

A Brief History of the Alfred Hovdestad Family

Prepared for the Hovdestad Family Reunion

October 8, 2006

Stewart Valley, Saskatchewan

The preparation of this history is heavily indebted and largely based on the research work following:

Descendants of Gertrude Aline Langager (1990, 1996) compiled by Arthur Gerald Hovdestad.

Descendants of Osmond Knudt ("O.K.") Olson (December 1979), compiled by Raymond L. Moen.

Various family papers including those of the late Taletta Sondresen (nee Olson) and the personal reminiscences of family members.

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Alfred Hovdestad - Biography

Alfred Hovdestad came to the Hovdestad District in Beaver Flat with his parents from North Dakota with his mother Gjertrude and her husband Jacob from North Dakota, USA, in 1907. Alfred was ten years old. They were among one of the first five families that came to break sod in the district.

He joined the Army in the First World War, and was the only boy from that district to serve in the Armed Forces. Incidentally, a few years later, his first born son Jim was born on November 11, Armistice Day. On October 20, 1922, he married Sina Pauline Olson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. O. K. Olson of the district. They were the first couple to be married in the newly built basement of the now completed Nordland Church. In later years he worked as a carpenter on the church and his mother's husband Jacob built the steeple of the Nordland Church. They are now buried in the Nordland Cemetery with three of their children who predeceased them.

Alfred was too young to get land as a homestead so he purchased land of his own, two and a half miles west of Jacob's homestead. After an accident with a runaway team he had poor health and decided to sell the farm. N.W. sec. 23, Twp. 19, R13 W 3rd. This land has now been sold to Clarence Olson. The Hovdestads moved to Stewart Valley and then on to Swift Current where Alfred took up carpentry and Sina took in boarders. Their home was at 378-1st Avenue N.W. The house has been sold and moved to Lac Pelletier for a cabin.

Alfred and Sina suffered many hardships raising their family. All the children were born at home on the farm, some with the aid of a Doctor, some without. They were a family of six daughters and seven sons.

Christmas was a time of great celebration at the Hovdestad home. There was not any spare cash but Alfred and Sina had great talents for making things out of ordinary boxes and baskets. In 1931 they had six children, three boys and three girls. Sina sent to Eatons for three doll heads, made bodies for them and doll clothes. Alfred made cradles out of grape baskets and they covered them with cloth to look like bassinets. For the boys he made a game board called "Krigi" (War). It was similar to our Chinese Checkers, but instead of marbles he used wooden pegs. What a beautiful surprise on Christmas morning. There were many Norwegian dishes on hand also. Kringla, Lefsa, Lutefisk and Jule caka.

For entertainment Alfred played the Harmonica and he always smoked one special cigar to celebrate Christmas. To keep the family busy he made skis for the family out of an old wooden barrel. A piece of leather strap from a harness was nailed across the center of the barrel stave to hold the ski in place. It took much practice and many a tumble to learn to manipulate those skis down a hill. There were no \$200 skis around in those days.

In the summer the children played ball and roamed the hills and coulees looking for Saskatoon berries or gathering deer horns for trophies. In later years they bought the children used ice skates for \$0.50 a pair and made them a skating rink.

Every Sunday after church they would exchange visits with the Julius and Ruth Moen family as their families were close to the same age.

Alfred had a new Model T Ford truck and hauled gravel to gravel the creek road to pay off his taxes so he would not lose his land. To his dismay a few years later, all the taxes were forgiven so he could have spared himself and his truck had he known what the future held. He was secretary to the Hovdestad School District for many years and was instrumental in bringing the barbed wire telephone, which in times of illness proved to be a real blessing.

He drove a buckskin team, Buck and Skip, for many years. One of the children would ride a horse called 'Jean' to the Ole Austrings for the mail on a Saturday morning, while another would take the buggy to Fritz Carlson's ice house for meat from the "Beef Ring". Uncle Cornelius Olson was the butcher and about fourteen families belonged. Each week one family was responsible for an animal to be butchered and divided so they could have fresh meat for the week. In the winter the meat was either canned or frozen in the Oats bin.

They had May 24th celebrations each year, which was also Alfred's birthday. It was a great celebration for the Scandinavians.

After Alfred passed away, Sina continued to live in their home in Swift Current, continuing to have boarders and renting out rooms. She enjoyed her garden and flowers and loved to sit in the sun porch in the evening, visiting with family or friends or just watching the cars drive by and watching the sprinklers water her lawn. A luxury she could not afford on the farm in the early years. Her home was always open to her many friends and relatives and the coffee pot was always on. She enjoyed bowling with the senior citizens, quilting, knitting for her children and grandchildren and her many other crafts and hobbies. She passed on in 1979 and was buried beside her beloved husband in the Nordland cemetery.

Alfred Hovdestad – Military Service in World War I

Military Service Records: Alfred Hovdestad

Source: National Archives of Canada

3352006

Canadian Expeditionary Force

24 May 1897, Mayville, North Dakota, U.S.A.

Enlisted: 10 June 1918, Regina, Saskatchewan

Discharged: 8 February 1919, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

Honourable, Private

Pte. Hovdestad, Alfred of Waldeck, Saskatchewan, Canada

Regiment No. 3352006

Unit: 1st Depot Battalion, Saskatchewan Regiment

The Hovdestad Family Name

Family names in Norway were not broadly used prior to 1900 and the usual reference was to use the first name followed by son or daughter of the father of a specific farm. Alfred Hovdestad's mother:

Gjertrud Aline (“Lena”) Ivarsdatter Vik was Gjertrud Aline, daughter of Ivar of the farm Vik in Skudenes Parish in the Karmoy Commune of Norway. Farm names from **Skudenes og Skudeneshavn**: Austnaberg, Dale, Dyrland, Falnes prestegard, Falnes (nedre), Ferkingstad, Grødheim, Haga, Heggheim, Hemnes, Hillesland, Hovdastad, Høynes, Håland, Kirkeleite, Kuvik, Kvilhaug, Kvilhaugsvik, Langåker, Li, Nes, Neset, Mjølhus, Risdal (nedre), Risdal (øvre), Sandhåland, Sandve, Selvåg, Skitnadal, Skudeneshavn, Snørteland, Stava, Stol, Syre, Tjøsheim, Vik, Vikra.

Lena's siblings after leaving Norway to live in America took family names Langaker/Langager, Vik/Vig and Iverson, somewhat complicating family histories. Gjertrud Aline Ivarsen was born on May 24, 1868 and baptized on June 14, 1868 to parents Ivar Jokumsen of the Vik farm and Laurens Bentsdtr of Falnes farm both of Skudeneshavn. Lena married Bertinius Bertelsen and they removed to Stavanger. Bertinius died on September 5, 1894 in Stavanger, Norway. Lena was a widow when she came to America and it appears that her two children by her first marriage had also passed away.

Jacob Odin Hovdestad took his name from the Hovdastad farm as that was where his mother was from, although according to the late Jim Oswald Hovdestad he debated using Kuvikstad or Kruvstad as his father was from the Kuvik farm. Jakob Sigvart Oliversen was born on November 24, 1868 and baptized on December 6, 1868 to parents Oliver Ivarsen and Olene Fredriksdtr Hovdastad of the Kuvik farm in Skudeneshavn. Jacob was the first child of his father and was raised by him and his wife when they married. Source files containing Norwegian records for Jacob and Lena are included in Appendix II.

According to the available records, Jacob and Lena arrived in the New World:

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| Source: Ellis Island Records Name: Jacob Hovdestad Ethnicity: Norway Place of Residence: Date of Arrival: May 23, 1892 Age on Arrival: 23 years Gender: M Marital Status: U Ship of Travel: Aurania Port of Departure: Liverpool, England, UK | Source: Ellis Island Records Name: Gjertrud A. Bertelson Ethnicity: Norway Place of Residence: Date of Arrival: October 18, 1895 Age on Arrival: 28 years Gender: F Marital Status: Ship of Travel: Germanic Port of Departure: Liverpool, England, UK |
|--|---|

Passenger – Jacob Hovdestad – Arrival in New World

Date of Arrival – May 23, 1892

Port of Departure – Liverpool, England

No Picture is Available for this ship.

Built by J. & G. Thomson, Ltd., Clydebank, Glasgow, Scotland, 1883. 7,269 gross tons; 470 (bp) feet long; 57 feet wide. Compound engine, single screw. Service speed 17 1/2 knots. 1,180 passengers (480 second class, 700 third class). Two funnels, three masts. Built for Cunard Line, British flag, in 1883 and named Aurania (1883). Liverpool to Queenstown and New York service. Also some Naples to New York trips. Scrapped at Genoa, Italy in 1905.

Passenger – Gjertrud A. Bertelson – Arrival in New World

Date of Arrival – October 18, 1895

Port of Departure – Liverpool, England, UK



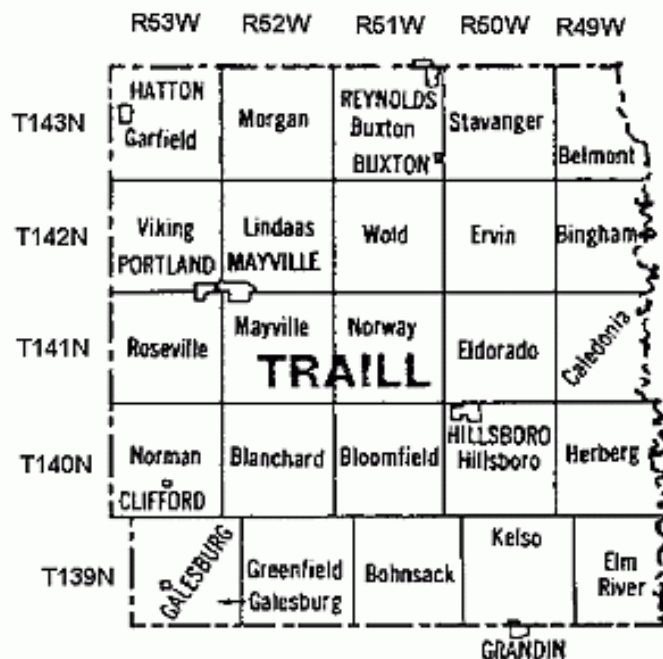
Built by Harlan & Wolff Limited, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1875. 5,071 gross tons; 468 (bp) feet long; 45 feet wide. Compound engine, single screw. Service speed 16 knots. 1,700 passengers (200 first class, 1,500 third class). Two funnels, four masts rigged for sails, iron construction.

Built for White Star and Dominion Lines, in 1875 and named Germanic. Liverpool-New York service. Won trans-Atlantic Blue Ribbon for speed in 1876. Sold to Dominion Line, British flag, in 1905 and renamed Ottawa. Liverpool-Canada service. Sold to Turkish owners, in 1911 and renamed Gul-Djemal. Mediterranean and Black Sea service. Sunk by British sub E.14 in the Sea of Marmora. Torpedoed and sunk in 1915. She was salvaged, first voyage 1920 Constantinople to New York. Renamed Gulcemal in 1928. Constantinople-New York service. After 76 years of service she later was scrapped in Italy in 1950.

Jacob and Lena Hovdestad

Jacob arrived in the New World in 1892 and Lena arrived in 1895. Jacob is found in the USA 1900 Census living with Lena's brother John Langager in Blanchard Township in the County of Trail, North Dakota, not to be confused with another Jacob Hovdestad living in Norman Township. Lina Bertelson is living with her son Alfred in Norman Township as a housekeeper for Erik Hjellum. Norman and Blanchard Townships are adjacent and it may be presumed that Jacob and Lena were introduced by Lena's family.

Jacob married Lena on November 29, 1902 at Hillsboro, North Dakota, where the marriage license gives their names as Jacob O. Hovdestad of Mayville and Mrs. Lina Bertelson of Blanchard, both age 34 years. The marriage license was filed on December 5, 1902 at the County Court, Traill County, North Dakota. Prior to this marriage, Alfred was born on May 24, 1897 with the father identified on his baptism certificate as Gabriel Sele, who is discussed separately in this document, although Alfred was adopted by Jacob and his baptismal name was Alfred Hovdestad. However, for the Civil Registry at North Dakota, Alfred was described as Alfred Bertelsen as per the Certificate of Birth (Delayed Registration) and assumed the Hovdestad name by adoption at the time his mother married Jacob Hovdestad in 1902. Alfred's baptismal certificate clearly indicates that Jacob adopted Alfred although it appears that the civil registration was either not filed or has been lost with the passage of time.



Following the marriage, Olaf was born on April 20, 1904 and Ida Laureense was born on July 29, 1905. After that the entire family removed to Saskatchewan where Jacob had

found land. As was the custom of those days, Alfred did not find out about all this until about the time Jacob passed away and after so many years Lena declined to discuss that subject until her dying day.

One of Alfred's grandsons followed through with his delayed registration of birth which although prepared in 1946 was not received until his grandson sent it to North Dakota Vital Statistics in 2001. An application to perfect this undertaking was filed and a birth certificate was ultimately issued. Similarly, this grandson filed to have his grandmother; that is Alfred's wife, have her proper name as Sina Pauline Olson on her birth certificate from North Dakota. As both Alfred and Sina had lived for five years before removing with their families to Saskatchewan, all of their children may claim American citizenship by filing a passport application.

Jacob and Lena Hovdestad were among the first families settling in the District as detailed in the following extracts from *Hovdestad Pioneers Golden Jubilee 1905-1955*¹:

In May of 1907 four of the family fathers, Diedrisk and Jacob Hovdestad, O. K. Olson, and Ed. Hermanson shipped out and stayed with us till they got houses built for their families. John was chief cook and bottle washer and we really had a good time. It was a busy place around Pete's shack, they had all shipped up milk cows, chickens and some horses. All the land that had been broken the year before was sown to wheat and new land was broken for oats. No one had much money but a genuine spirit of neighborliness and cooperation existed and soon the houses started to take shape so when the families came they were usable.

Not only for themselves was shelter needed but for the live-ins as well. D. E. Hovdestad had a shelter of binder canvas for his chickens. The building of these proved more an ordeal than the houses because the poles had to be hauled from the coulees a considerable distance away.

Soon land was broken that summer but only a very few acres compared to our acreage today.

The day finally arrived when the men traveled to Waldeck to meet their families coming by rail from North Dakota. It was a joyous reunion that 17th day of July, 1907. On the following day all the families were settled in their new homes.

Mrs. D. E. Hovdestad had 7 children, the oldest being 8 years. Mrs. J. O. Hovdestad had 3 children, the oldest, Alfred was ten years. Mrs. Ed Hermanson had five, the eldest Hilder, 7 years.

¹ This book has been prepared by the students of Hovdestad School as a Social Studies project for the Jubilee year 1955. The enterprise was under the direction and supervision of the teacher, Raymond Moen. The Editorial Committee consisted of Karen Hovdestad, Dianne Austring, Marilyn Hermanson, Derwood Harmanson, Wayne Austring and Yvonne Moen.

Mrs. J. J. Austring had not yet arrived, as she had to stay with her sons, who remained for some time on their rented farm in North Dakota. However, on the 18th of November she too arrived with her seven children and took possession of their new home.

The oldest son John, as we have mentioned before, had arrived in 1906 and his brothers Thorsten & Ingvold arrived on the 30th of November 1907.

They had rented land 1 ½ miles from Clifford for 3 years. In this last year they had a fair crop, which helped to offset the two previous years which had been failures.

Plans were soon made to celebrate their first Christmas in their new homes. Fortunately the weather had remained very mild that autumn and continued through the holidays. All the neighbors gathered at the home of Mr. & Mrs. D. E. Hovdestad on Christmas Day.

The first Christmas was long remembered by all who gathered there. Christmas hymns were sung and the message was read by Mr. D. E. Hovdestad. Then the younger children recited their pieces under the guidance of Helmina Austring. The older settlers joined in the merry making by singing old familiar songs or telling stories. Despite the hardships and poverty a very joyous time was had. The children had a wonderful time, and there was no thought of going home till long after darkness had set in. There was no moon that night.

The family of Alfred Hovdestad has grown greatly and spread far and wide. The next section includes all of Lena's known descendants to her grandchildren. Alfred and Sina's children have grandchildren of their own and the family has spread across Canada as well as having many relatives still living in Norway, the United States of America and no doubt elsewhere.

Lena's Descendants

First Generation

1. **Gjertrud Aline Ivarsdatter Vik** was born on 24 May 1868 in Skudenes Parish, Norway. She died on 17 Apr 1952 in Ste. #1 07 Beverley Apt., Swift Current, Saskatchewan. She was buried on 23 Apr 1952 in N.E. 1/4-18-19-12 W3rd, Nordland Church Cemetery.

Gjertrud married (1) **Jacob Odin Hovdestad** son of Oliver Ivarsen and Olene Fredriksdtr Hovdastad on 29 Nov 1902 in Hillsboro, Traill County, North Dakota, United States of America. Jacob was born on 24 Nov 1868 in Falne's Parish Norway. He was christened on 6 Dec 1868 in Falnes, Rogaland, Norway. He died on 12 Oct 1946 in Swift Current General Hospital, Saskatchewan. He was buried on 18 Oct 1946 in Nordland Cemetery, Beaver Flat, Saskatchewan.

They had the following children:

- + 2 M i. **Alfred Bertelsen Hovdestad** was born on 24 May 1897. He died on 13 Jan 1962.
- 3 M ii. **Olaf Hovdestad** was born on 20 Apr 1904 in Saskatchewan. He died on 3 Oct 1981 in Saskatchewan.
- + 4 F iii. **Ida Laurensen Hovdestad** was born on 29 Jul 1905.

Gjertrud was with(2) **Elling Gabriel Sele** son of Albret Ellingsen and Berta Sofie Tørresdtr. Bore. Elling was born on 30 Nov 1866 in Sele, Norway.

They had the following children:

- + 5 M iv. Alfred Bertelsen Hovdestad.

Gjertrud married (3) **Bertinius Bertelsen** son of Bertel Ananiassen and Gjertrud Sivertsdatter on 17 Oct 1890 in Domkirken, Stavanger, Norway. Bertinius was born on 18 Apr 1863 in Domkirken, Stavanger, Norway.

They had the following children:

- 6 M v. **Bertil Johan Bertelsen** was born on 23 Oct 1891 in Domkirken, Stavanger, Norway.
- 7 F vi. **Birgit Aline Bertelsen** was born on 9 Aug 1894 in Domkirken, Stavanger, Norway.

Second Generation

2. **Alfred Bertelsen Hovdestad** (Gjertrud Aline Ivarsdatter) was born on 24 May 1897 in Mayville, Traill County, North Dakota, United States of America. He was christened on 21 Sep 1897 in Norman Lutheran Church, Clifford, North Dakota. He died on 13 Jan 1962 in Swift Current Union Hospital, Saskatchewan, Canada. The cause of death was Cancer - per Swift Current Union Hospital. He was buried on 17 Jan 1962 in N.E. 1/4-18-19-12 W3rd, Nordland Church Cemetery.

Alfred married **Sina Pauline Olson** daughter of Osmond Knudt Olson and Sophia Arnesdaughter Loken on 18 Oct 1922 in Norlands Church, 18-19-12 W3m, Saskatchewan. Sina was born on 17 Sep 1901 in Norman Township, Traill County, North Dakota, United States of America. She was christened on 27 Oct 1901 in Norman Lutheran Church, Clifford, North Dakota. She died on 1 Apr 1979 in Swift Current Union Hospital, Saskatchewan, Canada. She was buried on 5 Apr 1979 in N.E. 1/4-18-19-12 W3rd, Nordland Church Cemetery.

4. **Ida Laurence Hovdestad** (Gjertrud Aline Ivarsdatter) was born on 29 Jul 1905 in North Dakota, United States of America.

Ida married **Lewis Alfred Aadland** on 1 1 Apr 1928 in Beaver Flats, Saskatchewan. Lewis was born on 30 Apr 1894 in South Dakota. He died on 13 Nov 1979 in Saskatchewan.

The Mystery of Gabriel Sele

Alfred's biological father was Gabriel Sele about who little has been known with any assurance for many years. The advent of increased availability of government records led to the ability to investigate and eventually realize a more complete knowledge of this man. Elling Gabriel, son of Albrecht Ellingsen of Sele and Berthe Sofie Torresdatter of Bore was born on November 30, 1866 and was baptized on December 30, 1866. He immigrated to the USA entering the USA in April 1888 through a port identified only as St. Vincent without reference to which State. It should be noted that Ellis Island Records only cover the period 1892-1924 and as Gabriel arrived in 1888, it would not be on that database.

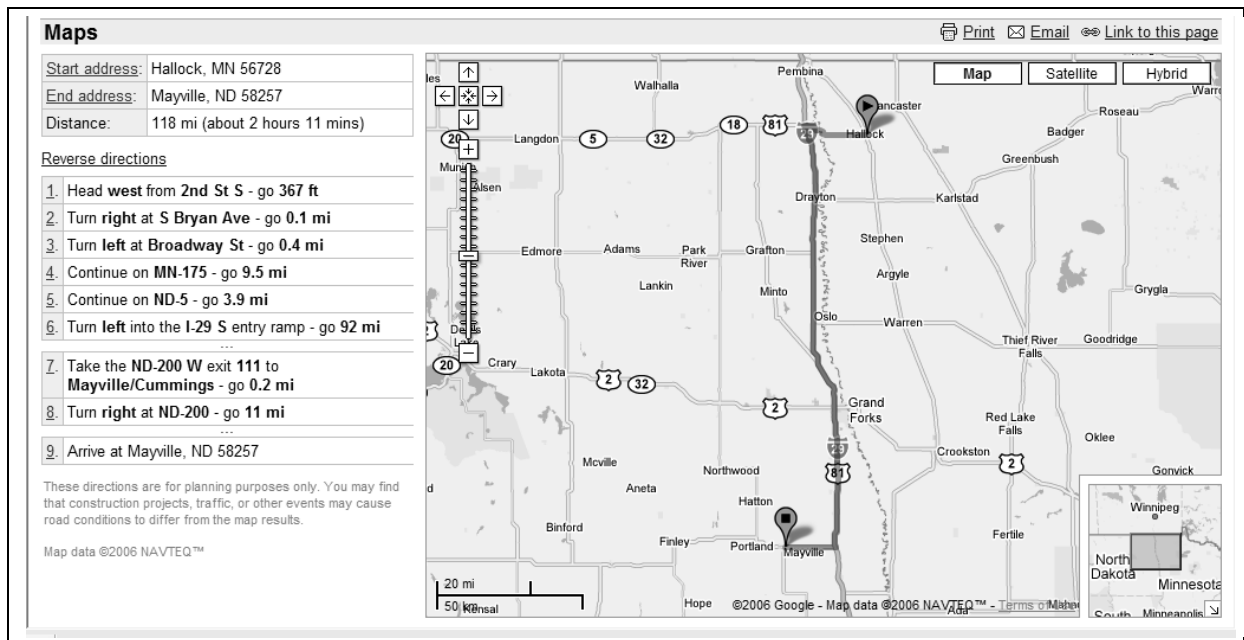
The identification of Albrecht and Berthe as Gabriel's parents was validated by the records of the family that show Gabriel's younger brother Gustav Sele who confirmed the names of the parents in his Social Security Application. As a point of interest, Gustav Sele, like his older brother Gabriel Sele, never married.

Gabriel A. Sele, where the A stands for Albretsen (numerous spelling variations) filed for naturalization on November 7, 1892 in Kittson County, Minnesota, where he said that he entered the USA at the port of St. Vincent in April 1888. Subsequently, Gabriel A. Sele became an American citizen on July 31, 1900. Gabriel Sele is found in the 1900 Census at Kittson, consistent with his naturalization applications. The 1890 Census of the USA was lost to fire and it was not possible to locate Gabriel Sele on any of the reconstructed lists. To date, Gabriel Sele has not been located on the 1910, 1920 or 1930 Census of the USA. The 1940 Census will only be available to the public in 2012 as per USA privacy laws. An area for possible future research would be the 1895 and other State Censuses for Minnesota and North Dakota.

Gabriel A. Sele filed for Canadian citizenship on May 28, 1923 which was granted on October 1, 1923. Gabriel A. Sele, born November 30, 1866, in Stavanger, Gadren Province, Norway, a citizen of the United States, came to Canada from Bemidge, Minnesota and arrived at Emerson on Soo Line Railway in March 1916. He came to Treelon, Saskatchewan in March 1916, where he resided until the fall of 1919 and lived from that time in Shaunavon, Saskatchewan, when he applied for naturalization and was subsequently naturalized as a Canadian on 01 November 1923. Gabriel Sele worked for the CPR for 1918 and 1919. His profession was that of a laborer and he was not married. He was 5 feet 11 inches tall, color white, complexion fair, blue eyes, with grayish brown hair and did not have any visible distinguishing marks.

Prairie Wool, A History of Climax and Surrounding School Districts (1980) referenced an "A. Seali, an older man, homesteaded N-9. He off and on worked in the livery barn in Shaunavon, later returning to the States." Gabriel A. Sele filed and received a Western Land Grant, NW 9-2-18 W3M, on July 23, 1920 which he sold on July 25, 1924 at which time he presumably returned to the USA sometime in late 1924 or 1925. To date, no confirmed later record of Gabriel Sele has been located.

The main point is the identification of this Gabriel Sele with the man of that name listed on the baptismal certificate of Alfred Hovdestad. Hallock, the court seat of Kittson County at the time when Gabriel was naturalized, is about 118 miles from Mayville, North Dakota.



Bemidji, which is the likely real name of Bemidge, is in northern Minnesota and is about 146 miles from Mayville, North Dakota and is 743 miles to Shaunavon, Saskatchewan. This history shows that Gabriel Sele did move about and around looking for work and that he was in reasonable proximity to where Lena was living in 1896 and 1897. Thus, it is evident that all documentation is consistent with the identification of this Gabriel Sele as the same Gabriel Sele given as the biological father of Alfred Hovdestad on his baptismal certificate. With advances to science, absolute proof could be obtained by DNA analysis of the male line from Gabriel's father Albret.

However, the mystery continues to date since his ultimate fate is unknown. One possibility is that he might be the man identified as Gabriel G. Gabrielson, born 20 November 1866, who died in Los Angeles on 28 June 1947 per the California Death Index. Gustav Sele was in California in 1930 and it is not unreasonable to assume that Gabriel moved to California. The identification of this man with Gabriel Sele is, of course, highly speculative and it is for that matter entirely possible that Gabriel returned to Norway.

The main investigator for the origins of Gabriel Sele was Alfred Hovdestad's grandson Wayne R. Hovdestad starting with information provided by Alfred's son Arthur Gerald Hovdestad and granddaughter Bernadine Saxton Van Vlymen who inherited considerable research by her mother Solveig.