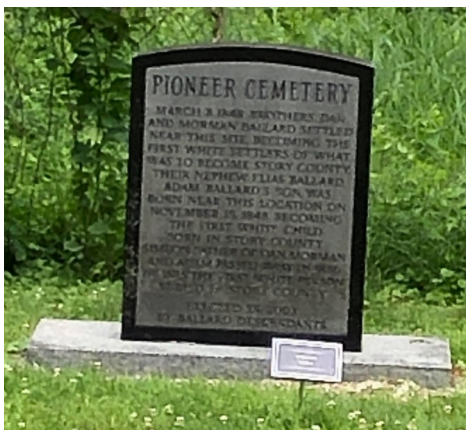
Huxley Historical Society Annual Meeting

President's Report April 18, 2022

Introduction of officers: President – Jolene Lettow, Vice-President – Delila Roberts, Treasurer/Historian – Nels Nord, Secretary – Nancy Neilsen, And Communications – Michele Kalsem. Our communications officer duties include website maintenance, Facebook entries, prepare newsletter, and manage zoom meetings. Michele has also been involved in the Ballard Cemetery activities this year which is included in her report. (Report is posted on website)

- HHS continues to support access to our Ancestry program. This is available to anyone in the community through the Huxley Library.
- Our mission statement is updated to read: “To engage and support the Community of Huxley, Iowa in the preservation, education and celebration of our heritage and ancestry. To preserve for re-search and education, the artifacts, information, and verbal histories about the lives of the people of Huxley from its pioneer origins to the present day and into our future.”
- We welcomed honorary members: Doyle Tweet, Hal Davis and David Ballard.
- Updated HHS bylaws, working with an attorney to assure we are compliant with 501c3 nonprofit organization operations.
- Restructured board and board member responsibilities.
- Donations and planned participation in the community included: Prairie Fest support of \$500 • Plans for a memorial rock in October of 2022 -Arlene and Keith Wee donation to HHS, used for display of Norwegian garments (in the Hub) • Funds used to add a restroom in the Nord/Kalsem Community center • Updated signage at 3C's to indicate location of Huxley Historical Society office and displays • HHS receives funds from Story County to continue maintenance of Ballard Grove cemetery (mowing and cleaning) • Board members meeting with direct descendants of Ballard family to pursue locations of graves (ground penetrating radar to locate graves) • HHS purchased Christmas lights for City – allocating \$40,000. (and receiving very favorable community response) Banners for seasonal change with a focus on history. • Purchasing historical markers for the bike trail through Huxley (including Huxley history) • Members dinner with program January 24, 2022 - HHS officers working with City Committee on revitalization of downtown. ~ end ~

For more reports, budget proposal, and updated bylaws please refer to the website or contact us at 515 N. Main Ave.



With the use of GPR and the help of the David Ballard Family, we have carefully located and permanently marked the locations of 7 graves sites.

The small plaques all say “Unknown Settler”



Century Farms—the first of a new series

Nels A. Nord .Treasurer and Historian

Iver Tvedt, a Civil War Veteran, purchased 80 acres 1½ miles west of Huxley from the Milwaukee Land Co. in 1855 for \$1.25 per acre. In 1960 this farm was owned by the family of Tilmer Sydnes, a grandson of Mr. Tvedt. It was a Century farm in the Huxley area in 1955.

Iver Tvedt was born in Norge, Norway in 1825, and he came to this country at the age of 18. He passed away on March 7, 1912, and was buried in the Palestine Cemetery. His first wife, Melinda Fisher, died while Iver was serving in the Civil War. They had three children, a son, Sam who left for Helena, Montana, and later to Alaska; two daughters: Martha, who died at the age of 22, and Isabel died at the age of 18.

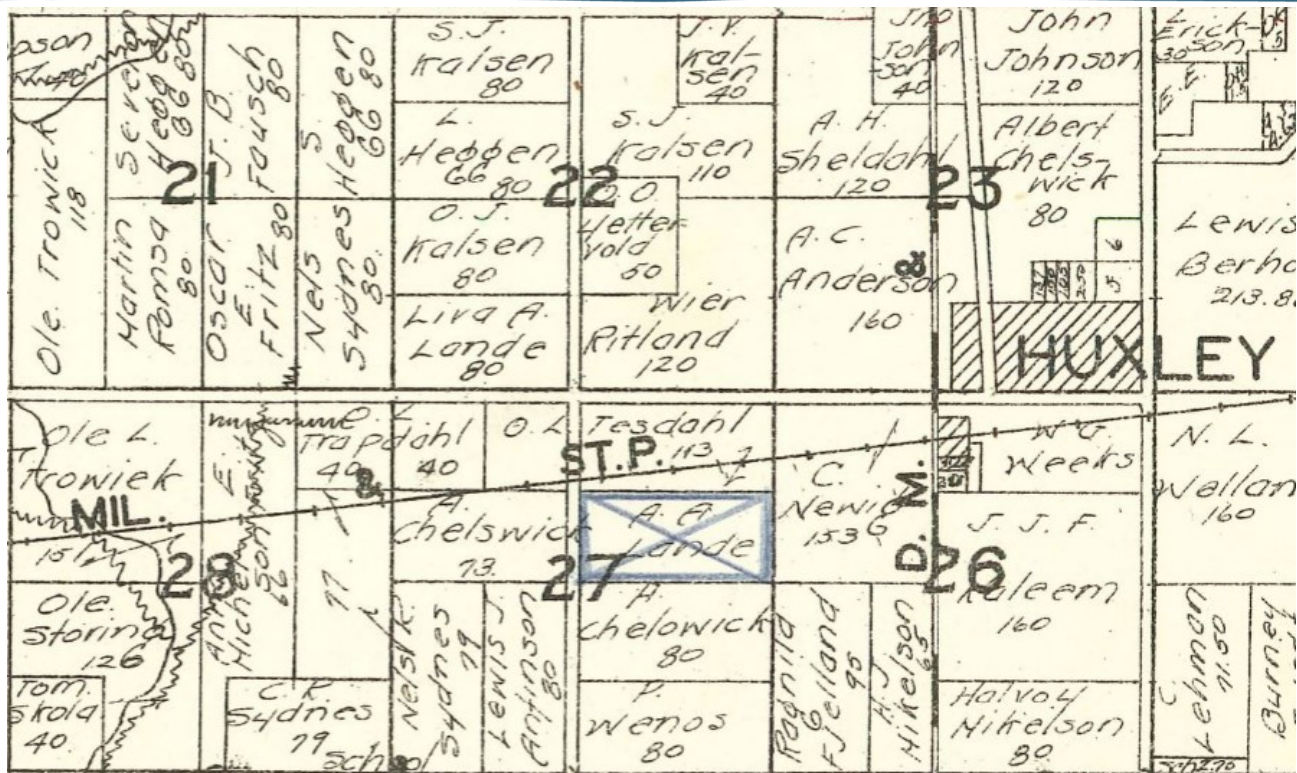
Later, Iver married his sister-in-law, Anna Fisher, who passed away in 1907. They had three daughters: Melinda, Bertha, and Martha. Melinda Tvedt became the wife of Tomas Olsen in 1896. Their children were: Maurine, Guy, Gladys, Walter, Ruth and Viola. Walter and Guy were honored at an open house April 26, 1981, for their retirement as mechanics for 47 years in Ames, Iowa.

Bertha Tvedt became the wife of Nels T. Sydnes in 1898, and died in 1947 at 78 years old. Nels and Bertha lived in Noblee County, Minnesota, for 14 years and returned to Iowa in 1916. In 1917 they purchased the Tvedt farm where they lived for 43 years. They had four sons and five daughters. One son passed away in Minnesota before they came to Iowa. Surviving children were: Tilmer, Melvin, Myrtle, Irene, Pearl, Mildred, and Myrma.

Tilmar married Carrie Wee in July 2, 1927. They had seven children: Helen 1945 Huxley High graduate; Carrol; Darlene 1950 Huxley graduate; Janet 1952 Huxley graduate; Paul 1957 graduate; Sandy a 1960 Ballard graduate and Linda a 1965 Ballard graduate.

The farms that were Century Farms in the Huxley area in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s were: Harold Sheldahl 1859; Silas and Elizabeth Sheldahl 1854; Kermit Freeland 1859; Ed and Ruth Larson 1876; and Clark Helland 1866.

~end~



Section of a platte map from 1930 Palestine Township.

HUXLEY HIGH ALUMNI THAT HAVE GONE BEFORE US.

Class of

- 1959 Gordon Steel 03/12/22
- 1958 Gary Lande 05/25/22
- 1956 Barbara (Hill) Dejong 04/12/21
- 1953 Charles Woods 12/19/21
- 1951 Ramona (Anfinson) Adams 02/21/22
- 1949 Audrey (Thompson) Miller 08/24/21
- 1948 Sheldon Lee 06/03/21
- 1948 Ann Marie (Harstead) Langmann 12/27/21
- 1948 Geraldine (Frederick) Bagley 06/20/20
- 1946 Anita (Hauge) Brendeland 06/20/22

Blessed My Road to Afghanistan - By Art Gumtua

I grew up in Huxley during the 50's. I can remember we always played outside, summer or winter. As large airplanes would fly over us, I was always curious about where were they going and who was on them. They always seemed to be in the same general area only sometimes they were going North, other times South (now I know). Little did I know that GOD was preparing me for a career in aviation.

In May of 1968, I completed my tour of duty with the U.S. Navy as a Radarman 2nd class. In October of that year, I went to work for the FAA at the Des Moines Air Traffic Control Tower as a trainee, Air Traffic Controller (ATC).

My FAA career took me from Des Moines to Kansas City, MO, Omaha, NE, Wichita, KS, Oklahoma City, OK, DFW, Philadelphia, PA, Anchorage, AK, and finally to Boston MA. While in Boston I was involved with the investigation of the John Kennedy Jr crash and the 9-11 attack on the United States. Two of those aircraft departed from BOS. In July of 2002 I retired and returned to my wife's home state of Oklahoma, with almost 37 years of government service. My resume included several senior level management and executive level positions.

In 2003, I went to Afghanistan as a Department of Defense (DOD) contractor for the USAF for one year (AFCAP Contract). I arrived at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan on Oct 3rd, 2003. The Air Traffic Control group I was with relieved the Montana ANG. My position was Chief, Air Traffic Control. Bagram Airfield (BAF). Bagram had been an operational Army Field for about 3 months. No chow halls, all our meals were MRE's. That stands for "meals ready to eat" out of a box. After a month or so we finally got a hot meal for lunch. At night the Base was on "total black out". No lights, pilots and vehicle drivers had to use night vision goggles to see the landing area or the roads. Everyone was restricted on where they could walk because of the land mines the Russians had buried on the airfield during the 1980's. We all lived in large tents (about 30 folks per tent) with latrine facilities about 3 blocks away. No communications available to talk with the folks back home. Very primitive.

Within a month, the Air Force was asking me questions about my FAA experiences and wanted to know if I would attend a NATO airspace meeting that was going to be held at the NATO HQ in Kabul.

Kabul is about 22 miles south of BAF. Military vehicles were not allowed to use the road until it was checked for Improvised Explosive Devices' (IED) each day. The road would usually have one or two IED's hidden in the ruts in that 22-mile stretch. Even though the road was checked, troops were still losing limbs from blast about every other day. For this reason, I requested to be transported to/from Kabul via a helicopter.

After two of these meetings, I was approached by the Air Force to see if I was interested in moving to Kabul and creating/standing-up a non-radar Air Traffic Control facility in Kabul that would control (proceduralized) all the Afghanistan air space. I was advised that this request was based on my FAA experiences. If I agreed, it would mean that I would have to extend my contract for at least two additional years.



While praying about this huge decision, I made a trip to the USAF Base, Al Udeid, Doha Qatar to call my wife. I moved to Kabul in Jan 2004.

The first thing I had to do was brief the USAF on my plan to accomplish this almost impossible task in a country that had no resources. I also needed to find a place to live that would accommodate 6 to 15 folks for the first 18 months while the parts to the system come together. Once operational, we would need facilities to accommodate 30 to 45 controllers and maintenance folks to staff the facility. Plus, I would need accommodations for the employees to be able to have meals, medical, laundry, entertainment, US mail service, internet and transportation. (Yes, we needed some form of entertainment to get our mind off of the things that were going on around us).

Week 1, We set up our living quarters in a tent that accommodated 4 folks. Problem was there were 7 of us. OUCH!

Week 2 Day 1, I met with a USAF Colonel to find my folks a place to live in Kabul, as I was informed that there was no land available for my group of 45 at the NATO base located on the Kabul airfield. The places he showed me were called "Safe Houses" and most of them were 6-10 miles from the Kabul airport.

Day 2, The Taliban had blown up some parts of the city and the whole 5 plus million folks in Kabul were on what they called a "lock down". NO ONE was allowed to go anywhere for 2 days. During the lock down I met with the Colonial, and I advised him that a Safe House was not going to work for my folks as we worked 24/7 in 8 hour shifts and we absolutely needed to be able to come and go as needed.

Day 4... So, the USAF Colonel and I met with the NATO Colonial who was in charge of the NATO Base at the airfield. Again, I requested land on the Airfield to build a camp for my folks. The response was a resounding NO space available..... Was this going to be a showstopper!

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE...

Huxley High School and Ballard Community High School Teachers and Administration – Mrs. Ruth Lee Larson

Part 6 of a series by Nels A. Nord, Treasurer and Historian

Ruth Larson was a secretary for Ballard High School principals for over thirty years. She was the secretary for James Mumper, Tom Leimer, Jim Billings, Jim Dodd, Phil Hintz and Steve Hornung. Ruth graduated from Huxley High School in 1947 where she excelled at basketball and vocal music.

Ruth Olive Lee was born on August 14, 1929, to Norwegian emigrant parents. Her father, Tarald Lee was 39 years old and her mother, Olava, was 35 when Ruth was born. Tarald, known as T.T. Lee, was born in Skjold, Rogaland, Norway in 1890. Her mother, Olava Sofri Jensen was born on October 1, 1893 in Haugesund, Rogaland, Norway. She married Tarald on July 20, 1913, in Story City, Iowa. Tarald passed away in 1972 and Olava passed away January 28, 1992 at the age of 98.

Ruth had two sisters: Thelma Marie Walker, born November 15, 1913, and Helen Gertrude Soderstrum, 1917. She also had 3 brothers: Joseph was born 1917, and passed away two years later; Harry Donald was born on January 23, 1920 and graduated from Huxley High School in 1940; Leonard Edward was born October 12, 1923, and graduated from Huxley High School in 1942.



SECRETARY MRS. LARSON

Ruth married Edward LeRoy Larson on August 14, 1948. Edward was a star baseball catcher and star basketball player for Huxley High School. He graduated in 1944 with his twin sister, Lucille. Ed and his twin sister were born June 9, 1926, in Polk County to Lewis Olai Larson and Isabelle Dobbe. Ed had three additional sisters: Inez Estrum a 1932 Huxley High graduate, Dorothy Johnson a 1937 Huxley graduate, Kathryn Moore, a 1940 Huxley graduate. Ed had one brother, Robert, a 1935 Huxley High graduate.

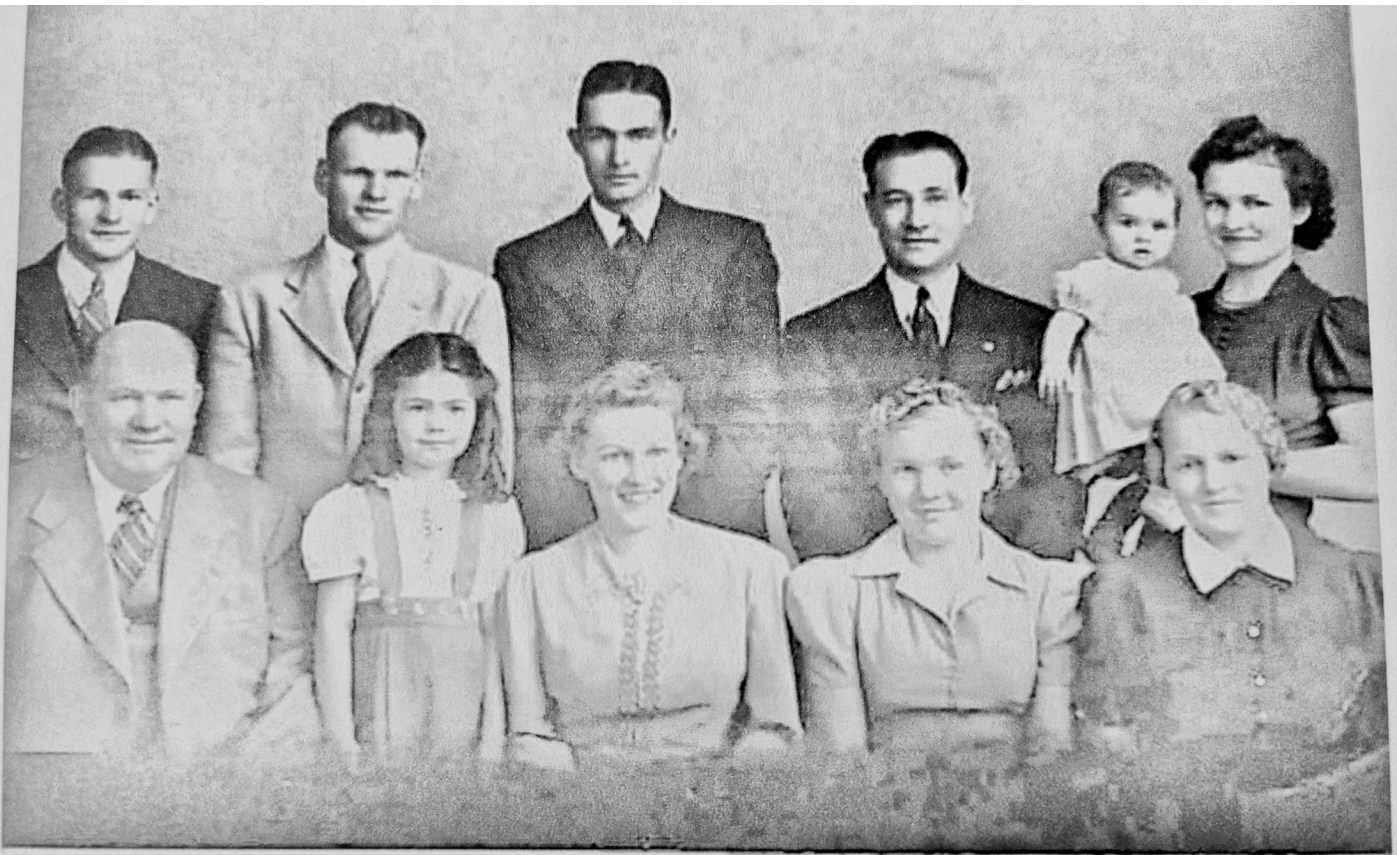
Ed and Ruth had two children; Paul a 1971 graduate of Ballard High School and Jane Ross a 1967 graduate of Ballard High School.

Cont. next page

Ruth was an important part in how Ballard High School was run. She was very organized in the daily duties and responsibilities she had as secretary to the Ballard High School principals. She was called "Sarge" by the students because of the way she "ran a tight ship" for the principals..

I worked with her on problems that came up at the school since I was the police chief almost all the years she worked at the school. She was always so easy to work with and she was a person I admired and respected in the Huxley community for her dedication to the Ballard School District.

Ruth's husband died on October 30, 2017, in Urbandale, Iowa, at the age of 91 and Ruth passed away October 1, 2020, at Unity Point-Iowa Methodist medical Center in Des Moines. Ruth and Ed were interred at the Fjeldberg Lutheran Cemetery in Huxley. ~ end ~



1942

Back Row- LtoR - Leonard Lee, H. Donald Lee,Wayde Soderstrum,Leon (Doc) Walker,Jean Soderstrum,Helen Lee Soderstrum

Front Row- Lto R - Tarald T. Lee,Janice Soderstrum, Thelma Lee Walker, Ruth Lee Larson,Olive Lee

Huxley



2022 Membership Form—Clip or copy and mail

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Annual Membership \$ 20.00

Lifetime Membership \$500.00

Donation \$ _____

Fjord Recipe Booklet \$ 5.00

2nd Ed. DVD / 1939-1955 \$ 20.00

Shipping and Handling for Book/DVD \$ 5.00

Total \$ _____

Ck # _____ Date _____

Mail to: HHS
515 N. Main Ave
Huxley, Ia. 50124



*****NOTICE*****

Effective immediately membership fees will be due in January of each year.

Please share stories and photos with Huxley Historical Society by emailing them to 4huxleyhistory@gmail.com or mail to HHS, 515 N. Main, St. Huxley, Ia. 50124