



THE
OFTEBRO FAMILY,
VOL. 2

Innhold

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The 2007 Oftebro Family Reunion in Durban, South Africa

By 10-4-1-2-1 Garry Oftebro



We were privileged to host the second “International” Oftebro Family Reunion in August 2007 in South Africa, three years after the inaugural momentous Reunion held in Norway 2004 - - there was quite a story to the whole development, discussion, and planning of this South African reunion. We became fairly involved with preliminary discussions here in South Africa, involving Torstein, Inge and families - - the idea of a follow up reunion was born and further discussion with the Norwegian stalwarts in our midst with several meetings and planning sessions happened with us even forming a committee during 2006 -- well it came to a

decisive moment where our committee (myself included) felt the Norwegian Reunion had been such an amazing success, and for us in Africa to be able to present anything nearly as amazing would be very difficult - - and besides ...we were at the other end of the earth, at the tip of Africa - - the huge project to match the “Norwegian Oftebro Reunion” was just NOT going to happen - - and the committee called it off



I had sadly not made the Reunion in Norway 2004, I had planned to and had so wanted to, but proudly that same year my son Karl had been selected to represent our country in field hockey at the World Games in Barcelona, Spain - - we were not in a financial position to achieve both - - so Karl proudly represented South Africa in Spain during 2004, and has for several years since then, and I did not attend the reunion. That did not dampen my enthusiasm for a follow up reunion, but probably did give me the advantage of not realizing the level of achievement having been set at the inaugural event.

Never the less, some time had passed since the committee having decided to shelve the idea - - when one morning I simply decided . . . why not, it can be done – even if it’s not perfect – let’s just go ahead and host a “South African Oftebro Family Reunion” -- for those who may want to venture through to South Africa – let’s just GO FOR IT!!! I felt that the uniqueness of offering our extended family the opportunity of visiting Africa and linking up with the families of the Three branches (10 Ommund, 3-1 Christian and 3-7 Berte Marie) who had emigrated to the south of Africa as missionaries, would be worth it. And being African - - I felt most things could possibly pass and be accepted. So, the planning and invitations went ahead - and the rest as they say, happened “The African way”.

The arrivals and main conference hosting was at the Gateway Centre in Umhlanga, Durban. It was extremely gratifying to host 46 Norwegians, family currently living in Norway - - WOW!!! There were 47 South Africans, plus we were proud to have an American (“Skål” Howard!!) and four Zimbabweans. It is of interest that the family tree representation was from three branches: - one member from Branch 1 (“Skål” Howard !!), seventy-four members from branch 3, and twenty-three members from branch 10.

Current surnames of the family members who attended were:

Branch 1: Winnem

Branch 3: Oftebro; Langeland-Hansen; Nel; Beisland; Sandvik; Sandvold; Gjerløw; Edland; Staalesen; Pedersen; Vaagland; Bergan; Harmer; Grondein; Smith; Kruger; Skea; Steyn; Larsen; Mathiesen; Wise; Harle; Tyrrell; Hojem.

Branch 10: Oftebro; Garritsen; Piccione; Wilkes; Waters; Baxter; Roe-Scott.

A picture from another time



From left; (3-9) Rudolf Reime, 3-9-1 Oline Regine (Lena) Reime, Oline Torkelsdatter Reime (sitting), Tom Reime, 3-9-2 Ole Johannes (John) Reime and Salve Torkelson (Oline's twin brother).

Dette fantastiske bildet er levert av 3-9-2-2-1-1 Ken og Debbie Reed. Vi vet ikke når det er tatt, men det må ha vært i siste halvdel av 1890-tallet. Vi må anta at det er tatt på Reime-familiens gård i Nebraska.

Anledningen er ukjent, kanskje er det bare at de har hatt en fotograf på besøk. Eller kanskje er det en spesiell anledning av noe slag. Påfallende er det i hvert fall at det er en andektig oppstilling, alle menn/gutter med lua i hånda, de har stilt seg opp og skuer i samme retning, de har tatt med ut både en spisestue stol og en stoppet godstol. Og de har kjørt fram hesten, med sin fineste vogn. Noe spesielt må det ha vært.

Familien 3-9 Reime, som mistet sin Katrine Tobine mens Lena og John var små, opplevde nok en hard side av emigrantlivet. Kanskje skuer de her tilbake mot øst, mot livet og øvrig familie i Lyngdal, og lurer på om det virkelig ble en bedre fremtid de fikk, som nybyggere på prærien i Nebraska. Hvem vet?

Sett med 2018-øyne er dette definitivt et bilde fra en annen tid.

3-9-2-2-1-1 Ken and Debbie Reed provided this great photo. We do not know when it is taken but suppose sometime mid or late in the 1890-ies. We suspect it to be taken at the Reime homestead in Nebraska.

The occasion is also unknown, maybe they just had a photographer visiting. Or it might be a more special occasion. It is obvious that they pose in a very serious manner. All the men/boys held their hats in their hands, they pose in a lineup, looking the same direction. They have taken out, both a wooden chair and a living room chair. They have even taken out their horse and a nice carriage. One should suspect it to be a special occasion.

The 3-9 Reime family, who lost their Katrine Tobine when Lena and John were very small kids, experienced probably a rough side of the emigration-life. Maybe they look back East, towards life and other family in Lyngdal, and wonder if it really became a better future, as settlers on the Nebraskan prairie. Who knows?

From a 2018 perspective, this photo definitely is a photo from another time.



3-2-6 Kristine (Rom) Aamli surrounded by Gudmund, Åsta, Johan and Gudveig

3-2-1-2 Åsta (Imenes) Johansen b. 10.09.1890, Grimstad, d. 09.03.1978, Husmor, Birkenes, Aust-Agder
m.t. *Mads Johansen* b. 07.09.1899, d. 23.08.1986, Gårdsarbeider

Åsta vokste opp i Grimstad der hun etter hvert ble ansatt en periode som tjenestejente og barnepike hos familien Christensen Opsal (3-5). I 1920 giftet hun seg med Mads Johansen som var gårdsgutt i Øvre Birkeland. Senere var han gårdsbestyrer på samme gård i 45 år. Familien kjøpte et lite hus på Birkeland og der vokste barna opp. Åsta var husmor og holdt et gjestfritt hus der slektninger gjerne kom på besøk. Det var alltid plass til mange mennesker der og mye sang og musikk i hjemmet. Åsta var en viktig ressursperson for sin familie, men tok seg også av andre i lokalmiljøet. Hun beskrives som en spesielt romslig og omsorgsfull kvinne.

Åsta was born in Grimstad, where she, when growing up, for a while was employed as maid servant and nanny with the (3-5) Christensen Opsal family. In 1920 she married Mads Johansen who was a farmhand at Øvre (Upper) Birkeland. Later he managed the same farm for 45 years. The family bought a small house at Birkeland, where the children grew up. Åsta was a housewife and kept a hospitable home where relatives liked to visit. There would often be much people gathered, and the home was characterized by song and music. Åsta was a valuable resource person for the family, but she also took care of other people in the local community. She is described as an unusually openminded and considerate woman.

3-2-1-2-1 Johan Johansen b. 22.07.1921, d. 08.07.2013, Oppsynsmann, Birkenes, Aust-Agder
m.t. *Anne (Bygland) Johansen* b. 24.10.1921, d. 09.04.2010, Teleekspeditør

3-2-1-2-2 Ingebjørg (Johansen) Larsen b. 08.06.1923 d. 20.06.1994, Kassadame, Birkenes, Aust-Agder
m.t. *Hans Kristian Larsen* b. 06.08.1917 d. 11.11.2002, Mekaniker, verkstedeier
Children:

3-2-1-2-2-1 :..... **Anne Kristine (Larsen) Aase** b. 23.07.1948, Birkenes, Aust-Agder, Bankansatt,
Lillesand

: m.t. (div.) *Reidar Nyhaven*, b. 05.12.1943, Sjøkaptein
: Children:

3-2-1-2-2-1-1 : **Grete Nyhaven** b. 24.06.1967, Lillesand, Montør, Lillesand
: s.w. (div.) *Tom Usterud Svendsen* b. 14.02.1961, Oljearbeider
: Children:

3-2-1-2-2-1-1-1 : **Mads Nyhaven** b. 11.04.1991, Lillesand

3-2-1-2-2-1-1-2 : **Bertine Nyhaven** b. 13.11.1997, Lillesand

The 3-7 Berte Marie (Oftebro) Hojem Branch



Berte Marie and Gustav Hojem with their 3 children, Ragnhild and the twins Thora Katrine and Johan Christian (Hand colored photo from 3-7-1-2 Joseph Oftebro Harle's photo collection)

Unge Berte Marie hadde livnært seg som syerske i Lyngdal. Der hadde hun reist rundt fra hjem til hjem og ordnet opp i familiers garderobe. Så kommer det et nødtopp fra onkel Ommund i Zululand. Hans kone er syk og hans datter, Hanna, har giftet seg og flyttet bort. Han har store vanskeligheter med sitt hushold. Berte Marie, som er levende interessert i misjonsarbeid, ser sin nye oppgave. Sikkert også tilskyndet av sin venninne i Lyngdal, Laura Aas, som skal til Zululand og gifte seg med en ung misjonær der, drar hun, 27 år gammel, av gårde sammen med henne.

Åtte år senere gifter hun seg i KwaMondi-kirken. Hun er en strålende kvinne, vakker og intelligent. Hennes mann, vognmaker Gustav Hojem, står på ingen måte tilbake i så måte. Han er 13 år yngre enn henne. Han kom fra miljøet rundt de norske settlerne som i 1882 hadde reist med båt fra Nord-Vestlandet i Norge, og slått seg ned i Marburg ved Port Shepstone på Sør-Afrika-kysten. Sammen får Berte Marie og Gustav 3 barn, hvorav to er tvillinger, før de begge dør av tuberkulose i Durban, han i 1898 hun ett år senere. Barna, som fortsatt er mindreårige, blir fostret opp hos familie, dels hos Berte Maries slekt og dels hos Gustavs slekt.

Disse barna har gitt opphav til 3 hovedgrener med utgangspunkt i eller fra Sør-Afrika: Harle-grenen,

Young Berte Marie had made her living as a dressmaker in Lyngdal, Norway. There she had moved around from home to home to shape up the clothing of families. Then there comes a cry for help from uncle Ommund in Zululand. His wife is sick, and his daughter Hanna has married and moved off. He has great problems with his household. Berte Marie, who takes great interest in mission work, sees her new responsibility. Certainly, also inspired by her friend in Lyngdal, Laura Aas, who plans to go to Zululand to marry a young missionary, she takes off, 27 years old, together with her friend.

Eight years later she gets married in the KwaMondi church. She is a brilliant lady, handsome and intelligent. Her husband, wagonmaker Gustav Hojem is no less smart and attractive. He is 13 years younger than her. He came from the Norwegian settlement in Marburg, close to Port Shepstone at the South African coast. Berte Marie and Gustav get three children, out of whom 2 are twins, before they both die in Durban from tuberculosis, Gustav in 1898, Berte Marie one year later. The children, who are all underaged, are brought up by family, both Berte Marie's family and Gustav's family.

These children were the origin of three main family branches in or from South Africa: The Harle branch,

BRANCH 3-7 DESCENDANTS OF BERTE MARIE (OFTEBRO) HOJEM (1855-1899)

