Johan

John

Lorentsine

Edvard

Peder

Pauline

Henriette

Øyvind

Henrik

Alfred

Petra

Jens

Maren og Johan Hanssen

Brønnøy slekt 1-5

English Guide

Preface

It was over 40 years ago that I learned my great grandfather came from Sømna and Brønnøy (Bjøru Sømna 1:10 and Reinfjord lille i:2). I was so drawn to the area and just had to learn all I could about my Nordland ancestors. This was before the Internet, but with microfilm copies of the church records, I began to build my tree by organizing all the families from the two areas. It was incredible luck that I heard about Tor Mathisen, who was just beginning to work on the bygdebøker (history books) for Sømna. When he learned of my work, he suggested I work with him and do the genealogy for the books. What we thought would be a three-year project became all-consuming, long term and life changing. Much happened during these years, but the books for both Sømna and Brønnøy were finally finished.

Paperback and e-book (Internet searchable genealogy) versions for Sømna were later done to update it, as so many changes and additions over the years were being made. We had learned so much since we started, and so many more sources became available. With the Internet we were able to communicate quickly. Then came Digitalarkivet with the original church records for all Norway right at our fingertips, plus Ancestry and other Internet genealogy sites appeared, making it so much easier to follow those who emigrated from Norway.

Besides putting the families together for both Sømna and Brønnøy, I have worked extensively with Velfjord and Bindal. I had time to search through church records from places all over Norway, and of course all of Nordland. We also were gathering feedback and additions from people who were using the original books.

For this e-book, the genealogy has been taken out of the five volumes of the original Brønnøy books and updated as much as possible. It will be an Internet source for tracing ancestors from the years around 1650 to the early 1900's. The original books for both communities are still available, nine volumes in all. In these can be found the history of each farm, stories about the people, as well as pictures and drawings.

May 17, 2013. Margaret Miller, Tor Mathisen (right) and the mayor of Brønnøy, Paul Birger Torgnes. (Photo: Brønnøysunds Avis).

For these projects, I am extremely grateful to the community for their interest and support, to Tor Mathisen for his guidance and friendship and to Odd Hendry Hestås, Jon Holand and the many others who helped in various capacities. Tor has now retired, and it is Odd Hendry Hestås who has stepped up with me to make this Brønnøy e-book a reality.

I have ancestors from five other places in Norway, so what is it about this Nordland place that draws me in so tightly? I have never lived there and still don't speak the language well. Is it possible that my spirit holds a memory of this place?

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The Norwegian Naming System

No study of your Norwegian ancestors can be undertaken without an understanding of their naming system which was used up to around 1900. Many are confused by this system, but it is really very simple and extremely useful. In old rural Norway each person had a name with three parts: The given name, the patronymic or father's name, and the farm name. Take, for example, the names Jens Jakob Arntsen Saltermarka and Berit Bjørnsdtr. Torgnes store (see Skåren 2:7). Here, Jens Jakob and Berit are given names, Arntsen and Bjørnsdtr. are patronymics or fathers' names, and Saltermarka, Torgnes store and Skåren are farm names.

In Norway a relatively few given names were commonly used, and there was a strong tendency for families to pass certain names down from one generation to another in a definite pattern. This pattern was not followed as strictly in Brønnøy as in other parts of Norway, but it was generally used up until around 1810. Almost always the first two sons and first two daughters were named for their grandparents. For example, Jens Jakob Arntsen and Berit Bjørnsdtr. (see Skåren 2:7) named their first two sons Arnt and Bjørn, and their first two daughters Maren after Jens Jakob's mother and Johanna after Berit's mother. There were exceptions to this rule. If either parent had a previous husband or wife who had died, then their name took precedence. Or perhaps one of the parents had a brother or sister who had recently died leaving no children. Then they might use this name first. If a child died, very often the next child of the same sex was given that same name. Occasionally, there were two living children in the same family with the same name. The important thing is to notice the pattern. These names are clues and can be used to find a child's grandparents.

The patronymic name indicates the name of one's father. It is formed by adding the suffix «-sen» (son) or «-dtr.» (daughter) to the name of the father. Thus, Jens Jakob Arntsen, son of Arnt, and Berit Bjørnsdtr., daughter of Bjørn.

Each farm in Norway has a name, and the farm name identifies where a person lived. As long as, and only as long as a person lived on any given farm, he took the name of that farm. His farm name changed if he moved to a different farm. Thus, when Jens Jakob Arntsen Saltermarka married and moved to Skåren, his name became Jens Jakob Arntsen Skåren. You can therefore see that three brothers could have three different farm names, and that if more than one family lived on a farm, they would use the same farm name, but would not necessarily be related to each other. This farm name system was used in Norway up until around 1900.

When the Norwegian immigrants came to America, they encountered a naming system quite different from that which they had used in Norway. They complied with this system in different ways. Some chose their old farm name, perhaps shortening it, Americanizing the spelling, or even translating it. Most, feeling that it was not proper to use the name of the home farm when they no longer lived there, decided to use the patronymics as the family name. This is why there are so many Johnsons, Larsons, Olsons, etc. The spelling of the name could have been changed several times, or perhaps after some years of using a name like Olson, a family would decide to go back to a less common farm name. A few chose a new American name, but most immigrants chose a name which was meaningful to them.

Probates as a source:
You will find a button for downloading a PDF file called *Brønnøy skifter*. Skifter are probates. Here you can find the farm and number for families who had probates that pertained to them. These probates often name the spouses and children of the deceased person. If one of the children was dead and left children, then these children were named. To find the original probate, you can go to the website *Digitalarkivet.no*. There are often indexes in the probate books. You may not be able to read the probate, but it is not hard to pick out names and relationships.

Svein Edvardsen has typed up the relationships for probates for Helgeland. This is being handled by *Slekt og Data Salten*, the Nordland branch of the *Slekt og Data* society. You can buy *Skifter på Helgeland* as a searchable CD or USB stick. If you want more information, please contact: *kildereg.skifte@sa.slektogdata.no*

Searching with Adobe Acrobat Reader

The new and updated family history for Brønnøy is being presented as a PDF file on the Brønnøy bygdebok web page. This means everyone can get to know the family history by downloading the PDF file from the Internet. Then just open the file in a PDF reader – shown here with Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Most web browsers can open and display PDF files. But how to use it may vary between web browsers, and will also depend on settings in the web browser. The easiest will therefore be downloading the file. And doing it this way you can use the file without accessing the Internet.
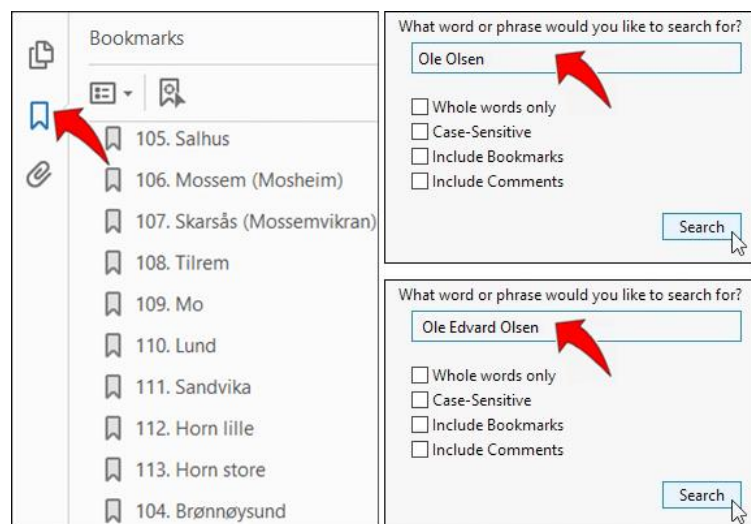
The index on page 9 in the file gives reference to the 40 farms covered in the family history, which are presented in Brønnøy bygdebok vol. I-V. You can use the file like an ordinary book – just find the starting page for a particular farm, then move to that page to see which families are included at a certain part (called *bruk* in Norwegian).

Note that bookmarks to the farms have been included. You open this menu by clicking the bookmark icon as shown to the left. Then just click on the actual farm in order to jump to the starting page for that farm in the text.

Use of the genealogy section explains how to follow a person backwards or forwards in time. Note that this reference system also covers the farms in Sømna bygdebok vol. I-IV.

The real advantage is, however, the possibility to search through the whole family history. Here we explain how to use the most common PDF reader from Adobe (free software).

Right-click the downloaded PDF file and choose to open it in Adobe Acrobat Reader. You can then perform searches this way:

⁍ open the *Edit* menu and choose *Advanced Search*

This will now open a new window in addition to the file. Here you enter the search criteria – note that it will have to match exactly in order to get a hit. This means i.e. a search for *first name last name* will not include those with a middle name in addition (see example in the graphics).

You can check the matches in the hit list the following way:

⁍ forget the hits where the text shown indicates they are not what you are looking for
⁍ click on the other hits one by one and check in the file what this applies to

With a little practice it should be quite easy to do searches in the family history. Although the hit list may be long, it is after all easier checking this instead of reading hundreds of pages with text.

Adobe Acrobat Reader got a new user interface in the summer of 2023. The description above refers to the old one. The new user interface has the bookmarks to the right of the window, while the seach function lies under the tool *Find text or tools* (and under the ... menu). The use of search is the same. Both user interfaces are available. Choose either *Menu | Disable new Acrobat Reader* or eventually *View | Enable new Acrobat Reader*, and restart the program.

Final tip: States in the USA are referenced using the two letter abbreviation. When searching for a state, i.e. WA, make sure to select both *Whole words only* and *Case-Sensitive* (see the graphics). This will avoid getting hits in names of persons, farms, and places too.

Use of the genealogy section

Brønnøy slekt I-V follows around 2600 families from as far back as we can go to 1900, and a bit beyond for those married before 1901. The genealogy is organized by farms, and since the lease or deed was usually in the man's name, the families are organized after him. The same for *husmenn* (cotters), *innerster* (those who live with a family) and *andre* (others).

In order for the genealogy not to take too much space, abbreviations have been used:

f. = born	d. = died	g. = married	ug. = unmarried
konf. = confirmed	dødf. = stillborn	sønn = son	datter = daughter
enkem. = widower	enke = widow	gbr. = gårdbruker or farm owner	
hsm. = husmann (cotter)	inn. = innerst	forp. = lessee or tenant	
folket. = census	PM 1755 = minister's census from 1755		tvill. = twins
KB = church book	publ. abs. = public confession		n. = mentioned

introd. = introduced (a mother was introduced back into the church after the birth of a child). When «kona introd.» is seen in the genealogy, this introduction is all we see in the church book. No baptism was recorded.

Abbreviations have been used for some of the churches. Trondheim: (Dk) = Domkirken, (VF) = Vår Frue, (Bl) = Bakklandet and (Lm) = Lademoen. Bergen (Dk) = Domkirken. For Kristiania and Oslo, Oslo's Domkirken is called Vår Frelsers kirke until 1950.

Neighboring communities are written as: Sømna = Sømna, Velf. = Velfjord and Bi. = Bindal (includes both Vassås and Solstad parishes). County names are not added for places in Nordland, but now and then names of larger areas are used, such as Salten, Lofoten, etc. The following counties have been abbreviated after the previous system: F = Finnmark, T = Troms, NT = Nord-Trøndelag, ST = Sør-Trøndelag, MR = Møre og Romsdal, SF = Sogn og Fjordane, HO = Horda-land, RO = Rogaland, VA = Vest-Agder, AA = Aust-Agder, TE = Telemark, BU = Buskerud, VE = Vestfold, ØF = Østfold, AK = Akershus, HE = Hedmark and OP = Oppland.

Abbreviations for states in the USA:

AL = Alabama	AK = Alaska	AZ = Arizona	AR = Arkansas
CA = California	CO = Colorado	CT = Connecticut	DE = Delaware
FL = Florida	GA = Georgia	HI = Hawaii	ID = Idaho
IL = Illinois	IN = Indiana	IA = Iowa	KS = Kansas
KY = Kentucky	LA = Louisiana	ME = Maine	MD = Maryland
MA = Massachusetts	MI = Michigan	MN = Minnesota	MS = Mississippi
MO = Missouri	MT = Montana	NE = Nebraska	NV = Nevada
NH = New Hampshire	NJ = New Jersey	NM = New Mexico	NY = New York
NC = North Carolina	ND = North Dakota	OH = Ohio	OK = Oklahoma
OR = Oregon	PA = Pennsylvania	RI = Rhode Island	SC = South Carolina
SD = South Dakota	TN = Tennessee	TX = Texas	UT = Utah
VT = Vermont	VA = Virginia	WA = Washington	WV = West Virginia
WI = Wisconsin	WY = Wyoming		

This is an example of the genealogy for a family at farm number 81 Eide.

2:6 **Martinus Kristensen** Skomo ytre 3:9c f. 1828 d. 1906 g. 1854 **Johanna Kristine Tomasdtr.** f. 1823 d. 1878, datter av gbr. Tomas Knutsen og Klara Hansdtr. Dyngeset Sømna (se 2:10d der) g. II 1885 **Maren Johanna Mortensdtr.** f. 1852 d. 1918, enke etter Ole Kristian Johansen Skomo ytre i:2. Johanna hadde et barn før hun ble gift:

   aa. jente f. 1850 Skomo indre d. ½ time. Far var ungkar Tarald Taraldsen Kavli, Hen MR

Felles barn Martinus og Johanna:

   Ia. dødf. jente 1853 Skomo
   b. Mikael Johan f. 1854 Skomo. Til Winnipeg Canada 1898. Hos søskenbarnet Chris Christensen i Pretty Hill Twp., Northwest Territories Canada i 1901 ug. Han brukte etternavnet Eide i Amerika
   c. Gerhardine Kristine f. 1861 Eide d. 1918. Se Kjølsøya 7:1
   d. Klaudius f. 1864 d. 1938. Se Eide 2:7

Felles barn Martinus og Maren:

   IIe. Magdalena Kristofa Jeselia f. 1884 d. 1900 på Kjølsøya
   f. Hilma Mathea Kristofa f. 1886 d. 1960 g. to ganger (g. I 1905 Brø. (Skomo ytre h:19d)). Bosted Skomo ytre bruk 22

Here we find Martinus Kristensen and his family:
2:6 means that he is at bruk (part) 2 and «head» of the 6th family on this part.

Skomo ytre 3:9c tells that Martinus is from farm Skomo ytre part 3, and that he was the third child (c) in the 9th family of farmers.

Martinus was married two times (marked with g. and g. II) and his first wife, Johanna Kristine Tomasdtr., was not from Brønnøy. In such cases where the wife or husband is not from Brønnøy, the names of the parents are given if known. We have also given the siblings and half siblings for those who are placed in Brønnøy. His second wife, Maren Johanna Mortensdtr., was a widow. To find her parents we will have to look at Skomo ytre i:2.

When a man was married several times, the first child from each marriage is given a Roman numeral (I, II, etc.) and at some places we also have *Felles barn* (children of...). This is to show to which marriage the children belong. If the man was married only once, no Roman numeral is used. Besides the children born inside the marriage, we can also find children born outside the marriage. This can be a child the man had before he married or one he had while he was married. In these cases, it is made clear who the mother was.

There are also cases where the wife had children with other men, sometimes from an earlier marriage in another parish. These children, who are not the children of the present husband, are numbered aa, bb, etc. in order to avoid confusion. Here the first wife had a child before marriage and it is being marked with aa.

If we look at the 6 children Martinus fathered, we see they are arranged by birth year with a, b, c, etc. Child a is marked with Ia and begins with *Felles barn...* to show this is the first child in the first marriage. Similarly for child e, who is marked IIe. Child f becomes then the second child in the second marriage.

In the same way that we follow Martinus back to his parents, we can follow his children forward in time. Here is written i.e. for child d, «Se Eide 2:7». This means that Klaudius and his family took over part 2 after his parents and can be found as the 7th family.

If no farm name is given after the birth year, the child was born on the farm where the family has its main place. Before 1820, the birth year can be a bit vague, since all births were registered in the church book according to the *baptismal date*, not the birth date. We have chosen to use years and have not used exact dates.

If there is nothing written after the year of death, the person concerned died on his or her main place. Especially during the 1900's, some people can certainly have lived more places than we could manage to list.

The main families include those married until 1901 who lived in Brønnøy. For children married after 1900, the spouse name is only included for American cases.