

## *Descendants of John Baldwin Seslar and Caroline Elise Miller*

### *Generation No. 5.9*

**JOHN BALDWIN<sup>5</sup> SESLAR** (*Thomas Martin<sup>4</sup> Sesler, Jane<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*) was born September 18, 1867 in Lima, Allen Co., OH, and died June 28, 1930 in Northport, Morrill Co., NE. He married **CAROLINE ELISE MILLER** June 29, 1910 in Northport, Morrill Co., NE, daughter of **HENRY MILLER** and **BERTHA KLOSE**. She was born May 07, 1888 in Evans, Weld Co., CO, and died May 04, 1963 in Laurelwood, OR.

Children of **JOHN SESLAR** and **CAROLINE MILLER** are:

- i. **BERTHA ELIZABETH<sup>6</sup> SESLAR**, b. November 24, 1912, Northport, Morrill Co., NE; d. August 02, 1989, Bridgeport, Morrill Co., NE. She m. **CLARENCE REX MOUNT** January 15, 1933, Northport, Morrill Co., NE; b. April 04, 1908, Northport, Morrill Co., NE; d. June 18, 1988, Scottsbluff, Scottsbluff Co., NE.
- ii. **FRANCIS JOHN SESLAR**, b. July 26, 1914, Cheyenne, Laramie Co., WY; d. May 13, 1968, Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii. He m. **DOROTHY HESTER MERRELL** December 31, 1934; b. July 06, 1913, Bridgeport, Morrill Co., NE; d. August 06, 1968, Springfield, Lane Co., OR.
- iii. **VERNON SESLAR**, b. October 10, 1916, Burns, Laramie Co., WY. He m. (1) **OPAL BOLTON** May 07, 1938, St. Helens, Columbia Co., OR; b. September 14, 1918; d. 1986, Ontario, Malheur Co., OR. He m. (2) **EVA ST CLAIR** 1955.
- iv. **VIRGINIA ANNA SESLAR**, b. October 10, 1916, Burns, Laramie Co., WY; d. October 25, 1917, Carpenter, Laramie Co., WY.

**JOHN BALDWIN SESLAR 1867 - 1930**  
**and**  
**CAROLINE ELISE MILLER 1888 - 1963**

*Jan. 15, 1908 - I did not work today for the wind was high and it snowed a little last night and I fixed my wagon.*

*Jan. 25, 1908 - We hauled one load of chips and the wind was high and I did not do anything in the afternoon on account of the wind blowing so hard today.*

*Jan. 31, 1908 - I did not do anything much today as it was cold and bad.*

*Feb. 18, 1908 - I stayed at home all day today for it was cold and snowed a little and the wind was high.*

*July 9, 1908 - I went up to the forty and turned the water on the alfalfa and hoed in the garden and fetched a load of alfalfa home.*

*July 15, 1908 - I went over town and then I went up to the forty and plowed corn all day.*

*July 24, 1908 - I went over to town and got two spools of wire and worked on the fence.*

*July 31, 1908 - I went up to the forty and stacked my hay and fetched a load home.*

*Aug. 8, 1908 - I washed and scrubbed and went over to town.*

*Aug. 19, 1908 - I went up to the forty to fetch up my mare and brought home a load of hay.*

*Sept. 13, 1908 - I went up to the forty to get some potatoes and got some beans and got some corn.<sup>1</sup>*

Day Journal of John Baldwin Seslar

**John Seslar Claims Prairie Land And Endures Its Harshness**

John Baldwin Seslar was a bachelor farmer for the first forty-three years of his life. During the three years before he married, he kept a day journal in which he recorded information about his activities, livestock, crops and weather. While it would appear that he led a solitary life, that was not the case. He had many relatives and friends living nearby who were frequent visitors. He spent many days helping to repair equipment, harvest crops and build homes for his friends, relatives and the town. His March 10, 1908 entry is typical: *"Today was a fine day and Sadie Logan and Jennie K and I went over to Todds to help him put up his windmill but he was sick and did not work and Laura Young and Ada Melvin came down and stayed a little while tonight."*<sup>2</sup> During this time John's most important volunteer project was the building of a new schoolhouse in Northport, Cheyenne County, Nebraska. *"June 24, 1907 - We went over to school meeting and voted a Mount for director and voted for a new school house and it carried so we will have a new school house and I went to town and got a pound of coffee. . . .Sept. 23, 1907: I donated one load of lumber for the schoolhouse and worked half a day and Patton<sup>3</sup> worked all day. That makes a total of six days 6."*

John was born in Lima, Allen County, Ohio on September 18, 1867.<sup>4</sup> He was the ninth child and last son of Thomas Martin Sesler and Elizabeth Mahala Aldridge. When John was just ten years old his father died of complications of illness contracted during the Civil War. While all of his older siblings were sent off to work or were married, he and his younger sister, Susan, remained with their mother.<sup>5</sup> They went with her to LaPort, Indiana, Chicago, Illinois and then on to Camp Clarke Township, Cheyenne County, Nebraska. On November 16, 1892 the Land Office in Sidney, Nebraska issued a homestead certificate to John for one hundred-sixty acres. The full payment was fourteen dollars.<sup>6</sup> John began to improve his claim, working hard for many years to gain a subsistence from it.

## THE JANE HIBBEN LINE

### Caroline Elise Miller Becomes Part Of The Seslar Family

In Caroline Elise Miller's journal she describes Pearl Inez Kushmaul (Martin), daughter of Jennie and George Kushmaul, as "*my dearest friend.*"

*On Jan. 3, 1910 I went to visit with my friends Pearl and James Martin at Alliance Neb. and had a nice time. . . . On Jan. 14, 1910 Pearl, Jim and I went to Bridgeport to visit with Pearl's people. . . . I went to stay with Pearl's grandmother Elizabeth Seslar Jan. 18th 1910.*<sup>7</sup>

Caroline was born May 7, 1888 in Evans, Weld County, Colorado, daughter of Henry Miller and Bertha Klose. Soon after, the Miller family moved to Arcola, Laramie County, Wyoming. She wrote in her journal: "*When I taught my first school which began Jan. 21, 1907 I was 18 years old. Began my second school Sept. 3, 1907.*"<sup>8</sup> Just a few years later she came to Bridgeport to care for the aging Elizabeth Seslar, and five months after that married her son, John Baldwin Seslar. "*Mr. John Seslar and I were married June 29th 1910<sup>9</sup> and received many beautiful and useful presents. We went to Alliance Neb. to spend the 4th and attended the Stock Grower's Association.*"<sup>10</sup> The first mention of Caroline in John's day journal was on April 8, 1910: "*I got a letter from Carrie Miller today and she is not coming home until Saturday and I hauled one load of hay for Jess Young.*"<sup>11</sup> The courtship and approaching marriage may have been the reason the last entry in John's journal was April 20, 1910. A letter from Caroline's parents to John indicates there had been a whirlwind courtship.

*Your letter we received and must say it came as a great surprise to us and is rather sudden. I guess it would not do us any good even if we wanted to say no as Caroline is old enough to know what she is doing. We hope you will be good to Caroline as she has always been a good girl. I am quite sure she will make you a good wife. You must both bear with the other, as there will be clouds in your life, but you will also find that there is lots of sunshine if you will only help each other over the rough places.*<sup>12</sup>

Evidently, John and Caroline decided life on the homestead and farming on the 'the forty' was not acceptable. "*We sold our place to Rev. Harper Oct. 14, 1910 and bought a resident lot in Northport, Neb. Oct. 17, 1910.*" On this lot they built a house, but left it and moved to live near Caroline's family in Wyoming. "*Rented our new house, just completed to Mr. Geo. Cricks Apr. 21, 1913. . . . All John's relations and Friends had a surprise [going away] party on us the 22 of May 1913. . . . We left Northport, Nebr. and moved to Arcola, Wyo. May 27, 1913. My brothers Frank and Henry came down to help us move. John and Frank drove through with the horses. Hattie, Henry, Baby and I went on the train. John's nephew Vernie Seslar came through with our car of household goods and cows.*"<sup>13</sup>

John and Caroline's first child was born before Elizabeth Seslar died. No entry indicating that she was pregnant preceded this: "*Our little baby girl was born Nov. 24, 1912. Named Bertha Elizabeth.*"<sup>14</sup> *She was born on her great great grandmother's birthday, whose name was Rosa Klose. . . .* The family moved to Arcola, near Carpenter, Wyoming in May, 1913.

*We stayed with my Folks till Sept. 1913. . . . Sept. 17, 1913 Baby and I moved to Cheyenne to live. I kept boarders. John stayed to help on the Ranch. In Oct. the 20th I came home to teach the school and Mama went to town in my place. Baby stayed with her all winter. . . . July 26th 1914 our Baby Boy was born in Cheyenne, Wyo. We named him Francis John. He was born on his great grandfather's birthday and named after him and his Papa. On Oct. 7, 1914 we*

*moved to our place in Arcola, opened up a little store and I was appointed Postmistress May 8, 1915.<sup>15</sup>*

### **Health Concerns Guide John And Family To California**

Twins, Vernon and Virginia Anna, were born in Burns, Laramie County, Wyoming on October 10, 1916. Virginia died October 25, 1917 and was buried in the Carpenter cemetery. In addition to managing the store, John worked on the railroad and raised cattle using the S+ brand.<sup>16</sup> (Plate 19)

*When John and Carrie married, he portrayed his age as 33 when in actuality he was 43. Until his death, his entire family thought he was 10 years younger than he actually was. John's health began failing during the World War I years. In the hopes of improving his health, the family moved to northern California where they followed the fruit, nut and hops harvests. When California climate failed to be as beneficial as hoped, John and Carrie returned to family and friends in Wyoming. (Plate 19) In 1929, the year of the Great Depression, they returned to Northport, NE because they owned a home there. John's health continued to fail and on June 28, 1930, one day before his 20th wedding anniversary, he died of kidney failure at the age of 63.<sup>17</sup> Burial took place in the family plot in Carpenter, WY, next to his daughter, Virginia.<sup>18</sup>*

### **Caroline Becomes The Mainstay Of Her Family**

Carrie returned to Northport to live and raise her family. When her daughter, Bertha, married Clarence Rex Mount on January 15, 1933,<sup>19</sup> the newlyweds shared her home. It was not possible for them to afford their own household during the depression.<sup>20</sup> Two other children, Carroll Wallace Mount and Eileen Lenore Mount, were born in this household before Carrie moved to St. Helena, Oregon to assist her son, Vernon, with his young children.

*When [about 1945] Opal [Bolton Seslar] left Vernon with four small children to raise, G'ma Carrie stepped in. She moved into their home in St. Helena where Uncle Vernon worked in the paper mills and donned a difficult dual role, grandmother and mother. As the kids reached high school age, Vernon wanted them to attend Laurelwood Academy, but couldn't afford tuition as well as board and room, so they moved the family to Laurelwood, OR. In Laurelwood, Vernon remarried and G'ma returned to NE for a few years. When that marriage dissolved, she again returned to OR to lend stability to the family. While there she purchased a small doll house of a home so that she could be in the area as a friend and grandmother, while maintaining privacy for both households. . . . One evening, while staying with Vernon in Oregon, she had retired for the evening and heard a car drive up to the house. Evidently, this startled her and she sat up suddenly and suffered a heart attack which killed her immediately. Uncle Vernon brought her body back to her native state of Wyoming where she was laid to rest beside her husband and daughter in Carpenter.<sup>21</sup>*

*Word has been received here of the death Sunday [May 4, 1963] at Laurelwood, Ore., of Caroline Elisa Seslar, 74, a former Northport resident. She was born May 7, 1888 at Evans, Colo., and later made her home at Arcola, Wyo., Northport and Laurelwood. She graduated from Cheyenne High School and attended the*

## **THE JANE HIBBEN LINE**

*University of Wyoming. She taught school for several years in eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska, and was married to John B. Seslar on June 29, 1910 at Bridgeport. She was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.*<sup>22</sup>

### **Additional Information About The Children Of John And Caroline Seslar.**

*[Bertha Elizabeth Seslar (Mount)] was born on November 24, 1912 in Northport, to John and Caroline (Miller) Seslar. She spent her early years in Arcola, Wyo. She graduated from Bridgeport High School in 1930. She married Clarence Rex Mount Jan. 15, 1933, at Northport. She worked for several years for the Northport School District, taught vocal music in many local schools and gave private piano lessons until 1984. She was a member of the Church, ITC, Judges' council, Garden Club, 4-H clubs and Community Services Federation. She held numerous local and state offices including State Garden Club president and regional director of the Community Services Federation. She had a master certificate as a master judge from the National Council of State Garden Clubs. She judged flower and horticultural show in Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado. A funeral for Bertha Elizabeth Mount, 76, of Northport, who died Aug. 2, 1989 at the Bridgeport hospital, will be at 10 a.m. Friday in the Bridgeport Seventh-day Adventist Church. . .*<sup>23</sup>

Bertha's husband, Clarence Rex Mount, was born April 4, 1904 to Clarence W. and Laura White Mount.<sup>24</sup> His father homesteaded near John Seslar's family and is mentioned in John's day journal. Bertha and Clarence Mount had three children; Kathleen Laverne Mount, Carroll Wallace Mount and Eileen Lenore Mount. Clarence died June 18, 1988 in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Both Bertha and Clarence are buried at the Oregon Trail Memorial Cemetery in Bridgeport.<sup>25</sup>

Francis John Seslar was born July 26, 1914 in Northport. He married Dorothy Hester Merrell on December 31, 1934. They had four children; Virgil Leroy, Janet Ann, Paul Francis and Larry Phillip Seslar.

*When Gramps had to give up the Texaco station, he sold it to Uncle Francis who operated it for a few years before he and Aunt Dorothy moved to Cheyenne where he worked as a builder, ultimately owning his own contracting company. Many of the homes in old Cheyenne are those that he built. . . . Uncle Francis became active in the Masons and, in later years, played tournament bridge. At a tournament in Hawaii, he excused himself from the play, went out on the lanai, and at the age of 54, died of a heart attack.*<sup>26</sup>

Dorothy Merrell Seslar died August 6, 1978 in Springfield, Lane County, Oregon and is buried with Francis at Santa Rosa Memorial Park, Santa Rosa, California.<sup>27</sup>

Vernon Seslar was born October 16, 1916 in Burns, Laramie County, Wyoming. He married Opal Bolton on May 7, 1938 in St. Helens, Oregon.

*After his marriage to Opal Bolton, they settled in Oregon where Don, Verna, John and Jim arrived. When Jim was just 6 months old, Vernon received his draft notice and entered basic training. For whatever reason, Opal could not cope with his absence and one day, left the four children with a neighbor and never returned. The neighbor got in touch with Aimee and Grandma Seslar who contacted the Red Cross who got Uncle Vernon released just 24 hours before his*

*ship left dock headed for the Europe warfront. Grandma Seslar went to Oregon to help out and ended up raising her second family. . . .After his second marriage failed, he lived in Laurelwood on two acres of land with his cattle and faithful dog. . . .His health his failed now to point that he resides in an Oregon board and care institution. John and Jim both live in the area with their families and keep an eye on him.<sup>28</sup>*

**Generation 5.9 End Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Day journal, March 6, 1907 to April 20, 1910, of John Baldwin Seslar. In the possession of Kathleen Laverne<sup>7</sup> Mount (Ruf) (*Berth Elizabeth<sup>6</sup>, John Baldwin<sup>5</sup>, Thomas Martin<sup>4</sup> Seslar, Jane<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*) as of 2002.
- <sup>2</sup> Sadie Logan - Sara Jane (Seslar) Logan; Jennie K - Virginia Adeline (Seslar) Kushmaul; Todds - Clyde E. Todd m. Alice Rose Kushmaul in 1910); Laura Young - Laura Emily (Seslar) Young.
- <sup>3</sup> Patton - John Patton, husband of Mary Margaret (Seslar) Patton.
- <sup>4</sup> Thomas M. Sesler & Elizabeth M. Aldridge family bible, "John Baldwin Seslar was borned September, 18, 1867."
- <sup>5</sup> US Census 1880, T9-990, page 399A, Bath, Allen County, Ohio.
- <sup>6</sup> Homestead Certificate #3048, Sidney, Cheyenne County, Nebraska.
- <sup>7</sup> Journal, 1903 to 1914, of Caroline Elise Miller Seslar, page 5. In possession of Kathleen Laverne<sup>7</sup> Mount (Ruf) (*Berth Elizabeth<sup>6</sup>, John Baldwin<sup>5</sup>, Thomas Martin<sup>4</sup> Seslar, Jane<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*) as of 2002.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., page 2.
- <sup>9</sup> Marriage Certificate, State of Nebraska, June 29, 1910.
- <sup>10</sup> Journal, Caroline Elise Miller Seslar, [Note 7], page 6.
- <sup>11</sup> Day journal, John Baldwin Seslar, [Note 1].
- <sup>12</sup> Letter from Henry and Bertha Miller to John Baldwin Seslar, in possession of Kathleen Laverne Mount (Ruf).
- <sup>13</sup> Journal, Caroline Elise Miller Seslar, [Note 7], page 13.
- <sup>14</sup> Known to her grandchildren as Aimee.
- <sup>15</sup> Journal, Caroline Elise Miller Seslar, [Note 7], pages 13-15.
- <sup>16</sup> Brand Certificate, Laramie County, Wyoming, book 12, page 364, September 1913.
- <sup>17</sup> Death Certificate, Northport, Morrill County, Nebraska, #A6560. Note: date of birth, February 18, 1868 does not agree with family bible records and given age of 68 years probably is in error; Funeral program, aged 62 years, 9 months, 10 days.
- <sup>18</sup> John Baldwin Seslar biography, unpublished, by Kathleen Laverne Mount (Ruf).
- <sup>19</sup> Kathleen Laverne Mount [Ruf] ancestor chart.
- <sup>20</sup> Memories of Carrie's home life were remembered and recorded by Bertha and Clarence's oldest daughter, Kathleen Laverne Mount (Ruf). During her formative years she had lived with her grandmother. Her recollections are shared in this narrative.
- <sup>21</sup> Caroline Elise Miller Seslar biography, unpublished, by Kathleen Laverne Mount (Ruf).
- <sup>22</sup> Newspaper, (unknown), Northport, Morrill County, Nebraska, about May 7, 1963.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., August 3, 1989.
- <sup>24</sup> US Census 1920, T625-998, Camp Clarke Precinct, Bridgeport, Morrill County, Nebraska.
- <sup>25</sup> Funeral program, Clarence Rex Mount, June 22, 1988.
- <sup>26</sup> Kathleen Laverne Mount (Ruf), "Uncle Francis," an unpublished biography; Newspaper, (unknown), Bridgeport, Morrill County, Nebraska, obituary.
- <sup>27</sup> Social Security Index, #520-34-4236; Kathleen Laverne Mount (Ruf) ancestor chart.
- <sup>28</sup> Kathleen Laverne Mount (Ruf), "Uncle Vernon," an unpublished biography.