

Ness Family History

Rasmus Engvald Lutvig Olesen Ystenes

Rasmus Engvald Lutvig Olesen Ystenes was born November 27, 1887 in the Ålesund area of Møre og Romsdal county, Norway to Ole Johan Andreas Petersen Ystenes and Maria Rasmusdatter¹. Ålesund is an important sea port located along the western coast of Norway. Rasmus was baptised into the Church of Norway (Lutheran church) May 29, 1888, and thus his birth record shows in the parish records of that year².



Young Rasmus in Norway.

Under the Norwegian patronymic naming system, Rasmus' official full name would have been Rasmus Engvald Lutvig, as shown on his birth record. Olesen (Ole's son) would have been added informally to show his paternal association.

¹ Ålesund parish record, National Archives of Norway,
<http://www.arkivverket.no/URN:NBN:no-a1450-kb20060925050640.jpg>

² Ibid.

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To further help identify himself, Rasmus would add the name of his family farm “Ystenes” to the end of the name. Ystenes (or Ystenæs) is Norwegian for “eastern peninsula or promontory”, and likely describes the location of the farm. Although it is unknown exactly where the farm was located, family stories tell of Rasmus rowing across the bay to get to Ålesund proper to buy supplies.

Tragically, Rasmus' mother passed away a little over a year after he was born, on December 30, 1888. The cause appears to be gastritis, although the writing on the death record is unclear³. However, a little over a year after Maria's death, Rasmus' father married a second wife, Anne Ingeborg Hansdatter Stokke, on January 28, 1890⁴. Anne (who seems to have gone by her middle name of Ingeborg⁵), was forty-two years old and was originally from the Hjørundfjord area of Møre og Romsdal. Ingeborg is the woman that Rasmus would have known as “mother” while growing up.

Little is known of Rasmus' life in Norway. He had three older brothers and at least one older sister, and they are shown at home on the farm in the 1900 Norwegian census⁶ (except for his brother Olaf who had already emigrated to the United States). In 1904 a great fire destroyed much of Ålesund. Family stories tell of sixteen year old Rasmus picking through the remains of burnt out shops looking for canned goods that could be salvaged.

Later, during his late teens or early twenties, Rasmus fell in love with a young woman and was engaged to marry her. However, the wedding was not to be, as Rasmus decided to follow his brothers Anton and Olaf and sister Marie to North America, and for reasons unknown, the young woman did not follow.

It is unknown exactly when Rasmus left Norway. Olaf emigrated in 1896, Marie in 1902, and Anton in 1904. We know he lived briefly in North Dakota with his

3 Ålesund parish record, National Archives of Norway,
<http://www.arkivverket.no/URN:NBN:no-a1450-kb20070328640076.jpg>

4 Ålesund parish record, National Archives of Norway,
<http://www.arkivverket.no/URN:NBN:no-a1450-kb20070328640044.jpg>

5 1900 Norwegian Census, National Archives of Norway, <http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/>

6 Ibid.

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siblings, but not exactly when or for how long. Like the rest of his family, Rasmus anglicised his surname to Ness upon arrival in the new world. He also changed the spelling of his middle and patronymic names to Engvalud Ludwig Olaf. Unlike his brothers and sister, Rasmus decided to make his future in the U.S.' neighbour to the north, Canada, which was also calling for European settlers to farm it's western plains.



Hand tinted portrait of Rasmus, taken in North Dakota.

Postmarked letters addressed to Rasmus indicate he may have lived in Bench and East End, Saskatchewan, and in Ferintosh, Alberta. His first documented residence in Canada was at Manyberries in southern Alberta. He resided there from at least July 1913 to 1923, and he owned land on the east half of section 17, township 4, range 5, west of the fourth meridian⁷. By 1926, Rasmus had moved

⁷ Canadian Pacific Railway Land Database

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to Kimberley, British Columbia, and by 1928 he again relocated to what would be his final home in Bashaw, Alberta. At the time, Bashaw was primarily a grain elevator town, collecting and distributing grains from the surrounding agricultural region. The town lies within an area heavily populated by settlers of Scandinavian descent. Rasmus found his calling in Bashaw as a carpenter.

While in Bashaw, Rasmus met a young woman from the nearby Lake De May area. Esther Katrina Akerstrom's parents had immigrated from Sweden in the early 1900s to the Lake De May area near Camrose, Alberta, and Esther was born there in 1909. Rasmus and Esther married November 27, 1930 in Bashaw. Wedding pictures show Esther holding a new born baby. This child must have passed away shortly after, as there is no further mention of the child, other than a grave marker in the town cemetery entitled "Ness Infants".



Rasmus Ness and Esther Akerstrom wedding photos.

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Esther also had at least one miscarriage before she gave birth to the first of her children who would survive past infancy. The couple had three boys, born in 1938, 1939 and 1948 respectively.



Rasmus the carpenter (on the roof, right side).

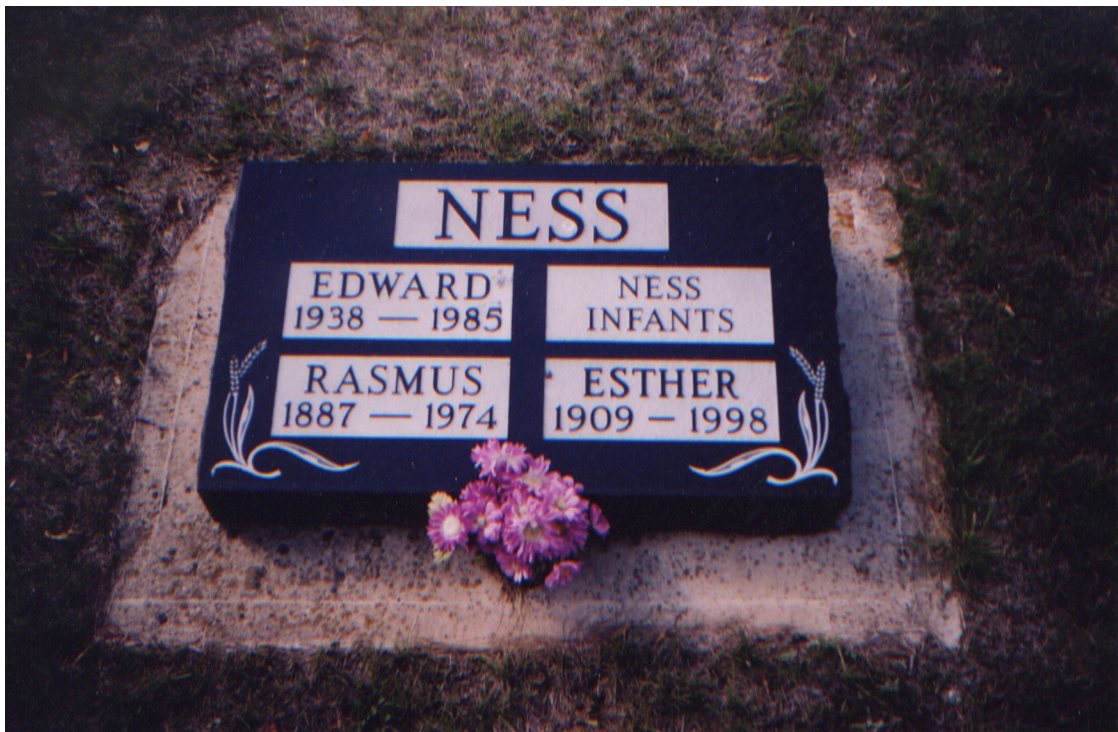
Rasmus continued to work as a carpenter his entire life, building barns and houses and other community buildings. He was also active in community life, joining the Royal Elks service club. When he first arrived in Canada Rasmus belonged to the Lutheran church in which he was raised. However, finding the obligatory tithe to be too onerous for the income of a pioneer settler, he switched to the United Church (a unique Canadian denomination that had formed from the merger of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal denominations), as they allowed their members to pay what they felt they could afford.

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Rasmus with Esther, his children and grand-children, ca. late 1960s/early 1970s.

Rasmus passed away of old age December 6, 1974, a few days after his eighty-seventh birthday, and was buried in the Bashaw Cemetery.



Rasmus' gravestone in the Bashaw Cemetery (2002).

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Sources:

Ålesund parish records, National Archives of Norway

1901 Norwegian Census, National Archives of Norway

Personal Correspondence with family members

*Note, this history is an abridged version of a more detailed story of the life of Rasmus Ness. Details on Rasmus' children have been abbreviated to protect the privacy of living individuals.

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Rasmus Ystenes & Documents

Birth Record

A. Levende						Fødte					
Nr.	Fødsels-Datum	Indskrivnings-Dato (og om Børn- eller Døds-)	Barnets fulde Navn	Foreldrenes fulde Navn og bopæl (Næsting)	Foreldrenes Bopæl	Foreldrenes Fødsels-Dato	Foreldrenes Navn og bopæl	Om øglet eller født	Om øglet eller født	Om øglet eller født	Om øglet eller født
36.	9/3	Apr. 2	Nicol Johan Lauritz	Nicol Johan Lauritz, Mikkelens Hustru & Høst. Christine Jensen, Lise, Høsting 1861.	Nicol Johan Lauritz, Mikkelens Hustru & Høst. Christine Jensen, Lise, Høsting 1861.	1865	1864	Geordby, H. Lauritz, Mikkel, Høsting 1865.	1865	1864	Geordby, H. Lauritz, Mikkel, Høsting 1865.
37.	Kr. 1865	1865	Rasmus Lauritz Lauritz	Carl. Ole Lauritz, Andreas, Peder, Høst. Marie, Høsting 1865.	Carl. Ole Lauritz, Andreas, Peder, Høst. Marie, Høsting 1865.	1865	1865	Høsting 1865.	1865	1865	Høsting 1865.
38.	1865	1865	Anders Lauritz	Høsting 1865.	Høsting 1865.	1865	1865	Høsting 1865.	1865	1865	Høsting 1865.

1900 Norwegian Census

Digitalarkivet: 1900-telling for 1501 Ålesund. [117658/42]

Retur til dataene: RHD

Post 748 av 757/12568 totalt i databasen

By	Husliste	Kretsnr	Gatenavn	Våningshus	UBebodd	Etasje	Beboelse		
748	Ålesund	14	23	Ystenæs	Vaaningshus	n	1	4	
	HusholdNo	Fornavn	Etternavn	Kjønn	Bosatt	Familiestilling	Sivilstand	Yrke	Fødselsår Fødested
12507	1	Ole	Pettersen	m	b	hf	g	Bryggearbeider Huseier	40
12508		Ingeborg	Pettersen	k	b	hm	g	Hustru	48 Hjørungfjord Rom
12509		Anton	Pettersen	m	b	s	ug	Fisker Søn	83
12510		Rasmus	Pettersen	m	b	s	ug	Søn	87
12511		Olivie	Pettersen	k	b	d	ug	Datter	85
12512	1	Anton	Pedersen	m	b	hf	g	Fisker	35
12513		Marie	Pedersen	k	b	hm	g	Hustru	36
12514		Olai	Pedersen	m	b	s	ug	Fisker Søn	80
12515	1	Peder	Olsen	m	b	hf	g	Sjømand	76
12516		Barbara	Olsen	k	b	hm	g	Hustru	80
12517	1	Knut	Leite	m	b	hf	g	Fisker	62 Skodje Rom
12518		Jakobine	Leite	k	b	hm	g	Hustru	66 Borgund Søndmør Rom
12519		Tholleif	Leite	m	b	s	ug	Søn	97
	HusholdNo	Fornavn	Etternavn	Kjønn	Bosatt	Familiestilling	Sivilstand	Yrke	Fødselsår Fødested

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Rasmus Ystenes ♣ Documents

Aerial Photos showing the Ålesund area of Norway.

