

# HUXLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Website: [www.huxleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.huxleyhistoricalsociety.org)

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1

Spring 2023

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## 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.

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## April 1st

## PANCAKE FEED

(No fooling!)

## Nord-Kalsem Shelter

## 7AM—10AM

## Goodwill Donations Accepted

*Pancakes made by the famous Don Rimathell!*



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.*

# Area Century Farms - Helland By Nels Nord, Historian



Mike and his wife, Juli, live in the original Helland farm house that was built in 1908 by Mike's great grandfather, Nels Helland.

Ole Helland came to Central Iowa in 1857 from Norway to visit his daughter and son-in-law and ended up buying a farm and becoming a charter member of the Fjeldberg Lutheran church in Huxley, Iowa. He bought the 40-acre farm from Salomas Heggen in 1861 for \$2.50 an acre south of Huxley about two miles.

In 1866, (1)**Ole** and his son-in-law, Seivert Helland, bought another 80 acres. Ole's daughter, Isabell, was married to Sievert in 1853 in Norway. According to Norwegian customs, Seivert took his wife's name because she was a property owner and they came to America the following year.

(2)**Seivert** became the owner of the Helland farm south of Huxley in 1870. He bought another 40 acres in 1872 to make the original farm 160 acres.

(3)**Nels S. Helland** was born May 18, 1865 in Huxley and married Dinnie Frowick, born in Slater in 1863 and became the owner of the Helland farm around the turn of the century. They had five children: Marie born in 1907 – d.1908, Sanford b.1887 - d.1940, Leonard b.1889 – d.1890, Lawrence b. 1891 – d.1939, Ed b.1896 – d.1970, Nelson b.1900 – d.1968, Beatrice b.1905—d.2001. Nels died in 1942 and Dinnie died in 1949.

(4)**Sanford Helland**, son of Nels, took over the farm in 1933. Sanford was married to Clara Torgerson of Slater, Iowa, on March 23, 1911 in Slater. Clara was born in Cambridge, Iowa in 1889 to Abraham Torgerson and Serena Roe (both Norwegian immigrants). Sanford and Clara had five children: Seerley, Doris, Marie, Ivadell, and Clark.

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**(4)Lawrence Helland**, 3<sup>rd</sup> son of Nels, was married to Rebecca Ersland from Slater. Rebecca died in 1914 after the birth of R.B. Lawrence Helland. Lawrence died in 1939. Lawrence had farmed the farm on the southwest side of 210 and Highway 69. R.B. farmed the location in the 1940s— 1960s. R.B. died in September 14, 1983. R.B. had two half-brothers, Morris b.1924 – d.1986 and David b.1930 – d.1936.

**(4)Saleph Edward Helland**, 4<sup>th</sup> son of Nels, was born February 14, 1896, and married Henrietta Charlotte Sheldahl in Eagle Grove, Iowa, on February 6, 1922. They had one son, Laverne Helland and they both farmed northwest of Cambridge. Eddie and Henrietta moved into Huxley in the mid- 1950s and lived on West 5<sup>th</sup> Street and North Main Ave. The Nord family lived across the street from Eddie and Henrietta and they were great neighbors. The four Nord boys always enjoyed visiting with Eddie and Henrietta. Eddie died December 3, 1970. Henrietta died March 27, 1989.

**(4)Nelean Dennis Helland** was the 5<sup>th</sup> son of Nels and Dinnie and was born March 6, 1900 and died in Tulsa, Oklahoma May 12, 1968. **(4)Beatrice Walder**, was born September 21, 1905 and died in 2001 in Lismore, Minnesota.

**(5)Clark Helland** and his wife, Janice (Saunier), took over the farming operation from his father, Sanford in 1967. Clark and Janice had three children, Phyllis Helland-Morris, Charles and Mike.

**(6)Charles** and his son, **(7)Dustin**; and brother **(6)Mike** and his son, **(7)Nick**, farm about 3000 acres at the present time. Phyllis also is engaged in the farming operation by owning several hundred acres that her brothers and nephews farm together.

With Dustin and Nick involved in the farming, that makes seven generations of Hellands farming. Mike and his wife, Juli, live in the original Helland farm house that was built in 1908 by their great grandfather, Nels Helland.

NOTE: numbers in parenthesis denote generation.

Cited from Ancestry.org, and

## Huxley High Alumni That Have Gone Before Us

**Marjorie Kalsem Muench, Huxley Class of 1952, Died August 9th, 2022**

**Carrie Dueland Witt, Huxley Class of 1951, Died December 24th, 2022**

**Mary Lou Berhow, Huxley Class of 1955, Died February 7, 2023**

**Doris Overland Lundy, Ballard Class of 1960, Died March 15th, 2023**



# Growth of Huxley 1960 to 2023

By Nels Nord, Historian

In 1960 the Huxley population was only 435; in 1970 it grew to 939. A special census in the summer of 1979 showed 1,377 residents in a community that was growing fast because of a developer named Arnold Ihle. Arnold had purchased approximately 95 acres in 1967 north and south of highway 69. Ihle Construction started with its development South of Highway 69 from West 5<sup>th</sup> to North 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the mid-1960s. It was the start of several subdivisions built by Ihle Construction. In the late 1960s construction expanded to North of highway 69 all the way to Sycamore Avenue.

Charles Raker was also a developer and built about 20 houses on West 5<sup>th</sup> Street and North 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue next to Nord-Kaisem Park.

Robert Larson, Larson Lumber and Grain Company, developed many houses on the east side of Timberlane and on Parkridge Avenue.

In November 1971, Arnold Ihle opened the Ballard Plaza along Highway 69 with several businesses including: South Story Bank, Huxley Post Office, Our Own Hardware (Otis Ihle), The Parlor (a modern hair styling shop operated by Alan Hammond), Luke Brothers Furniture and Carpet, Huxley Laundromat (Harold Rittgers), Harlans Grocery, Harold Sharpnack Appliance and Repair, Anita's Fabrics, The Clothes Closet, and Sylvia's Gift Shop to name a few. Later he added another strip with a Children's Clothes Shop (later became a drug store operated by Jim Obrecht), The Clothes Closet moved there, a furniture store (later to become Iowa Miss and Mrs.) and a variety of businesses. Arnold also invited Clarence Stupka and his family to Huxley to open a restaurant called the Bomber.

In 1974 Arnold Ihle and Dr. Steven Kruse built the K-I Building at North Main and Highway 69. The businesses were: Ballard Medical Center (Dr. Steven Kruse), Shoten Computer Services, Everett Steensland Real Estate and Insurance, Payer, Steensland and Lathrop Law Firm, Skinner and McLaughlin Midwest Agri Tax Service Corporation, Michael McGregor, Dentist, Arnold Ihle Construction Company and Rose Elaine Apartments. The apartments were located behind Ballard Plaza and consisted of three 24-plex apartments.

Huxley continued to grow, and a 9-hole golf course called Ballard Golf and Country Club was built in 1975 with 220 shares sold the first year.

Arnold had a great vision of how Huxley would grow due to the location between Ames, Ankeny, and Des Moines. He did all this development without financial help from the City of Huxley.

Huxley continued to grow with the population increase to 1884 by 1980. In 1990 the population was 2047. By the year 2000 the population increased to 2316 and with the new development North of Huxley the city expanded to 3200 by 2008. With additional development to date the population is between 4500 and 5000.

In a recent article by Newsbreak, Huxley was selected as "The Top Iowa Small Town You've Never Heard of Before." Some of the criteria for "best small town" were population density, low unemployment rates, cost of housing, insurance rates, commute times, and education. The town is referred to as the "Heart of the Prairie". Huxley was #1 followed by (2) Earlam, (3) Atkins, (4) Solon, (5) Roland, (6) Walford, (7) Fairfax, (8) Dike, (9) University Heights, (10) Lawton.





# DELILA ROBERTS – A WOMAN OF MANY HATS



Delila (Peterson) Roberts – daughter. Delila has worn many hats in her life. The first hat she ever wore went along with a farmer's bib overalls being she was a farmer's daughter. She was the first born to Clifford Peterson, of Norwegian descent, and Violet (Ruppert) Peterson, of French/German descent in November 1937. Her parents had met each other at a dance in Des Moines. (Dancing wasn't allowed in Huxley in those days as it was sacrilegious.) Clark Gable was the most favorite person in America at the time, the chocolate chip cookie was invented and Time magazine's Man of the Year was Adolf Hitler.

Delila grew up in Huxley. When Delila's parents were first wed, they lived in a house in Huxley on Main Avenue. The population of the town at that time was 392 residents. A few years after Delila was born the family moved to a farm southwest of Huxley on Highway 210. After Delila's family moved to the farm, her paternal grandparents moved into the house in town. That house still exists and is still owned by family. The farm Delila grew up on still exists as well and keeping with family tradition, has stayed in the family and is now the residence of her nephew, Dr. Kirk Peterson.

Delila Roberts – sister/aunt. Four years younger than Delila was her brother LeRoy. LeRoy lived most of his life in Huxley in a house right on Highway 69, next to the old Standard gas station.

LeRoy made Delila an aunt four times as he had two daughters and two sons: Colette, Jeff, Kirk and Lainie. Four years after LeRoy was born came along a sister, Diane. Diane finally changed tradition and after she wed, moved onto a farm in White Oak. Delila became an aunt to Diane's three children: two boys and a girl: Michael, Darrell and Brenda.

Delila Roberts – wife/mother. Delila married in 1958. President Dwight Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act, creating NASA. Paul Newman and Elvis Presley were America's sex symbols, the modern hula hoop was invented and an "Evening with Fred Astaire", the first television show recorded on color videotape, was broadcast on NBC.

Four years after being married, Delila moved to...guess where? Huxley! Population at the time was 486 residents. Living on an acreage southeast of Huxley on Highway 210 (just a couple miles east of the farm she grew up on!) and being the good catholic woman that she was, Delila gave birth to nine children - three girls and six boys: Jolene, Dan, John, T.J., Susan, Lucy, Andy, Charlie and Shane. All of Delila's children were active in sports and activities, and thus, another hat that was worn during those years was that of bleacher mom, (besides, of course, the hats she wore as nurse, cook, housekeeper, teacher, etc., etc., etc.). The bleacher hat was a hat she thoroughly enjoyed wearing and it's still one of her favorites. Currently, all of Delila's children live within a ten mile radius of her home.

## \*\*\* Publisher Correction \*\*\*

The article on Kalsem Farm Inc. has a typo in that states "In 1982 John V. Kalsem Homesteaded"... THAT should read **1882!!!**

Additionally this photo was incorrectly labeled. It should read left to right :

**Dave with Ralph and Jay Kalsem in front of Iowa Foundation Barn.**





Delila Roberts – First Responder. It was 1984 that Delila decided she should give to her community. She was 46 years old. Only four of her nine children remained at home. The population of Huxley had skyrocketed to 1,884 residents. More than 20 million Trivial Pursuit games were sold in that year. The top shows on television were “Dynasty,” “Dallas,” and “The Cosby Show,” and Apple had sold its first Macintosh computer. For over twenty years Delila was an active member of the Huxley Fire Department and voluntarily provided aid to the growing number of residents in the community. That was a hat well worn.

Delila Roberts – grandmother/great grandmother. Her family has expanded to include 18 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren with two more great grand babies on the way! All of her grandchildren spent many wonderful days on her acreage, jumping on the trampoline grandma kept in the back yard, great Christmas parties, and many wonderful meals that the family shared (beans and ham!). Grandma wore the bleacher hat many, many times for her grandchildren’s sports and activities too.

Delila Roberts – Historical Society Board Member. In 2005, the Historical Society was formed. YouTube had just been invented, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf of Mexico, and Brad Pitt left Jennifer Aniston for Angelina Jolie. Huxley’s population increased to 2,337. The first board members on the Huxley Historical Society were Nels Nord, Donnie Duncan, Michele Kalsem and Delila Roberts. Delila has been a board member since the Society’s inception. During her tenure, she was seen dressed in different historical garments while sitting on several floats during the annual PrairieFest parade. She served at pancake breakfasts, sat on the Maland Home committee and is a firm believer that history matters. It is a hat Delila still wears.



Last November, Delila Roberts turned 85 years young. She still attends luncheons at the Plumbers Local Union #33 in which five of her sons, and two of her grandsons are members. She goes to breakfast once a month at IHOP with several of her friends, attends church religiously and with her ever-growing family has many weddings and births yet in her future. She has worn many hats and not all of them were mentioned in this article (to name a few: she was a Red Hatter, a Ballard school cook, and a full-time employee at Sevede Transfer in Ames). Today, the population of Huxley sits at 4,415 people. It’s amazing how much change can occur in 85 years.

Yet, if you know Delila Roberts, nothing has changed. She is perhaps a little older and a lot wiser. But all that matters are the many hats she has proudly worn and the many hats she still wears today.

~ end

**Huxley****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