

Jens Chr. and Anna Elisabeth Opsal

The siblings Anna, Thora (Andvig), Karl and Torleiv Opsal were all born in the Norwegian town Grimstad in the period 1883 to 1893. They were raised in a family with strong family ties and mutual interests, and kept through the years close contact with each other. The four of them were all educated as teachers. They developed a strong interest in genealogy. Anna and Torleiv learned to read Gothic, and studied eagerly old documents.

The siblings lived in different parts of the country, so they kept in contact through correspondence. Some of the letters are kept and shows that their parents, the fathers' education, interest and eventful life, impressed the siblings.

Jens and Anna Elisabeth lived a rich life, and did their utmost to give the four children the same opportunities.

The sibling gathered much information of the family, especially information and a huge archive of photos from their parents' life.

They discussed to publish a book of their father's life, but did not come that far. Much of the information is unfortunately lost, but the following story is mostly from information the siblings gathered in the 1950's and 60's.

The letter from Karl to his brother Torleiv dated 3rd November 1962, is ending with the words: "So is it left to write the story of Jens Christensen Opsal".

Furebrakken 2. Hinna 3/11 1962

Kjære Torleiv!

Takk for "lappen" i Ellens brev. Jeg trøer til pennen for en gangs skyld. Det går så sjelden på at jeg stundom undres på om jeg enna kan regnes blant de skrivkyndige.

Det var i betimelig tid du satte meg på fars historie. Nå skal du høre: Jeg kom en gang - husker ikke når det var - over en eske blant mors få etterladenskaper. Min første innskyttelse var at innholdet vel var egnet til å gå i anfallsdenker: noen gamle bankbøker, bilder, små rammer, medikamentes o. a. Men der lå fars gamle og velbrukte lommebok - seddeboka - rund og støtta med ei solid skeiserem spent om. Heisan, gamle papirer har min interesse, og her fikk jeg noe å bla i. Formodentlig har mor pakka boka full av det hun har funnet av fars personlige akt-stykker. Der var mangt. Fra vitnemål og attester, utkast til klageskrivelser over koseholdet på Stend til bryllupsrang av Torjus Hansen og en gammel pantobligasjon etter Christen Jensen Opsal. Papirene hadde vært brettet og lagt (de fleste) i små, trange konvolutter av skjøpelig materiale. Nå har jeg stund med å tyde de gamle, gulnede papirene, og så har jeg forsøkt å ordne dem kronologisk og i grupper etter tid, sak og sted - f. eks. Huseby, Mo i Førde, Stend, As, Grimstad. Så står det igjen å forfatte saga om Jens Christensen Opsal.



*Three generations at Eastern Rom, Lyngdal in 1922.
Behind from left: Karl, Thora, Anna Elisabeth, Ellen, Bertha, Torleiv, Jens and Jørgen
In front from left: Jens, Gisle, Astri, Kari and Finn*

The years 1860–1920

In this story we follow the family of Jens Opsal and Anna Elisabeth Oftebro through the last half of 1800-century and until Jens died in 1926. This period was in many ways marked by tough conditions in Norway, but gradually the modernization of the country began. Norway had a break as a separate nation, as the country was in union with Sweden until 1905, and owing to this the times was very unstable until the union came to an end.

After the Napoleonic War in 1807 to 1814, Norway went through one of the worst depressions the country has experienced. Bankruptcies and unemployment affected the entire Europe. After 1830, we see the first sign of a new rise. In the 1850s a far stronger business community grew up, and in the 1870s there were an unusually strong growth period in the country. The industry grew strongly in the 1890s, and in 1899 Borregaard was the country's largest factory with over 1,000 employees. The population of Norway grew from ca. 880,000 in 1801 to over 2.2 million in 1900.

After the union with Sweden ended in 1905 the period was marked by strong economic growth. Cheap electricity and foreign capital investments forced growth. Under World War I in the years 1914-1918, Norway declared itself neutral, along with Denmark and Sweden. The war led to boom and inflation, and growth continued pretty much continuously until 1930.

The major world crisis, which ushered in "the harsh 30s", began with a collapse on the stock exchange in New York in October 1929. The decline came fully to Norway in autumn 1930, and shortly after unemployment set new records. Prices fell and production in industry was reduced by over 20%. The

price of agricultural products in 1933 was down to 1/3 of what they had been in the 1920s.

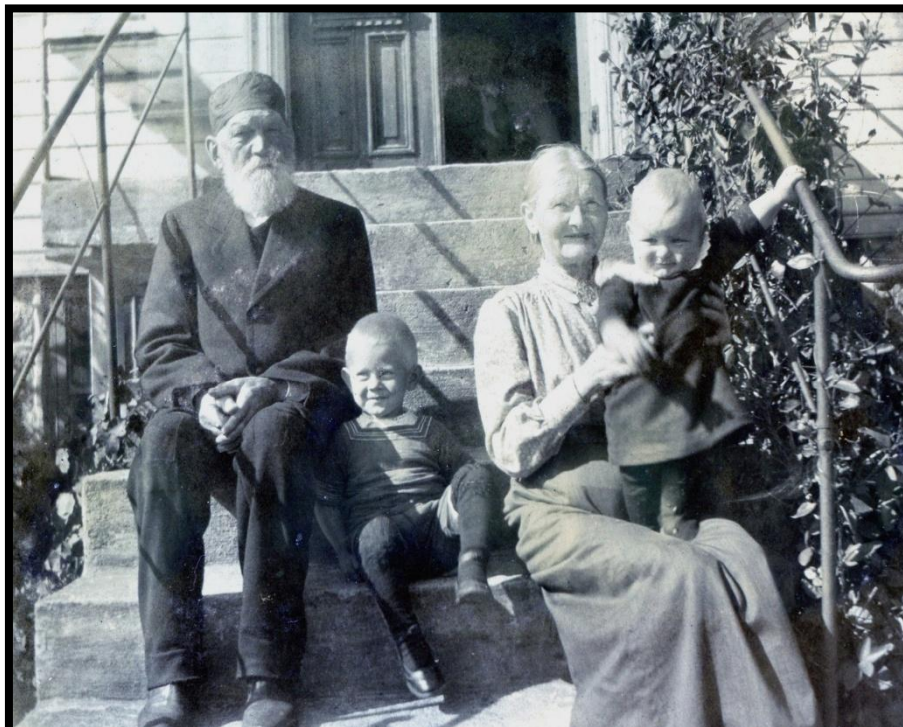
The winters 1932-33 and 1933-34 about 40% of the trade unionists were unemployed. From 1934, the first sign of new growth showed, which continued until World War II came to the country with the German invasion 9th April 1940.

Jens C. Opsal in brief

Jens was born on the farm Opsal in Lyngdal. Agriculture was his passion. He received his education at Huseby Agricultural School at Lista, and at Ås Higher agricultural school in Akershus, where he was an agronomist. Later he taught as a teacher at agricultural schools in Førde and in Fana, before he started and ran his own agricultural school at Imenes in Grimstad.

He settled in Grimstad, founded family, and ran the state alcohol monopoly, merchant outlets and an own private dairy in the town. Jens was very socially engaged. He participated in starting agricultural schools, was engaged in discussions concerning the Norwegian language and educational standard in the society. He had a number of municipal offices and missions in his years in Grimstad.

Jens and Anna Elisabeth returned to the farm Eastern Rom in Lyngdal in 1914. Jens died there in 1926. Anna Elisabeth then moved to her children in Stavanger, where she lived with her son Karl to her death in 1940.



*Eastern Rom 1919
Jens Chr. and Anna Elisabeth with the grandchildren
Finn Andvig (left) and Jens Opsal*

Jens and his siblings

Jens Christensen Opsal was born on Opsal April 22nd 1837, as the 4th of the 6 siblings. The first-born brother Jens died only 2 years old in 1834. The other 5 were growing up.

The Opsal siblings:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| 1. Jens | (1832-1834) |
| 2. Margrete Katrine | (1834) |
| 3. John | (1834) |
| 4. Jens | (1837) |
| 5. Apelone | (1840) |
| 6. Johanne Martine | (1843) |

Margrete Katrine and John were twins and were born 15th January 1834. Margrethe (1834-1913) was married to Kristen Resvik (1834-1894), from Resvik in Grimstad. There is great posterity after them in the Grimstad area. Margrethe and Kristen had 4 children. The oldest, Gunnar Kristensen (1856-1904) remained unmarried. Kristen Kristensen (1858-1943) went to USA, where he was married and later divorced. He had a daughter, Henriette Kristensen who was married in USA. Their brother Martinius Kristensen (1871 -) married Kirstine Bakken (1875-1958) and also went to the United States before they returned to Solborg in Grimstad. In USA Martinius was seaman and a clerk. The youngest brother, Anders Kristensen (1874-1919) was married to Johanne Beruldsen (1875-1916) and settled in Grimstad.

John (Christensen) Opsal was Jens' only brother. The two brothers had much in common, and followed each other throughout life. Like Jens John settled in Grimstad, on the farm Imenes. John changed his name to Imenes after he married. His new name was thus John Imenes. Aase Andersdtr. Imenes was born at Imenes in 1840, and was only 17 years old when the two married in 1857. They took over half the farm at Imenes for 330 Spd. Inger, Aases mother, died in 1863. Three years later, in 1866, John and Aase took over also the last half, and the farm was again united.

John died in 1904, and widow Aase then kept the farm to 1917, when her son Toralv Imenes took over. John and Aase had 3 sons, who all settled in Grimstad. The oldest son John Alexander remained unmarried, lived at Imenes, and became an insurance inspector. He was interested in politics and youth work, and was also involved in local history. He was chairman of Landvik local history organisation until his death in 1955.

The brother Anders was shopkeeper in Grimstad, and has a large posterity in the area. The third brother, Karl, went out of town. A period he was a gold digger in Australia, and wrote, among other things, a book with scenes from the gold digging. Karl also wrote several other pieces and was both a poet and a newspaperman. Karls posterity is partly in Grimstad, and partly in USA.

The background for the name Karl is unknown, but both Jens and John called one of their sons Karl.

Jens' sister was married to Apelone Jacobi Kristensen from Kindingsland (1831-1918).



*Grimstad 1910
Anna (27), Thora (22), Karl (20) and Torleiv (17)*

Jens' youngest sister Johanne Martine (1843-1915) married Gunnar D. Timenes (d. 1928) from Timenes in Randesund outside Kristiansand. They had 8 children, but 5 of them remained unmarried, and a sister died as children. Thus, only 2 of the 8 children grew up and have descendants.

However these two children, Andreas Timenes and his sister Maria, who was married to Hans Emil Benestad, got large posterity. They had 6 children each, a total of 9 sons and 3 daughters. After Timenes and Benestad it is great number of descendants in Kristiansand region.

Anna Elisabeth and her siblings

Anne Elisabeth was born October 31st 1851 on the Oftebro farm. It was quite remarkable at that time that both she and her 8 siblings all grew up. All were married. The siblings were born in the years 1842 to 1861.

Their descendants is currently spread over 3 continents. The elder brother Christian went to Eshowe mission in Zululand in South Africa as a Medical Missionary. His uncle Ommund Oftebro was there at first as a missionary. He was educated at a missionary at the mission school's first class in Stavanger. Ommund travelled to Zululand in 1848, and was one of the great pioneers of Norwegian missionary operation in South Africa .

Hanna, Ommunds daughter and Christian's cousin, became Christians wife. They married January 8th 1881. The couple settled in Zululand and have a large posterity.

The Oftebro siblings:

1. Christian (1842)
2. Gunhild Regine (1844)
3. Karen Sofie (1846)
4. Anna Tonette (1849)
5. *Anna Elisabeth* (1851)
6. Tobias (1853)
7. Bertha Marie (1855)
8. Ole Mathias (1858)
9. Katrine Tobine (1861)

Lived in:*Zululand, South Africa*

USA

Zululand, South Africa

USA



Seven of the Oftebro siblings ca. 1865.

From left: Bertha Marie, Anna Elisabeth, Tobias (behind), Anna Tonette, Ole Mathias, Karen Sofie and Katrine Tobine.

The sisters Anna Tonette and Katrine Tobine married respectively Anders Johnsen and Rudolf Reime. In the 1880s, there was a considerable emigration to the United States, especially from the Agder counties. The two families searched a future in the new country. They were a group of 10 people leaving Lyngdal March 24th 1883. The families settled down as farmers in the state of Nebraska. There is great posterity after them over most of USA.

The other siblings were all married and settled in Norway. Gunhild Regine married June 4th 1868 with Tollak Rom. He was a farmer at Rom and bank cashier in Lyngdal. They had 11 children, of whom 10 grew up and were married. Three of the children travelled to the United States and have a large posterity. The rest are scattered all over Norway.

Karen Sofie married Nils Foss, who was farmer at Foss in Lyngdal. They had 10 children, 7 of them grew up and were married. Six of these siblings travelled to the United States with their families, and have a large posterity.

The brother Tobias married November 3rd 1887 to Kamilla Sandersen. They had 9 children in the years 1888 to 1905. Six of them grew up and were married. Unlike their cousins they all stayed in Norway, with the exception of Adolf, who became a farmer in South America.

Bertha Marie married April 9th 1891 with Gustav Hojem. They travelled to Durban in South Africa.

The last of the brothers, Ole Mathias, married July 4th 1891 with Amalie Log. He was a teacher, and became school principal in Kristiansand. Of their 4 children, 3 married, and all lived in Norway. The oldest daughter Torbjørg (1892) was married to Kristian Grimsø. He was a vicar in Tinn in the county of Telemark and in Sandefjord. The son Arnulf (1900) was a dentist in Tune in Østfold, while Aslaug (1908) was married to Arthur Evensen. He was a high school teacher in Oslo.



Zululand in South Africa

Jens and Anna Elisabeths parents

Jens and Anna Elisabeth were third cousins. Jens' great-grandfather Christian Vraalsen Herdal was brother of Anna Elizabeth's great-grandfather Henry Vraalsen Herdal.

John was son of Christen Jensen Opsal, born 20th June 1801, and Anne Helene Jonsdtr. Lene, born 19th September 1804. They were married 9th June 1831. Christen was farmer at Opsal in Lyngdal. Anne Helene was daughter of Jon Pedersen Lene, born 5th October 1779, and Apelone Aanensdtr. Bringsjord, born 17th October 1781.

Anna Elisabeth was daughter of Tobias Oftebro, born at Oftebro 28th December 1803, and Anne Kathrine Birkeland, born 17th May 1821. Tobias married 38 years old with Anne Katrine who was 20 years old. They settled as tenants on the Outer Berge farm where they lived 19 years. Here they had their 8 first children. While he was the leaseholder on the Outer Berge, Tobias around 1845, demolished the old stone church, and built the foundation of the new

Lyngdal Church of the stones from the old. From 1860 the family was tenants at Lyngdal rectory, where their last child was born.

In 1865 Tobias took over the farm Western Fidje from Anne Katrine's father, Torkild Ånensen (Birkeland) Fidje. The family had strong mission interests, and Anne Katrine was active in the local missionary women's movement. Anne Kathrine was of "Good Family", as her family was descending from several of the old noble families in Norway, and also the Norwegian kings in the Middle Ages. The higher nobility around the Hardanger fjord is central among the ancestors.



Eastern Rom 1919:

*In front: Anna - Ellen/Torleiv - Bertha/Karl - Thora/Jørgen - Anna Elisabeth/Jens
Children: Jens Opsal on Anna's knee and Finn Andvig with Torleiv*

Jens' education in agriculture

Jens developed in his youth a strong interest in farming and agriculture. He decided early to take education in that direction, and as he was "smart", he finished the highest education of the time. His brother John first went to Huseby Agricultural School in Vanse. Jens joined him in 1857, 20 years old, which was the start of an education that culminated with 2 years at Ås Higher Agricultural University as "free student".

Lista & Mandals County had the first agricultural school in 1847, located at the Berge farm in Lyngdal. After a few years the school developed so it had to look for a more suitable place. The Huseby farm in Vanse, proved to be suitable for this purpose.

The owner of Huseby, Peter Nicolai Otto, was educated in agriculture, and developed the farm with great enthusiasm. He established tenant farmers and expanded the farm by cultivation. From 1855 the farm was rented to the agricultural school. The contract was written September 2nd 1855 between Otto and the school. Otto rented out Huseby for 10 years against an annual payment from the county of 800 Spd. Otto would then pay a theory teacher 320 Spd. in annual salary, as well as lodging and firewood. He also had to pay salary to a practical teacher, which the theory teachers could accept. Eight students were to stay for free at the school, while further 4 pupils could be taken up after acceptance of Otto. The theoretical teacher should also be the manager. The school started with the first students 14th April 1856.

Jens' older brother John, first went to Huseby, and was a student at the school's first class in 1856. The following year, in 1857, Jens followed as a student at the school. After Jens graduated in 1858, he was offered a position as a farm manager and practical teacher at the school. He was 21 years old, and was on the farm for a year.

The agricultural School was at Huseby until 1868, but was then closed. The owner Otto didn't stay long at the farm, as his wife didn't feel comfortable on the exposed farm. A very strong storm went over Lista in February 1869, and let the big building at Huseby in ruins.

In order to continue his plans for education in agriculture Jens wanted to get out of the military service. His son Karl told the story of his father's military career in a letter to his brother Torleiv in 1962:

"That our father got free from his military service - as at that time was extremely hard - was thanks to his father. Grandfather (Christen Jensen Opsal) went on foot to Kristiansand (or Arendal?) to get him out. The "price" for this is unknown, but it had to be partly compensated by being postman for a while. I think I've heard something about 2 years."

From Lista through Ås to Førde and Fana

After ending his stay at Huseby Agricultural School, and then got himself free from the military, Jens moved to "The higher Agricultural School at Ås" (today Ås Agricultural University) where he was granted free studies for 2 years. The school was opened in 1859, and was at the time the highest education in agriculture in Norway. Jens studied at Ås in the years 1860 - 1862.

Jens finished the studies at Ås as the best student. It is said that the students, by the awarding of the school certificates, was set up in order of performance. As Jens had the best grades he should be placed first, but he was put in third place after two students from more affluent families. Jens was so annoyed of this injustice that he tore apart the certificate.

His son Torleiv wrote many years later, in a letter to his brother Karl, that *"there was much of an achievement - under the circumstances he grew up - to receive such an education at that time."*

After finishing his studies on Ås in 1862 Jens was agronomist. He was 25 years old, but had already graduated, and had also received practice as a teacher and a farm manager at Huseby agricultural school. He wanted new challenges and was the same year employed as a teacher at an agricultural school in Mo i Førde, Sunnfjord, where he stayed for 4 years, until 1866.



Stend Agricultural School in Fana 1869, where Jens was teacher from 1866.

At the same time a new agricultural school was established in Bergen. The county bought the property in 1861 at Stend in Fana to start an agricultural school for the county. The farm was over 2000 acres, of which approximately 1,200 acres of productive forest. The farm is the largest agricultural farm in the county.

The first class at Stend agricultural school began October 1st 1866. Jens left his job as a teacher in Førde, and was part of establishing the new school in Fana. His daughter Thora later said that Jens went on foot over the mountains to Stend. He loved hiking in the mountains, and made a huge collection of stones on his trips.

Grimstad

In the county-book of Landvik, under Imenes, we find a little notice about Jens. It says;

"The first agricultural college in the county was started at Imenes in the 1870s. Jens Opsal ran the school. The school was active only a short period. Jens Opsal was later alcohol monopoly manager in Grimstad. Agricultural schools were the first sign of a new era. It became a shift in the hundred-year-old production practices. In these years a dairy was established in Grimstad, and farmers started sending milk there."

It was Jens' big brother John who made Jens move to Grimstad. John had the same strong interest in farming as his brother, and moved to Grimstad already in 1857, the year after he completed the Agricultural school at Huseby. He married that same year with Åse Andersdtr. Imenes. They bought half the farm on Imenes for 330 Spd., and thus John became a farmer only 23-year-old. There

are currently a large number of descendants after John Christensen Imenes in the Grimstad region.

After having traveled a lot of places in the country, both for education and later as a teacher in Førde and Fana, Jens went to Grimstad in the early 1870s. He then came close to John, who was established with his family and ran the farm at Imenes.



Anna Elisabeth and Karl in 1892

Jens decided to settle in the Grimstad area, near his brother's family, and soon he started planning his own agricultural school in the area. As John owned and ran the farm at Imenes, it was natural for Jens to establish his agricultural school at the farm.

The initiative for operating the agricultural school in Grimstad is typical for Jens. All his life he was passionately interested in the operation and development of all aspects of agriculture and farming, which he demonstrated by agronomist education at Ås, his own farm, and teaching on various agricultural schools. He was also a pioneer in the dairy operation until he was 75-76 years.

Anna Elisabeth was also born in Lyngdal, and was Jens' third-cousin. She worked several years as a housekeeper for Jens, but became somewhat dissatisfied with the conditions. She finally wanted to quit the job, partly because of the desire for higher wages. Jens responded to propose to Anna Elisabeth.

The two were married June 19th 1882. All their children were born in Grimstad in the years 1883 to 1893.

The Opsal-siblings were:

1. Anna (1883)
2. Katrina (1885-1889)
3. Tobine (1886-1886)
4. Thora (1888)
5. Karl (1890)
6. Katrina (2) (1892-1895)
7. Torleiv (1893)

Jens became a "business man", as manager of the alcohol monopoly and later Dairy Manager in Grimstad, positions he held for many years, until the family returned to the farm at Eastern Room in Lyngdal.



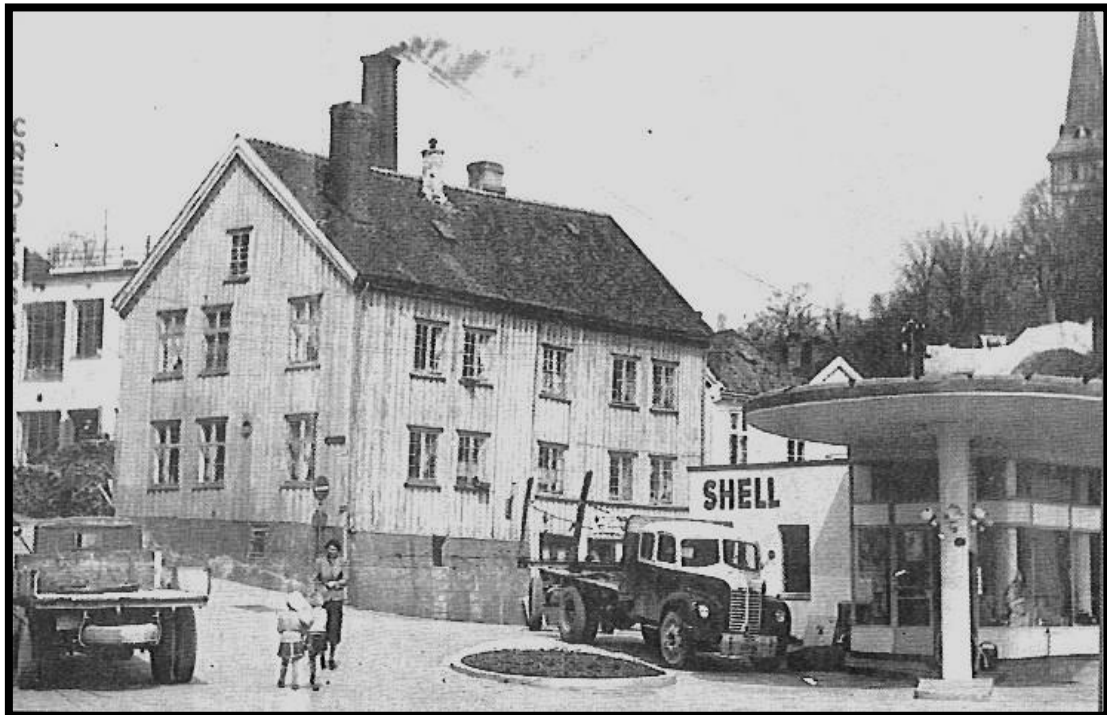
*Grimstad 1905
Anna (22), Thora (17), Karl (15) and Torleiv (12)*

The Alcohol Monopoly in Grimstad

In 1816, the Parliament gave owners and users of free land access to make liquor to private use, while the urban population was allowed to make their own liquor if the boiler was at least 200 liters. The result was massive consumption and large social consequences. The brakes had to be put on.

In addition to reductions in alcohol trade and also new taxes, the Alcoholic Monopoly was established in 1871.

License to sell liquor should be given to the Monopoly, and the profit should go to the public activities. The municipalities would decide whether licenses should be granted.



"The Green House" was placed on the corner of Bryggegata and Skolegata in Grimstad. The building was erected around 1880 and was for a long time used for liquor sales. The house was demolished in the 1950s.

Jens and Anna Elisabeth lived in the "The Green House", and the children lived there their early years. In Grimstad the first step towards an alcohol monopoly was taken in 1874. It was subscribed for shares for 5000 Spd., of which 3000 Spd. were used to redeem the existing private liquor rights.

To manage the operations it was required a "Manager and Salesman". The manager got an annual salary of 400 Spd. and "a room for living". In addition, "two salesmen, to carry out the sale" were needed. Their annual salary was 250 Spd. It was important for the monopoly system that employees should have a fixed salary and no commission of the sale.

In January 1876 the Monopoly "Grimstad Samlag for Brændevinssalg og Udskjænkning" was opened. This first monopoly in Grimstad existed for 19 years, and a significant amount of 215,000 kroner was given to public charity, for instance Grimstad primary school received 18,000 kroner, Dahlske school 15,000 kroner, local roads 64,000 kroner, and temperance societies in Grimstad 7000 kroner. When the church in Grimstad was built in 1881, 2500 kroner were given the clock in the tower.

Jens was appointed as manager of Grimstad Monopoly in 1880. As "a room for living" followed with the position, the family moved into their own apartment in the same building as the Monopoly. The building was located on the corner of Skolegata and Bryggegata, opposite the petrol station, in the same location as the current gas station. The house, called "The Green House", was built around 1875-1880, and was fairly new when Jens and Anna Elisabeth moved in.

Jens and Anna Elisabeth lived in this house for some years, and as the children were born, they grew up in these surroundings in the heart of Grimstad.

A referendum of the Alcohol Monopoly

In 1894 the Parliament passed a law that opened for holding local referendums on the monopoly' continued existence. Such a vote was to be held in Grimstad in 1895. In the days before the referendum there was a major engagement in the community, and the debate was active in local newspapers. In particular, opponents of the monopoly mobilized considerable power through enthusiastic letters to local newspaper, appeals and poems.

Supporters for the monopoly did actually agree that the social problems of alcohol abuse were huge, but that is also the reason why they wanted the monopoly, since they as a result of the monopoly got earnings to social purpose, and also to some extent were able to control consumption. The debate for or against the monopoly was important for Jens because he would lose his job by a 'no' majority. The discussion in the community was important, far worse was the hard discussion within his family.

Anna Elisabeth was in a terrible dilemma by the referendum. She wanted, of course, that Jens should keep his job and the house, but on the other hand, she said that it was very painful to see all the farmers who came to town with their farm products, and then returned home drunk and broke.

After difficult considerations Anna Elisabeth decided that she would vote for the closure of the monopoly by the voting 28th October 1895. The vote ended with the majority to abolish the monopoly. Jens was very disappointed that his wife helped to vote him out of his job and housing.

In a new referendum in 1900 the majority voted to restore the monopoly, which existed until 1913, when a third referendum again endorsed the closure. The following year, in 1914, Grimstad Beer and Wine-monopoly started (without liquor). Here you could buy wine until 1937, when this too was closed.

Temperance People

In the obituary after Jens C. Opsal it is written that he was an honorable man in all his ways, accurate and conscientious to the extreme. As manager of the monopoly he was both rigorous and careful.

The purpose of the liquor monopoly was to reduce use of alcohol, and Jens wanted to manage the monopoly in such a way that the alcohol-abuse was limited. It is hardly other managers of an alcoholic monopoly that have gone under the Temperance People Flag in the Constitution Day parade. So he was, they said.

If Jens and Anna Elisabeth was fully abstainers is not certain. It was produced and served wine in the Opsal home, but they were both careful with alcohol.

Dairying

Although Jens lost his job at the monopoly after the referendum in 1895, he was not unemployed. As the enterpriser he was, he had several opportunities. While Jens operated Imenes agricultural school, farmers traveled to Grimstad to sell milk. This quickly became an important commodity, and the need to establish sale of milk and milk products in orderly conditions became evident.

At the General Meeting on July 14th 1883 Grimstad Dairy for sale of milk and milk products was established. The dairy was established in Storgata 54

November 2nd. Berthe Årflot was employed to manage the outlet, and December 5th the same year Grimstad Dairy opened.

Jens was at this time manager at the alcohol monopoly, but had a far greater interest in agricultural and dairy activities. He soon began to wonder how he could participate in this exciting new area. Already in 1886 the dairy grew so quickly that the premises had to be extended. Negotiations began with the owner of the premises, but the parties reached no agreement. The dairy moved therefore out of the offices and to Skolegaten 40.

This opened new opportunities for the enterprising monopoly manager. It was now vacant premises that were tailored for the dairy operation, so Jens established quickly his own private dairy in Storgata 54, at his own expense, in full competition with the local dairy. He was thus the only one who at the same time was both manager of alcohol monopoly and dairy.

The children of Jens and Anna Elisabeth

All the children were born in Grimstad. The healthcare at the time was not in such a standard that today's parents of small children enjoy. Child mortality was high, and there was not good medicine for most diseases. In addition, it was not always easy to make the correct diagnosis.

This brutal reality had large influence in the life of Jens and Anna Elisabeth. The first 4 years after their wedding, Anna Elisabeth gave birth to 3 daughters, Anna in 1883, Katrina in 1885, and Tobine in 1886. Of these three sisters only Anna grew up. Tobine died only three months old, while Katrina was barely 5 years. After these Thora was born in 1888, Karl in 1890, Katrina (2) in 1892 and eventually Torleiv in 1893.

But a new tragedy hit the family. Only two years after Torleiv was born, the youngest daughter Katrina (2) suddenly died, 3 years old. Thus, only 4 of the 7 siblings grew up. Anna remained unmarried and childless, while Thora, Karl and Torleiv have large posterity.

Bom den 5-10-1919.

Kjære Torleiv!

Tak for brevet: jeg vil begynde med
 saa godt jeg kan at besvare disse
 sporsmaal: Sikkert har du ikke været
 saa vi har havt læge uden difteri,
 og det husker jeg ikke aarsal? det maaske
 vel kunne siges da Thora døde, eller
 hans vider det var vist ^{og} Bjørnkelund
 kan huse.

J. G. Opsal fødselsaar	1837
Anna Elisabeth	1851
Anna Opsal	1883 (skarlagersfeber)
Katrina "	1885 død 1887
Tobine "	1886 f. 1886
Thora "	1888
Karl "	1890 (Hjertebehandling)
Katrina "	1892 død 1895
Torleiv	1893

Tobines sygdomsart ved jeg ikke, nærmest
 krampe, læge, Frisak.

It is difficult to understand the despair and grief all these deaths must have meant to the parents and siblings. Child mortality was high at this time, but that three of the seven children died, were more than usual.

Torleiv wanted, when he grew older, to learn more about the sisters' deaths in early childhood. He contacted the family physician Dr. Frisak. Torleiv received a letter from the doctor, 5th October 1919, answering questions about the sisters. Dr. Frisak wrote that the sisters died of various causes.

Katrina (1) was born 27th January 1885 but died already 4 years old, of scarlet fever. Tobine was born 15th August 1886, and died just 3 months old from an unknown cause of death, as Dr. Frisak not even was a physician on the occasion. He writes that "Tobines disease I don't know, but it is mentioned cramp". The last sister, Katrina, was born 6th August 1892, but died of "brain inflammation" already in 1895.



*Eastern Rom, Lyngdal 1918
Anna, Finn 1 year, Thora and Anna Elisabeth*

Dahlske Intermediate School

To Jens only the very best was good enough when it came to children's schooling and education. Dahlske Intermediate School in Grimstad is central. Thora, Karl and Torleiv all were students at this school. The Legacy founder Peter Dahl was born in 1747. He ran away from home at a young age, and shortly afterwards he was captain of a ship to the East Indies. He was engaged to an Indian girl of high rank and great wealth.

Later, Peter was a merchant in Copenhagen, where he built up a large fortune. He died unmarried, but among other things, his legacy was spent to build up Dahlske Intermediate School, in his hometown Grimstad.

Social commitment

The family was engaged in central positions in the local communities. Jens had a strong social commitment. He had a number of public and municipal offices in the years in Grimstad, and was widely used in the communal life in the city. He

was manager of the monopoly in the city. The periods when the monopoly was voted down Jens ran a merchant business in addition to his private dairy shop. He was for many years road inspector in Grimstad.

His great passion was agriculture and agricultural schools, but he was also engaged in "new Norwegian language", and interested in public enlightenment. The book "The educationist Viggo Ullmann - a memory", from Kviteseid 1913, tells a lot of Jens' efforts to raise a college at Vigemorken. Jens' great community involvement made him politically interested, but he had not much time for active involvement in political life. He was committed to the political party Venstre all his life. Jens was described as a great idealist with appropriate ballast of great, sober business sense.

All four children were educated to teachers. Karl was for many years headmaster of the school Jåttå outside Stavanger. The siblings were, as their father, engaged in leading positions in various leisure activities.



*The siblings gathered at the cottage Knatten at Haaø island nearby Grimstad in 1955
In front from left: Jørgen, Thora, Karl and Torleiv
Behind from left: Anna, Ellen and Bertha*

They were all sports enthusiasts. Karl and Torleiv were central in the sport life in Stavanger and Kristiansand, and were partly involved in the founding, management and operation of various sports associations. Torleiv founded Kristiansand Swimming Club 9th September 1922 together with the estate broker Gustav Olsen. They held their first propaganda show 24th September and attracted a total of 2.500 spectators around the bathhouse in Kristiansand. Karl and Anna were for many years central in scouting at Hinna outside Stavanger. Anna never married. After the teacher education, she moved around in Norway, and was teacher first at Jevnaker and later in Sandnes, where she settled. Thora married merchant Jørgen Andvig, and moved to Oslo. The siblings, who were all born in Grimstad, were thus spread to Stavanger, Oslo and Kristiansand. They

came to live far from each other in daily life, but maintained over the years a close friendship, with much socializing as soon as the opportunity occurred.

From Grimstad to Eastern Rom in Lyngdal



*Jens bought the farm at Eastern Rom in 1906, but the family moved there first in 1914.
The farm was sold in 1927, the year after Jens died.*

Early in the 1880s Jens and Anna Elisabeth had thorough discussions about their future. They both came from Lyngdal, but their many siblings were scattered all over Norway, the United States and South Africa. Jens' 3 years older and only brother, John, was living in Grimstad. The two brothers had many interests in common and followed each other in all years. The families had much contact and all these years.

Jens was at this time manager of the monopoly in Grimstad, and was eventually a central person in the city. In spite of all these ties to Grimstad, Jens made the first preparations for a return to Lyngdal as early as in 1884. His father's property on the farm Opsal had come out of the family, but Jens succeeded this year to bring the property back in their own hands, when he bought a bond for his father's former farm.

The bond gave Jens the ownership to the Opsal-farm, but Jens and Anna Elisabeth never moved there. It was probably just the opportunity to continue his father's farm that interested Jens. He had the bond on the Opsal from 1884 to 1906. Jens was then 69 years old, and bought the farm on the Eastern Rom in

Lyngdal 1st May 1906, when this came on sale. Jens and Anna Elisabeth found the property on Rom better and more central than the farm at Opsal. As a part of the settlement of the farm on Rom Jens transported the bond on Opsal to a bank in Lyngdal.



*Eastern Rom 1915
Behind: Thora, Jørgen and Karl
In front: Torleiv, Anna Elisabeth, Jens Chr. and Anna.*

In the book "Norwegian Farm Names" is the name of Rom interpreted as "hook," which refers to the farms location in the northeastern corner of the plains by the river Lygna. In 1934 there was a grave find from the Viking Age. The discovery consisted of a two-edged iron-sword and a spearhead of iron.

Jens and Anna Elisabeth left Grimstad in 1914, and settled at Eastern Room. The farm became a central place for the family over the next 10 to 12 years, and the children who had started teacher studies, and eventually established their own families, were together as often as they could on the farm.

In the years before 1926 Jens and Anna Elisabeth got several grandchildren. The farm in these years was an important gathering place for three generations. Thora and Jørgen had 4 children in the years 1917 to 1923. Karl and Bertha also had 4 children in the years 1918 to 1924, while their youngest son Helge was born half a year after Jens died in 1926. Torleiv and Ellen's 3 children were born in the years 1925 to 1933.

It was full of life at Rom in the first half of the 1920s, and a huge archive of photos shows a happy family life these years. Karls' wife, Bertha and Anna were both avid photographers, and they made a magnificent picture archive over many years.

Farming at Rom.

After they purchased the farm at Eastern Room in 1906, Jens and Anna Elisabeth wanted to return to Lyngdal as fast as possible. Although the family was living in Grimstad until 1914, they also ran the farm in Lyngdal.

The first years they lived at Rom every summer, while they spent the winters in Grimstad. Karl and Torleiv lived, however, at Rom before the parents moved back. Karl lived at the farm in the years 1909-1911, after he had finished the agricultural college, and Torleiv was at the farm in 1910-1911.



*Mowing season at Rom in 1914
Thora and Anna with rakes, Karl at the wagon, Torleiv in front*

The cashbook of Jens

Jens was unusually systematic and orderly. As manager of both the alcohol monopoly and his own private dairy, Jens could use these qualities. It is kept a detailed cashbook from the years 1901 to 1914.

The cashbook gives accurate records of all use of funds in both his job and in the private household. In this way, the diary provides a detailed overview of all movements of the family, and especially we can follow the four children in education, travel and leisure. The cost of education, private consumption, operating costs of the Eastern Room is described in detail, and surplus / deficit is specified on a monthly level.

Utdgift.

1908					
8	Kjøttkjøp	20	00		
9	...	3	50		
11	...	3	50		
13	...	150	35		
14	...	25	25		
16	...	2	00		
17	...	3	18		
23	...	1	50		
25	...	30	00		
26	...	25	50		
27	...	1	30		
30	...	2	00		
...	...	1	50		
...	...	15	00		
...	...	30	60		
...	...	54	9		
...	...	154	1		
1	...	20	00		
3	...	105	00		
6	...	10	00		
...	...	88	63		
...	...	27	44		
...	...	0	50		
10	...	150	00		
...	...	14	00		
...	...	120	00		
...	...	97	30		
13	...	130	35		
15	...	40	35		
19	...	20	00		
...	...	2	00		
...	...	2	00		
...	...	27	68		
...	...	5	50		
...	...	12	50		
24	...	10	00		
24	...	42	44		
24	...	155	75		
...	...	6	00		
...	...	146	77		

Jens had an impressive education. He and Anna Elisabeth wanted to give the children equal opportunities. The diary shows in detail how the parents, in lack of public funding for studies, invested a significant amount each month in their children's schooling.

In 1901, the diary shows that Anna received 50 kroner a month to teachers college at Notodden.

In 1908 Thora got 50 kroner to the teachers college at Notodden, Karl got 50 kroner to the garden agricultural college in Porsgrunn, and Torleiv received 16 kroner to Dahlske Intermediate School in Grimstad.

In total the parents paid 116 kroner a month to the children, which was a considerable amount around 1900.

The same year, the diary shows that all four children had savings of approx. 1000 kroner each in the bank.



Eastern Rom 1919
From left: Karl, Jens 1 year, Torleiv, Jens C., Finn and Jørgen

In addition to the schooling Jens and Anna Elisabeth wanted to give the children a solid economic platform. All four children therefore got their own bank account, where the parents transferred monthly savings to each. The four children were naturally treated equally, and the saving amounts became significant for all four.

Anna Elisabeth at Hinna.

Jens died at Eastern Rom the spring 1926. He was almost 89 years old and was buried at Lyngdal Church.

After Jens died, Anna Elisabeth, 74 years old, first moved to her daughter Anna who was teacher in Sandnes. Later she moved on to her son Karl and his family at Hinna, outside Stavanger, where she stayed for almost 15 years. The children of Karl and Bertha were pretty young when "Grandma Lyngdal" became "Grandma Upstairs". The house at Hinna were completely new, finished in 1924. Else and Helge were born there, but no one had expected that the family would grow with a grandmother. Yet they were able to organize the 2nd floor so Anna Elisabeth had 2 rooms and a kitchen. So she got the nickname "Grandma Upstairs".

The grandchildren went shopping for their grandmother. In return she was a good babysitter. They often were with her and listened when she told stories of her sisters who had emigrated to America, and her brother and uncle who were missionaries in Africa. Because Anna Elisabeth lived there, the house at Furubakken on Hinna became a place of meeting for the entire family.

Anna Elisabeth lived at Furubakken until her death in January 1940, 88 years old. She is buried in the family grave at Hinna cemetery. The cemetery was built in 1916, while the church was built in 1967, almost 2 miles away.



*Hinna 1938.
Anna Elisabeth (86
years) and the twins Vibeke
and Elisabeth Andvig*