

*HISTORY OF UPPER PLUM CREEK**WRITTEN FROM MEMORY IN MARCH 1962 BY EVER ELLINGSTAD*

Some of the first settlers in Upper Plum Creek (Town of Arcadia) were Ole, Thor and Johannes Jackson (their name from Norway was Berget) They homesteaded together in the early 1860-s. They all dug a cellar and lived there until they built a log house. The logs were not plentiful, they had to haul them a long way-- only in the wintertime-by oxen. There were no logs on the hills, only brush. Fire had gone over the hills for years before. What they looked for was spring water and marsh hay for feed. When they got a cow or two, that was half of their living. They made butter, cheese and Primost from the whey. They raised their own oxen to work with. I think I am one of the oldest now living, born in Plum Creek. (The first settlers) did their own work. Johannes was a mechanic, blacksmith, carpenter and handy man. He did all the fixing for the neighbors, too. He was the first to build a basement bar laid up of dry, big, flat stones. There were the other brothers also from Gulbrandsdalen, Norway that homesteaded in Plum Creek. They were Ole, Lars and Per Kelly (their name from Norway was Sundvoll). There were many more from Valdres, Norway--Bjorn Anderson, Ole Narveson, Ole Thompson, Ole Roningen, Peter Hia, and Gulbran Grou. Ole Ellingstad homesteaded in 1872 on a quarter that laid there for many years on the hills after the rest was taken up. There were eleven with the first name of 'Ole' in the school district.

All came from Norway. Now they are all dead. There were more homesteaders in the district. Sever Amundson sold his farm in the late 1880-s to Hans Klevgard and Hans Nerhagen ( they called him 'Tree Foot Hans because he had a wooden leg.) He had homesteaded the farm the Melby boys now have. Ole and Christian Lee bought half of the land that Knudt and Tonats Smallandhad homesteaded. Christian Lee bought half of that farm, two of his grand-daughters still live on that farm alone now. All the people I mention came from Norway except the two girls--they were born on the farm. None of these people had any education. They depended only on hard work but they were all honest and God fearing people-bless their memory! Some of these people never learned to talk good English but got along, helped each other in need and there was no talk of any cash pay. Money was scarce. Thor Jackson had seven boys. They are all dead now. Ten years ago Claude Jackson bought his grandfather-s farm from the estate. He has developed it, drained it and tiled the marsh. Now he plants corn on marsh that was so wet the cows could not walk on it! He has built dams to keep the water back in heavy rain storms. This land was no good for pasture nor hay before. I was there last summer to see. It wonderful what money and work can do. He has a marsh one mile long now that will be ready for corn next year. He had 100 head of cattle last summer. That is almost as many cattle in all Plum Creek 50 or 60 years ago. It goes to show what conservation can do. Just think what the first settlers had to go through. They came from Norway with families, very little money and no education or know how. There were more homesteaders-Knudt Everson Brenom, and two brothers-Thronde Tande and his brother, fathers of Tosten and Ole Tande. These people came up through Iowa and through Coon Valley. Most of them came here with ox teams. They dug cellars to live in until they built log houses. That was before the railroads came through. There were no hospitals nearby. All the babies were born at home and there were few doctors but they got along with home remedies and grew up to be good workers. The work was hard those days. Mostly grubbing and breaking land, some worked in the woods to make some money. This is written from memory. Seventy or more years ago, I was raised at this locality but long after the first settlers came here. Now it is so much different. When they sold for a dollar then, they bought for a dollar. Now most of it goes to Wall Street. I think they were better off then, then now.