

Jørgen Johnsen Hesja "George" Johnson

Marriage 1833/1834 - George Johnson(Hesja) and Oline A. Johannesdatter Nordboe

In the summer of 1834 six families sold their farms and moved to Illinois, according to a contemporary letter. Four were those of Andrew Dahl, Gudmund Haugas, George Johnson, and Jacob Anderson (SLogvig).

When J. Nordboe was contemplating his move to Missouri in late April, he wrote of the economic position of his son-in-law, the Sloop, George Johnson. Our daughter will remain here. They have done well, have 330 acres, have worked on it for two and one-half years, and paid |150 for the farm. If he would sell his farm now, he could get \$1400 to \$1500. They have two pair of oxen, three cows, six sheep, many swine, four geese and a great many chickens. Last year they got a son, a sound and healthy one [Joseph Johnson].

Two Fox River Sloopers lost their wives and remarried during this period — George Johnson(Hesja) and Gudmund Haugas. Oline Johnson died in 1814.6? and left four children: Joseph, 11; Caroline, 8; Elias, 5; and John W. She was probably buried on George's farm, near the southwest corner, on a plot which was later known as the Classon Cemetery. After her death, with four small children to care for, it is not surprising that George soon remarried. On a trip to Wisconsin he had become acquainted with a lone immigrant girl, Malene Nelsdatter Eie, and on April 4, 1847 they were married. On December 29 of the same year they were blessed with a daughter, also named Oline.

On July 29, George Johnson was summoned. In addition to being a farmer, he was also a cabinet maker and a lay preacher of the Haugean persuasion. He was preparing to go to a church service in the morning when he said he too was getting the cholera. He had been helping with cholera burials. Before nightfall he was dead, — a man only 40 years old. He left his second wife, Malinda, their child Oline, not yet 2; and four children from his first wife.

Cholera victims were not carried far. George Johnson was buried in a cemetery on his own land. After George Johnson's death, his Slooper friends and other neighbors looked after the affairs of the estate. The statement of his death filed in Ottawa was witnessed by Peter Nelson, Nels Nelson and Benjamin Fleming. Ovee Rosdail signed the bond, dated Oct. 22, 1849 to be responsible for the property, On Nov. 17, 1849 there was a public sale with Ovee as Cryer (auctioneer) and Rasmus Olson as Clerk. One sale bill was dated Oct. 19, 1850.

After George Johnson's death, John Nordboe came from Texas to take the four oldest children down to their grandparents. The widow, Malinda Johnson (Malene Nelsdatter Eie), and Oline, her only child by George, remained on the farm following the sale. But on April 2, 1853 she married Michael Olson and moved to where he was breaking prairie near Newark, Illinois.

The trip by the older Johnson children to Texas was made in no less company than that of pathfinder, Kleng Peerson. He had only recently returned from Texas, possibly with John Nordboe, and was chock full of stories of that wonderland. He said land could be bought in Dallas County, Texas, with as deep and as black a soil as that of Illinois for fifty cents per acre and he told the truth. He persuaded Ole Canuteson and his father Knud to make the trip south, and thus the party consisted of five adults (Ole had acquired a wife) and four children. The latter were Joseph Johnson, 15, Caroline, 13, Elias, 9, and John W., 6.

The group took a boat on the Illinois-Michigan Canal from Ottawa to LaSalle and then west by river steamer to St. Louis and New Orleans. Here two other Norwegians joined the party and they took another steamer back up stream to the Red River and thence up that to Shreveport. Here they secured a wagon to haul the baggage and the Johnson children to Greenwood, about sixteen miles; and there rented a house in which to leave Ole Canuteson's wife and the children. The four men then walked the remaining one hundred seventy five miles to Dallas, which then consisted of only a few houses along the river. John Nordboe hitched a yoke of large oxen to a light wagon and went back after its. Ganuteson and the Johnson children, arriving in Dallas about Christmas.



John and Permelia
Reynolds Johnson