

The A.T. Kraabel Family of Clifford, North Dakota

Written by Thelma Kraabel Lund July 1975

Anton T. Kraabel was born in Norway on Oct. 16, 1862, and came to America with his parents when he was five years old. The family settled in Wisconsin where he grew up, but as a young man he migrated to the territory of North Dakota to make his fortune. He wanted to earn enough money to go to Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, first to their preparatory school and then college. He never made that but he sent all seven of his children through college. The four boys went to Luther and the three girls to St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn. because Luther college did not admit women at that time. Kraabel himself had only an eighth grade education.

Maren Osvold was born in Wisconsin in 1865 shortly after her parents had arrived there from Norway. Before her marriage she was a professional seamstress.

The Kraabels first met in Wisconsin in the home of Ole Kraabel, Anton's oldest brother, when Anton had gone back to Wisconsin to visit. They were married in the year 1892. Anton brought his bride to Clifford and they settled in the house where he had lived as a bachelor; the house being much smaller then than it is today. This house still stands on the main street of Clifford and is still very precious to the members of the Kraabel family. All seven of us children were born in that house and we grew up there, and almost all of Mother and Dad's married life was lived there. To us, as we were growing up, it was the most precious spot in the whole world. Only Dad's broken health caused them to leave Clifford.

Dad and Mother were active members of the Lutheran Church in Clifford and many visiting clergymen and missionaries were entertained in our home. All seven of us were confirmed there; two of the boys were ordained into the Holy Ministry in that church, and Elvida was married there.

Dad was interested in politics and served in some local offices and the State Legislature before he was elected Lieutenant governor of the State. He served in that capacity under Gov. Hannah and Gov. Frazier. He was not in sympathy with the political policies of the newly organized Non Partisan League and was not active in politics after that.

Dad engaged in many enterprises in the town, at one time running the local lumber yard, operating the local hardware store, being a partner in the Peterson, Rygg and company, the local general store, and buying and selling real estate. Mother was active in the ladies Aid of the church and during the First World War was very active in the work of the national Red Cross. She received a certificate of merit from the government for her efforts in that capacity. But mostly Mother was busy taking care of her family, which for many years included and uncle, grandmother, and running a very hospitable home which was always open to all friends, relatives, and visitors.

Of the seven children born to this family only three are still living. Elvida, who was married to the Rev. Mikkell Lono, died in 1947 in Alpena, Michigan where Rev. Lono was serving at the time. The Rev. Dr. Alf M. Kraabel died in 1967 in Tacoma, Washington where he and his wife Marie were serving on the staff of Pacific Lutheran University after he had retired from the active ministry. Eline, Mrs. George Morken, died in January, 1975 in Parkland, Wash. Where she had served as head of the School of Nursing at Pacific Lutheran. Dr. T.O. Kraabel died April 25, 1975 in Washington, D.C. where he was living in retirement with his wife Charlotte. He had served both the American Legion and the National Government as National Rehabilitation Director for veterans.

At the present time Ragnar E. Kraabel is living in retirement in Laguna Hills, Calif. With his wife Della who at one time taught school in Clifford. Ragnar was a banker most of his adult life. Rev. Maynard Kraabel is living in semi-retirement in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with his wife Helen, and Thelma is living in Parkland, Washington with her husband Mr. Clarence Lund. Both Clarence and Thelma are retired teachers.

T.O. and Ragnar both served in France during the First World War and Alf was a Chaplain in the Second World War serving in the Pacific War Zone.

Fifteen grandchildren were born into the Kraabel family. Luther Lono is still listed as Missing-in-Action in S.E. Asia, a casualty of the Viet Nam War.