Three generations after Slinde, Norway

The Slinde Homestead

By Chris Gessele

Slinde, Norway.
It's a beautiful coastal town, surrounded by those characteristic, majestic fjords and inhabited by those hardworking Scandinavian people.

The fishing and agricultural community is also a starting point for something else of significance: the Slinde family.

It was Nels Slinde who first journeyed out of Norway to the United States, and in 1869 settled in Lansboro, Minn. Nels married Karoline Vangen, and the couple proceeded to have 12 children. Among them was Johnannes — or John — born in 1883.

John Slinde — along with several of his siblings — embarked on a mission into western North Dakota to settle his own farmstead in 1903. He journeyed all the way west to what is now Mercer County, and bought property 7.5 miles southwest of Stanton in 1903 at the age of 19. He worked in town for two years, before settling his purchased property and farming at a tender 21 years.

Then, on July 12, 1906, Mercer County official John Pulles christened the John Slinde farm “Valley View Farm.”

John proceeded to marry Lillian Brown of Stanton in 1914, and the couple had eight children together before Lillian’s death in 1930.

John eventually remarried, marrying Edith Pfliger in 1932, and had three more children — Geneva, Paul and John Jr.

John Jr., or John, was much younger than many of his siblings and half-siblings, with 17 years separating him from his eldest sibling. So, he said that he didn’t even know two of his brothers, Udene and Carlton, 16 and 14 years his senior respectively, until they returned from their service in World War II. It was about this time, in 1944, that John also remembers the farm’s large, red barn being built from lumber provided by a disassembled blacksmith shop in Stanton. It still stands today.

But even with the large Slinde family, there was enough work to go around, and John vividly recalled milking duty.

“When I was a little shaver, (the family) milked a bunch of cows by hand. Everybody had to join in the milking,” John Jr. said.

The Slinides also raised a “good number of beef cattle,” John Jr. said, as well as hogs and chickens.

The Slinde children attended school in Cambridge, a country schoolhouse one mile northwest of the farm. For a few of those years, the school's young teachers would stay at the Slinde farm. This worked out well for John Jr. and his brothers and sisters.

“We would usually walk the mile to school. But winters when the teachers would stay at the farm, Dad would hook the horses up to the sled,” John Jr. said.

John and his older siblings attended class at the one-room school, as well as half of John’s children before it shut down, forcing them to Hazen. John enjoyed the farm life, and continued to live and work on the farm after his parents’ retirement.

John married Myrtle Joslin in 1954, and they had four children: Connie, Kent, Judy and Beth. Kent continues to keep the Slinde farm and ranch running smoothly — the third Slinde

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Kent, left, and John pose in the farmyard two years ago with the result of a successful day's hunt. Kent lives on and operates the farm, the third generation of Slindes to do so.

John Slinda, right, and his wife Myrtle lived in and operated the Slinda family farm southwest of Stanton with their son, Kent, until 1985. The couple now lives in Hazen, where John has been retired since 2001.

Slinda

generation to manage the operation. Kent currently lives on the beef and grain farm in its original location southwest of Stanton, and currently runs about 300 beef cattle. John and Kent jointly farmed the homestead, even after John and Myrtle's move into Hazen in 1985. John retired from farming six years ago.

Of the 12 Slinda children, John said that only three remain — Geneva, Lillian and himself, and “we are still close,” John said.

Over the years, John has watched John Slinde Sr.'s dreams of a homesteaded farm in Mercer County develop and grow into the large beef cattle operation that Kent runs today.

“Everyone was al-