

The homesteads

Opsal

The Old Norwegian name is Uppsalir. This could mean either "the farm on the hilltop" or "the upper farm". The name Uppsal was kept till after 1900. Opsal lies where two valleys meet and two little rivers join the Oftedal-river in Lyngdal. A stone axe and a spear point from ancient times have been found here.

Tore Opsal paid tax on the farm in 1600 and 1604. In 1617 Bjørn Opsal owned the whole farm. For about 40 years he is the only owner. These first settlers at Opsal are however not our forefathers.



Opsal 1910, Christen Jensen Opsal's farm

Our family came to Opsal when *Christen Jensen Opsal* (1804-1880) from Oftedal settled there in 1830. He was married to *Anna Helene Jonsdatter (Lene) Opsal* (1804-1875). Christen bought the homestead May 5th 1830, at the price of 300 Spesiedaler (Spd.). In 1834 he separated a part of the property and sold it for 100 Spd. At the population census in 1865 Christen is mentioned as a farmer at Opsal. He then owned 6 cows and 6 sheep.

In 1873 Christen sold the homestead to Bernt Kristian Tobiassen for 300 Spd. Christen and Anna Helene both moved to their daughter Apelone at Kinningsland, where they lived for the rest of their lives.

The property at Opsal did however get back to the family when their son *Jens Christensen Opsal* bought a bond on the farm in 1884. Jens was married to *Anna Elisabeth (Oftebro) Opsal*. They kept the property till 1906, when Jens

transferred the bond to Lyngdal Sparebank in connection with the purchase of the farm at Eastern Rom.

Opsal has been the most populated farm in the eastern part of Lyngdal. In 1877 the farm was divided among 10 owners. Shortly before 1900 a hat-factory was started at Opsal. The factory used waterpower from the river and gave work to 15-20 people. The factory burned down both in 1905 and 1913. It was not rebuilt after the second fire.

Family Reunion 2004



During the Family Reunion in Lyngdal, August 2004, a lot of Opsal-descendants of Jens and Anna Elisabeth were gathered. At an excursion to the Opsal-farm of Christen Jensen, the descendants could study the remains of the foundation of the house, and the fields where the animals were grazing 170 years earlier.

In the middle is seen Jens Opsal (1917-2008) from Stavanger, Norway, who was named after his grandfather Jens Christensen, and then was the 5th Jens known in the family. The first Jens we know of was Jens Refsvolden born approx. 1640. Jens grandson Jens Opsal (1993-) carries on Jens as a family name.

Østre Rom (Eastern Rom)



Eastern Rom 1918.

Eastern Rom has been in the family in two different periods. A half of Eastern Rom was "crown-property" from around 1617. *Torkild Tronsen (Gjelmestad) Rom* was the owner of the other half. His son *Tron Torkildsen Rom* owned and ran the farm till 1627. One of Tron Torkildsen's daughters married *Jon Hansen Herdal*. He is the first known farmer at Herdal. Jon Hansen Herdal was the grandfather of *Jon Vrålsen Herdal*, who was Villum Christian Oftebro's great grandfather from Herdal. These first owners at Eastern Rom are all Oftebro ancestors.

Eastern Rom came back into the family when 3-5 *Anna Elisabeth (Oftebro) Opsal* and her husband *Jens Christensen Opsal* bought the farm in 1906. The family had lived in Grimstad for many years, but bought the property at Eastern Rom when it came for sale. Their son 3-5-5 *Karl Opsal* ran the farm in 1910 and 1911. The second year his younger brother 3-5-7 *Torleiv Opsal* also lived there with him.

Anna Elisabeth and Jens lived in Grimstad until 1914 when they moved to Rom. Jens died in 1926. The homestead was sold to the Vintland family in 1927. They still own and run the farm in the 4th generation.

When the farm was sold in 1927, the Opsal-family kept a small parcel of land where the daughter of Anna Elisabeth and Jens 3-5-1 *Anna Opsal* built a cottage called "Knatten". She spent every summer there till 1963. Thus the family kept the contact to Rom and Lyngdal.



*Eastern Rom 1914, Opsal-siblings
From left: unknown, 3-5-4 Thora, 3-5-5 Karl, 3-5-7 Torleiv and 3-5-1 Anna*

Family Reunion 2004

During the Family Reunion we also visited the farm at Eastern Rom. There are huge photo archives from the farm from the 1920s, also pictures from the stairs into the garden. The family members at the reunion were welcomed at Eastern Rom by today's owners, and got nice photos and memories from the farm.



Eastern Rom 1919:

From the front: Anna - Ellen/ Torleiv - Bertha/ Karl - Thora/ Jørgen - Anna Elisabeth/ Jens.

The children: Jens Opsal with Anna and Finn Andvig with Torleiv



Eastern Rom 2004:

Three generations Opsal-descendants gathered at the same outdoor stairs into the garden.

Jens Opsal is sitting at the exact same place 85 years after the above family picture from 1919.