



Benrud...Because We're Family

Hilsen, familie!

Greetings, Benrud Family,

Happy holidays to you! As another year comes to a close, we have a lot to be grateful for. Our Benrud family continues to grow and prosper across two continents, numerous states, and down through multiple generations. While this year has been full of uncertainty and natural upheaval across the world, our family roots remain in tact and our traditions continue to be celebrated.

For those family members who have passed on this year, we remember them fondly and celebrate their impact. We will carry on the traditions that they so dearly loved...from making sandbakkles at Christmas time, to running the Benrud Family Live Auction. We salute our dear ones that we've lost, but give thanks for the wonderful time we did have with them. Their legacy lives on through us, and through our family traditions.

As you read the article "Preparing to Leave", you'll have a new found appreciation for the roots we have established and all of the work and toil that went into the perilous journey that our ancestors embarked upon over a century ago. Enjoy our yearly newsletter as you sit down with a delicious piece of buttered lefse by the fire...maybe even enjoy a little bit of aquavit to keep you warm...if you're brave!

We are grateful for your continued support and celebration of our beloved traditions this holiday season.

Skal!

Kris MacDonald
Olava Branch

Officers and Directors

PAST PRESIDENT

Iris Othrow
2455 Hillpoint Road
McFarland, WI 53558
608-698-0277
IrisOthrow@aol.com

PRESIDENT

Carolyn Swanson
3907 Idaho Avenue N
Crystal, MN 55427
763-533-1070 (Home)
763-300-9325 (Cell)
cswanson@repgroupinc.com

VICE PRESIDENT USA

Diane Piper
302 Eagle Avenue
Rockland, WI 54653
608-487-1993
dianepiper4@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT CANADA

Douglas Olson
1407 21 Street NW
Calgary, AB T2N 2M1
403-686-1665 (Home)
403-651-4824 (Cell)
doug.olson@shaw.ca

SECRETARY

Jan Strand
6781 County 23 Blvd
Kenyon, MN 54667
507-789-6633
farmalto@yahoo.com

BENRUD READER EDITOR

Kristine MacDonald
569 Moultrie Street
San Francisco, CA, 94110
715-891-7604
krisleemacd@gmail.com

TREASURER

Paul Benrud
3072 Wendt Way
Sun Prairie, WI 53590
608-837-9880
Benrud@frontier.com

FAMILY CHAPLIN

Edith Roberts
1829 Markham Drive
Bethlehem, PA 18017
610-882-0418
Ebr50@aol.com

FAMILY TREE

Julie Backus
891 N Roadrunner Road
Apache Junction, AZ 85119
414-745-4362
jewelsdi@yahoo.com

Chris Backus

216 3rd Ave NW
Pacific, WA 98047
316-305-2469
Chris.backus@use.startmail.com

ASSISTANT HISTORIAN

Marie Marin
9030 Blumenstein
Woodruff, WI 54568
715-356-9453
mcpmdcm65@yahoo.com

ANTON HISTORIAN

Linda Othrow
2455 Hillpoint Road
McFarland, WI 53558
608-838-3388 (Home)
608-770-8145 (Cell)
lindie123057@yahoo.com

HEAD MAREN HISTORIAN

Greg Olson
291 Driftwood Street
West Salem, WI 54669
608-526-4734
greg.olson15@yahoo.com

ASSISTANT CARL HISTORIAN

Vacant

ASSISTANT LENA HISTORIAN

Vacant

ASSISTANT OLAVA HISTORIAN

Vacant

BENRUD WEB PAGE

Dan Kobler
2325 Humbolt
Denver, CO 80205
303-725-5141
dan@dankobler.com

ANTON BRANCH DIRECTOR

Kameo Maynard
2054 W Clark Avenue, Apt. 26
Galesville, WI 54630
608-865-1247
krmaynard75@gmail.com

LENA BRANCH DIRECTOR

Manita Murphy
1207 240th St.
Algona, IA 50511
515-320-2091
murphyconst@gmail.com

Hayley Koeritz

116 1/2 West Main Street
LuVerne, MN 56156
hayley.koeritz@gmail.com

CARL BRANCH DIRECTORS

Erik Benrud
2704 South Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
267-294-8359
erikecon@gmail.com

Jan Strand

6781 County 23 Blvd.
Kenyon, MN 55946
507-789-6633
farmalto@yahoo.net

OLAVA BRANCH DIRECTOR

Kaia Lee Seefeldt
6020 Pinewood Lane
Minnetonka, MN 55345
612-201-7377
Hiyakaia@mac.com

Paula O'Keefe

1004 Lakeview Drive
Burnsville, MN 55337
612-750-0591
pcokeefe@comcast.net

MAREN BRANCH DIRECTORS

Gay Gilbertson

1815 Plante Street
Eau Claire, WI 54703
715-579-1141 (Home)
715-835-3578 (Cell)
gilbegay@gmail.com

Marianne Vevang Groeland

569 Adams Street
Burlington, WI 53015
847-815-7608
mgroeland2003@yahoo.com



Benrud Vision Statement

The members of the Benrud Family foster traditions of family, heritage, and culture.

Benrud Mission Statement

The Benrud Family will provide opportunities for members to maintain contact with one another, to learn about the culture common to all of them, and to gather in celebration of their family heritage.

Check Out the Benrud Family Web Site

Go to www.benrudfamily.org to find your family history, past Benrud Readers, photos and more.



2020 Reunion Planning Is Underway

The Benrud Family Board of Directors met Saturday, July 28, 2017 at Pettibone Resort in LaCrosse, WI to plan our next reunion. The dates have been set for **July 31 - August 2, 2020**, at the AmeriInn Hotel & Conference Center Riverfront in La Crosse, WI. Mark your calendars!!



Blast from the Past

"IOWA, MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN COUSINS"

Norwegian immigrants, Olava Benrud Lee (b. 1856) and husband Joseph Lee (b. 1847), farmed for over 50 years near Portland, Wisconsin, just west of the village of Cashton. With daily chores and a large family, life was full and vacations were rare. However, on several occasions, the Lees boarded the train at nearby Sparta for visits to Olava's sister Lena Anderson in Northern Iowa, and her brother Carl in Eastern Minnesota.

Stella (b. 1897), youngest of the Lee children, always treasured the good memories of those visits in the early 1900s when she was 10 years old. It was a major adventure to journey so far to see her mother's relatives. In Ventura, Iowa, Stella met the Lena branch Anderson cousins: Conrad, Matilda, Elmer, Clara, Emma and more. In Goodhue, Minnesota, she met the Carl Benrud family: Gust, Hannah, Ole, Kenneth, and Mina among others. They established life-long relationships by sending colorful one-cent post cards, a popular fashion of the day, visiting each other and sharing their Nordic heritage.

It was through such early ties that the Benrud Reunion tradition was established in 1950 by Charles Benrud (b. 1921 in Minnesota). We thank our ancestors for helping us to preserve our Scandinavian culture.



Photo taken in Goodhue, Minnesota
Circa 1917
1st cousins:
Kenneth Benrud
Mina Benrud
Stella Lee



Reverse side of postcard:
1909 Conrad Anderson, Ventura, IA
To Stella Lee, Cashton, WI

A Story from the Lena Branch
by Haley Koeritz

As part of her high school English course, Hayley Koeritz was given a writing assignment called a boast. She was to purposefully brag about one of her skills, using an Old English writing style and a very large vocabulary. The topic of her boast? Lefse making!

During the 2010 Benrud reunion, Hayley's mom, Heidi, read this boast for the Lena Branch portion of the evenings entertainment. It is reprinted here for your enjoyment.

Give ear to my words, ye members of the Clan of Benrud! I am Hayley, eldest and most favored child of Sir Thomas of the House of Koeritz and Lady Heidi of the House of Halverson. I am descended from the lutfisk-lovers of old who dwelled in the land of the fjords, home of the Vikings. It was from these people that I ascertained my artistry.

A deftness almost disregarded, but not absolutely. For I have conquered their craft and have reached a level of superiority and have become the supreme lefse culinarian in the hamlet of Northrop, state of Minnesota.

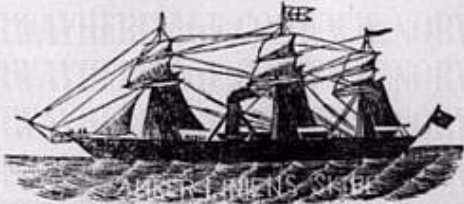
It has taken years to perfect my passion for the potato bread of the north. I have trained long and hard, working through sweat and pain, to be able to accomplish this task. With the sheer strength of my massive biceps I am able to squeeze the lifeblood out of the mammoth tubers, using a weapon so powerful that it strikes fear into the hearts of those who witness this horrendous act. I have dubbed this armament potato ricer. This is only the beginning of my battle, for I must then wrestle the bovine in order to extract the sweet content of its mammary glands. I use this liquid cream to pour over the beaten corpse of what were once the tubers. Everything is crushed, smashed, and pulverized so that all that remains is a mass of mush. I then watch with delight as this formless mass which I have thus created is shut away in its dark bleak prison known as a bowl to await its end.

When this cooling period has passed, I delicately sprinkle in the powder of the gods known as wheat flour. I then tear it apart with my fantastically dexterous fingers, forming perfectly spherical conglobates. I then use my cylindrical club known as a rolling pin and, with all my might, compress and oblate it until it is a circular disk thin as parchment. Then with my magic and most trusted staff I lift it onto my fiery, torrid, and scorching grill. I observe with the utmost attention the rise and fall of the seemingly sprightly spuds, but alas they are scorched by the heat and are dead; lifeless, motionless.

I am Hayley, slayer of spuds, sovereign of smashing, supreme Scandinavian of the settlement of Northrop!

Hayley has since graduated from Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska, and is currently living in Northrop, MN and working at Ad Manufacturing in Fairmont as a graphic designer. She and Paul Luther, were wed on July 1st 2017. *See the photo of the Norwegian wedding cake under the Lena Branch section.

Den billigste og korteste Vej til Amerika.



Indskrivning af Emigranter til alle Steder i de Forenede Stater i Amerika og Canada med **Aufserliniens** velansættede, store, bekvemmelige og hurtigsejlende Dampskibe, som afgaar hver Uge fra Christiania ved første aadent Vand via Leith og Glasgow til New-York. Telt følger hele Veien til Chikago. Emigranter behøve at henvende sig til Underkancellen, hvor nærmere Oplysning erholdes og Indskrivning naaerlemest foregaar til billige Fragtpriser.
P. A. Lindberg, Samar,
autoriseret Agent.

Preparing to Leave

The *Christiane* in 1851- A few of our neighbors had emigrated here to America and they wrote long and glorious letters home to their friends describing the privileges and with what ease a poor man could provide for himself and family here in America compared to what he could in the old country. So, the question of emigrating to America was a subject that was agitated and talked of a great deal all over the country, and early in the spring of 1851, quite a crowd had decided to go and my father was one of them.

Notice of an auction was stuck up and at the appointed day, we sold everything we had and the 12th of May was the day filed when we should leave our old home. The day set for our departure finally came, and web that is, five of us in all: father, mother, my two sisters and myself had to bid our friends and relations a long farewell, and we started for Drammen, a city on the seacoast where we arrived the next day.

The time of which I speak, 1851, was before steamboats were built large enough to cross the Atlantic, so, consequently, sailing vessels were the only conveyance used in those days for so long a voyage. As the wind was so very uncertain a power to propel a ship, its speed and the time it would take to make a trip from Norway to America could not with any certainty be estimated, and for that reason we stayed in Drammen about a week and laid in a supply of provisions enough to last about three months, so that we should not be in want in case of contrary wind and weather.

The vessel in which we were to sail was a three-master brig large enough to accommodate 251 passengers. (She was probably rigged as a ship in 1851 as she is described as a ship in an announcement in 1858.) This number had now registered from here and there all over the country and they were getting their baggage and stuff aboard the vessel and stored away, making everything ready for the journey, so that May 18 A.D. 1851, the anchor was hauled in, the sails were spread, and we glided down the Fjord of Drammen into the North Sea and left old Norway behind until at last it looked like a dim cloud in the distance.

The tall mountains of Norway were scarcely out of sight before men, women and children began to hunt their berths. The pain of parting with relations and friends and their dear old home on top of a very severe attack of seasickness was more than the most of them could stand. The intention of our captain was to sail through the English Channel, but then about half way across the North Sea, the wind turned square against us, so we turned to the right and went through by the Shetland Islands and sailed half way around England and Ireland.

April 1859- The time came when we had to leave our home. That was in April 1859 that we left our home where we had lived for six or seven years. We went first by boat across lake Mjosen and then from Gjovik to Drobak, from there, on railroad to Christiania. Arrived there the same evening and got lodging for the night in an old dilapidated building. There we had to sleep as best we could. There were no beds, but we were glad we could rest some way. The men had to stay awake and watch the family and baggage. We stayed there, I believe, for three days waiting to get aboard the ship. The name of the ship was *Nordlyset* and the captains name was Hansen.

April 8, 1861- We left our home to leave for America. It was indeed a terrible day to leave our poor parents and the rest of the family and our childhood home which we loved so much. In our thoughts we knew that we would never see them again, but the decision was made. With hearts filled with sorrow and an almost empty pocketbook, we started to walk to Skien, a town about 75 miles away. At that time of the year in several places, we had to walk in snow and water up to the knees or as deep as two or three feet. After three days, we arrived in Skien and boarded the ship *Mapily* (*Maple Leaf*). The Captains name was Lunemark (Funnemark). He was conscientious and a good man and did his best to help all of us. On April 18 the ship left at 7:00 in the morning with 600 people on board. Then we saw the last of Telemarken as we passed the town of Langesund and sailed away by a northeast wind. All sails were set and soon we were in the open ocean, and at sunset we also lost the small islands along the coast which I doubt I will see again.

1861- The morning we left Troo, we saw only Asle Nygard and an old woman who came to take care of his cows, besides Ole Troo, fathers brother, but many dear ones had come before to say goodbye. There was sorrow in leaving. It may have been hard for Mother to leave many nice things behind, although she did bring some. She brought a large and a small copper kettle and a big copper coffee pot, a huge box of food, and various supplies plus a big chest of clothes. The spinning wheel was taken apart and placed at the bottom of the chest. Father hired two men each with a horse and wagon to bring us and our belongings all the way to Drammen which took many days. It was 18 Norwegian miles (7 American miles to every Norwegian mile). When we finally got there, we rented a room where we baked more flatbread and went out to buy rice, peas and milk. We had to bring enough food for the whole summer in case we were becalmed for some time, but at least we were ready.

July 4, 1864- Iver Halvorson, his wife Anne Guldbrandsdatter, and their seven sons set sail aboard the *Norden* en route to North America. The family left the comforts of their Norwegian farm to embark on a new life. While in Drammen, boarding the emigrant ship *Norden*, the Halvorsons ten-month-old son, Iver, was killed. No records remain describing how the child was killed, but the accident was probably a result of being crushed by either the hundreds of people or their belongings being boarded on the ship. The baby was buried at sea right in the port before the ship set sail.

May 1865- They are now ready to leave Norway. Their household goods have been sold. The trunks and chests were packed with the only possessions they had in this world. Food for their entire journey had to be provided to last a period of three to four months for two adults and five children, the oldest less than seven and the youngest only a year old. There were boxes or chests of bread and flatbrod, casks of salted fish cod, herring and halibut others with salt pork, beef and mutton, boxes of cheese, butter, flour, sugar, salt and all the other spices that would be needed. Then there were trunks of clothing, American Chests, they were called. All the clothing, not only for the journey, but for all their needs until more could be made, axes, saws, planes and chisels, hoes and spades bedding, thread, needles, yarn, medicine, innumerable articles needed to establish homes in the new land. Last, but not least, the Bible, the hymn book and a Book of Family Devotions.

April 8, 1867- As a lad, John O. Tansem operated a ferry on Lake Mjosa. He married in the year 1865 and on April 8, 1867, left their old home with Ole Lynnes and Nicolai Julsrud and arrived in Christiania at 11:00 a.m. the same day. There they took lodging with a merchant and stayed until 3:00 p.m. April 10. Then they went aboard the said ship *Olaf* which lay ready to depart with a load of emigrants for America. At 7:00 in the afternoon, we hoisted anchor but lay still till the morning of the 12th when we sailed with full sails out of port. However, this did not last longer than we could well look back on the town.

Then we ran into a headwind and this lasted until Monday morning the 15th of April. Then we had a good wind and sailed with good speed past Drobak and Kavholman and before 9:00 p.m. we left Ferder and came out in the North Sea. The 20th of April we were by Scotland and there we fished so we had fresh fish for Easter Eve. On April 21 which was Easter Sunday we left the North Sea and headed out into the Atlantic Ocean. After than we did not see land until the 20th of May.

The following is a list of provisions printed by Det Norske Udvandringsselskap in Christiania in the 1870s. These provisions were intended to be adequate for an adult for up to ten weeks:

70 pounds hard bread (or the equivalent in soft bread or flatbread)

8 pounds of butter
bushel dried peas
24 pounds of meat
bushel pearl barley
10 pounds of sidepork
3 pounds coffee
1 small keg of herring
3 pounds sugar
8/3 Td. Potatoes
20 pounds rye and barley flour
2 pounds syrup

Quantities of salt, pepper, vinegar and onions

Continue

Of course, each passenger may take along the type of provisions desired as long as they are adequate for 10 weeks (pound=454 grams; Td.=ton=keg).

The emigrants were also advised to take along equipment, such as a water pail (the size according to the needs of each family, about 3 quarts a day per person), cooking pot, coffee kettle and dishes and eating utensils. They had to prepare their own food on the ships galleys placed up on deck. Often there were no more than a couple of these to be shared by all the passengers. The lines for preparing food could easily become long when there were several hundred passengers. There are reports about ships where some passengers never made it to the stoves, it was a matter of the survival of the fittest.

Daily rations of wood and water were included in the price of the ticket. The emigrants on board the sail ships were completely dependent on wind and weather. If the weather was bad, the journey could take much longer than anticipated. There were several occasions when the emigrants ran out of food and water before they arrived in port.

1866 (written by a second mate) When we were ready at Portsmouth (England), we sailed for Cadiz with a load of freight and then took a load of salt to Bergen. There we loaded some freight and made ready to take emigrants to Quebec. The middle deck was altered to take care of this. A floor was installed, bunks were built fore and aft, each to accommodate three people. On each side of the ship, a private toilet with room for one was provided. A wooden board trough emptied from this into the ocean.

A compartment was constructed of boards and equipped with three small stoves for cooking. A large water tank was built in an under deck. A considerable amount of stove wood and some coal was taken on ship. Whether passengers or the ship underwrote this cost, I never learned, but I did understand a passenger paid only 15 specie dollar (one spd equaled a little more than an American dollar) for passage. We normally had three boats (life), a large boat and a pram in case of bad luck. On this occasion, an extra boat was obtained, but had we been forced to leave ship, there was not enough room for all.

The ship had nothing to do with provisions. Each passenger or family provided their own which were individually prepared when needed. Three pieces of wood and three small pots of water were issued each day per passenger, and I remember a large cask of water stood on deck for drinking. This was rationed and I was responsible for this. Provisions carried by the passengers consisted of flatbread, dried and smoked beef, cheese of various kinds, coffee and some had large pans of milk that became quite sour as the trip progressed.

I do not remember the number of emigrants (235 souls on board), but all the bunks were filled. Most of these people came from Hallingdal or Valdres. They boarded the evening before Easter and we were scheduled to sail the next morning. When morning came, many of the ships crew were missing and the captain went to Bergen police and demanded his men be arrested and brought aboard. The police chief decided it would be poor policy to arrest anyone on a holy day, and advised him to send out the mate in search. So when the captain returned, I was ordered to go out and bring the men aboard as quickly as possible.

I walked the streets in hopes of seeing them with no luck. There was a dance hall named *Westindien* near the ship. I found the establishment and after pounding on the door for some time, it opened and a lady carrying a broom appeared with a demand to know what warranted this noise and fuss on the morning of a holy day. I told her of hunting members of the ship's crew and described them as best I could. We do not hold house for drunken sailors, she said. Our guests are from better people, officials, preachers and such. If you are looking for sailors, you will likely find them in the knotbetangenb (fine-speaking house of ill fame), and she slammed the door. I had heard of this place but had no idea as to location and kept wandering around until I met a policeman to whom the predicament was explained. It made me happy to learn that he had seen the men within the last hour, that they were slightly inebriated but were heading for the ship.

On my return there was another unhappy situation aboard the ship. Several of the emigrants had brandy with them and during the wait had begun drinking. Some had more than they could handle, were staggering around deck offering drinks. The captain took quick effective action regarding this. All brandy was confiscated and placed in a sail compartment from where it was dished out frugally. The owner could have one dram a day, except in event of illness. There was not a great deal of brandy amongst the passengers and the captain took the position that the sooner it was consumed the sooner the trouble would end. Stomach ache was considerable those first few days but seemed to end when the brandy was gone. We prepared to sail. Passengers belongings were placed under the middle deck except what was needed in daily living.



Peterson Family Farm 150th Celebration Cashton, Wisconsin

(Olava Lee Branch)

By Peter and Pat Peterson

The once-in-a-lifetime event is over, but the memories linger on. There were 97 people who attended the 150th celebration of the Halvor and Bendikka Peterson Family Farm on July 15th, 2017 at Cashton, Wisconsin. Chuck Johnsons two Belgian horses, Rock and Red, and our resident cat, Callie (who was anti-social and hid during the afternoon) were added to the count to make an even 100!

It was a special time of visiting and reconnecting with the relatives and friends and coming to the land and soil where family roots run deep. Naomi Flugstad Bekkum represented the third generation. There were fourth, fifth,

and sixth generation members present. Representatives from the Clara, Hans Peter, Otila and Henry families attended.

Activities included horse-drawn wagon rides provided by Chuck, antique tractor driving and rides, the planting of 15 emerald arborvitae trees, the ringing of the dinner bell 150 times and refreshments. A walk through the Peterson woods and nature preserve, a visit at North Coon Prairie Lutheran church and cemetery, and dinner at Old Towne Inn in Westby followed.

A book containing history, stories and pictures of the farm and family life was distributed, many photos were taken and wonderful memories were shared. Fifty copies of the book were distributed; one per family and more are being printed. Copies will be available for \$ 20 each. Please email your orders/requests to: petersonpetepat@gmail.com.

David Christensen presented the family with his artistic rendition of a family tree with the eleven branches of Halvor and Bendikka's children.

On August 8th, at the Wisconsin State Fair in Milwaukee, WI, we received recognition and the sesquicentennial award for the Peterson family farm. Our cousins, Sue Christensen Sujecki and her brothers, David and John Christensen, represented the Peterson family at the awards ceremony.

At the Cashton Fall Festival on Sunday, September 10th, there are plans to enter a Peterson family float in the parade. Any of the Peterson family members are invited to return to Cashton to ride in the parade or drive one of the antique tractors! Please contact Peter Peterson for more information: petersonpetepat@gmail.com

Family members came from Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, and California. Some who could not attend called or sent greetings. Thanks to all who attended and for helping make the day a memorable event!

Mange Tusen Takk and Soli Deo Gloria

(Many thousand thanks and Glory to God alone)

Peter and Pat Peterson



Laura Miller, daughter of Beth and Mark Miller, was employed by President Obama at the White House. This is after the November election 2016. From left: Mark and Beth, Pres. Obama, Laura and her brother, Ryan.

A New Journey: A Benrud in the White House

Laura Miller (from the Lena Branch) completed an internship at the White House last year. Read about her experience below!

WHS Graduate Winds Down Career with Obama Administration
By Sandy Kucharski

A passion for politics sparked by two internships led to a 5-year path to the White House for Laura Miller, a 2007 graduate of Woodstock High School. Currently the Director of Online Engagement in the Office of Digital Strategy, she started out working for Jack Franks while she was a senior in high school.

A friend and WHS classmate Patrick Oakford encouraged her to join him as an intern for Frank's office, giving Miller her first exposure to the political arena.

While attending the University of Illinois, where she majored in advertising, she applied for a White House internship. On graduation day, she received a phone call offering her the internship, an offer that completely changed the direction of her life. In August of 2011, she headed to Washington, D.C., for the program re-election that lasted from August to early January 2012. When the internship ended, she moved to Chicago to work on the Obama for America re-election campaign. After a month as an unpaid volunteer, she landed a full-time position working on Barack Obama's re-election campaign digital team.

Job duties included program management - coordinating between the fundraising and email campaigns - as well as digital content editing. Miller said, "I was using my advertising degree, but instead of working for various clients, my client was the president."

In the final stretch of the campaign she wanted to experience a battleground state, so she headed off to Colorado, spending the last 50 days traveling throughout the state. Her job came to a successful end Nov. 6, 2012, as Obama won re-election.

Feeling like her business there wasn't finished, Miller moved back to Washington, where she took a position with Edelman, a top public relations firm. However, she said she quickly realized that she wanted to be back with the administration, working for the larger good.

Developed a deep passion for workforce issues, she said, inspired by her involvement with the Lead on Leave campaign for the Secretary of Labor Tom Perez. The campaign focused on issues that affect women and families in the 21st century workplace, including paid leave.

After two years, she joined the White House in her current role as director of online engagement where she works with a small team running social media for the White House. Their primary objective is to create avenues for the president to engage with people online and ways for the public to connect with the president.

Among many firsts, Miller said Obama is the first president to utilize social media, including utilizing a White House Facebook messenger app that her team recently initiated, allowing Americans to connect with President Obama more directly.

As Obama enters the final months of his presidency, Miller said, "This is the last haul."

Her job also includes working with the First Lady. She recently assisted with the launch of Michelle Obama's Snapchat account and traveled with the First Lady and her staff to Liberia, Morocco and Spain, producing behind-the-scenes digital content for the Let Girls Learn initiative, an engaging way for young people to follow Michelle Obama's trip to bring awareness of the more than 62 million girls around the world who aren't in school.

One of her many memorable encounters was in October 2011 when the 1985 Chicago Bears players visited the White House. Their visit was cancelled 25 years before, due to the Space Shuttle Challenger tragedy. As a diehard Bears fan, she was thrilled to have the opportunity to interview several of the players during their visit.

In another random encounter, she was walking around the West Wing and passed Stevie Wonder in the hall.

As a political appointee, Miller's job will come to an end in January when a new presidential administration will take over.

Reflecting back on almost five years in Washington, she said, "This is obviously something I really enjoyed doing. It wasn't always the most glamorous job, but I found an appreciation for it ... It's going to be bittersweet when it's over."

Interestingly her former classmate, Patrick Oakford, also found his way to Washington, D.C., where he currently works in the Department of Labor.

Looking ahead to what's next, she expressed how influenced she was by her work with the Department of Labor, where she developed a passion for empowering women in the workforce.

D.C.'s my home now, but I'm pretty open to possibilities, she said. But first, I look forward to catching up on sleep.



A Note to the Cousins

Hello Cousins ! The project to make a list of homes/farms of Benrud first cousins continues to move forward. Thank you, Manita Murphy, for adding so much information of the Anderson Branch! Virginia Torkelson Hilden & I also enjoyed a tour of the Lee homes in Cashton last June. Look on the Benrud Family website: <http://benrudfamily.org>. As information becomes available it will be posted by Dan Kobler (our webmaster) either under each Branch or in a separate area. You may also contribute burial sites, too. If you can add information or make a correction, please send me an email: mcpmdcm65@yahoo.com. This will be an ongoing project to be finished before the 2020 reunion. A reminder - the first cousins generation are the children of Maren/ Carl, Lena / Lars, Anton/Maria & Julia, Olava/Joseph & Carl/Gina. What fun they must have had in the early years as they came together for picnics!

News from the Anton Branch

Eldon Rumppe died 2/25/2015.

Kristin Abanto (granddaughter of Lillian Rumppe) married to Dustin Michael Abanto on May 4, 2013, then had a daughter, Penelope Snow Abanto, on June 5, 2015. 2nd child due in March 2018.

Lillian Rumppe celebrated her 91st birthday on 9/7/17

Ryan Harris, (son of Donna Harris and Jack Pierce) graduated from Dunwoody Technical College in May 2017, with a degree in Automation Repair.



Mike and Iris Othrow celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in July 2017



My little branch of the Benrud Tree lost another member this summer. My grandfather, James (Jim) Benrud of Melrose, WI passed away on July 15, 2017. Jim was a very active member of the Benrud family. He was on the Benrud Board for approximately 10 years. He was very proud of his heritage and loved to share with anyone.
- Kameo Maynard

Elvina Lucille Sjovold, daughter of Ella Benrud Johnson celebrated her 100th birthday April 9, 2017 in Saskatchewan. She is blessed with good health. She still walks up to two miles per day with her walker which she contributes to her longevity.





On January 2, 2017, the Benrud Family lost a very special member. My uncle, Curt Benrud of Owen, WI (pictured above) passed away at his home. Curt had a passion for everything family! He was an active member of the Benrud Family Board, past-Board president, and Director of the Anton Branch. Curt also played a very important role in getting the Benrud Chapel from its former home in Sparta to its current home of Norskedalen in Coon Valley, WI.

Anyone attending the reunions could see Curt jumping from one area to another to make sure things were running as scheduled, ensuring everyone was enjoying themselves and simply just visiting with the family.

Curt's enthusiasm and excitement for the next reunion always astounded and intrigued me. It was that energy that encouraged me to join the Board as a Director of the Anton Branch with my uncle by my side. I know I have some very large shoes to fill and will do my best to make him proud. Curt's legacy in the Benrud Family will never be forgotten.

-Kameo Maynard

News from the Maren Branch



David Peterson turned 80 on January 28th! Happy (belated) birthday!

News from the Lena Branch



Matthew and Julia Studer were married on April 16, 2016, in Portland, Oregon. Julia is a seamstress/designer and owns her own boutique and Matt is completing a physician's assistant program.



Hayley Koeritz, daughter of Tom and Heidi Koeritz and granddaughter of Luverne and Arlys Halverson, was married to Paul Luther on July 1st, 2017, in Truman, MN. Since both the bride and groom still maintain claim to their Norwegian heritage, the mother of the bride offered to supply a traditional Kransekake for the reception. Heidi had attended the Kransekake class at the 2015 reunion, led by Karrie Aaseby. She purchased the rings and with Karrie's recipe in hand, she made a trial run on her first Norwegian wedding cake back in February. To everyone's surprise, the cake turned out beautifully and wasn't even lopsided! Afraid she wouldn't be able to repeat this little miracle, Heidi wrapped it up in many layers of plastic wrap and foil, cleared a large space in the freezer, and hoped for the best come July 1st. It turned out to be a beautiful addition to a beautiful day!



News from the Carl Branch

Carl Benrud update

Elli Hope Swanson was born July 26, 2017 to Matt and Stacey Swanson of Severn, MD. Elli is the granddaughter of Wayne and Carolyn (Benrud) Swanson and the great-granddaughter of Evelyn Benrud and the late Carl Benrud.

Updates Needed

In the last year many of your children have grown up and moved to their own places. Be sure we have their addresses.

Also, new babies have been born and others in our family have died, we need your information to keep accurate records.

In our age of technology e-mail addresses are an important addition. Please e-mail jewelsdi@yahoo.com with your e-mail address or changes.

Please use the form below or the form on our web site (www.benrudfamily.org) to send
new information and changes only to:

Julie Backus
414-745-4362
891 N. Roadrunner Road
Apache Junction, AZ 85119



Family Tree Update Form

Family Branch (circle one): Maren, Olava, Lena, Carl, Anton

Name _____
First Middle Maiden Last

Address _____
City State or Province Zip or Postal Code Country

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Occupation/Hobby _____

Marital Status (Circle one) Single, Married, Divorced, Widow, Widower

Marriage/Divorce _____
(Circle One) Name of Spouse Birth date of Spouse Date of Marriage
or Divorce

Birth/
Adoption _____ Name
of child Location of birth Date of Birth and adoption

Death _____
Name Date Burial Location Cause of death

Give full names, including maiden name and dates, place of birth, cause of death, location of burial, complete data on new spouses and children, and any other information that will make your family records more complete. **Also, send obituaries and other news printed information to Julie.**

Optional Additional Historical Information

This can include Baptism date and location, Confirmation date and location, Retired from and date, Education, Schools attended and graduation dates, Church affiliation, Social organizations, Civic involvement, Volunteer activities, Professional organizations, and Accomplishments, and anything else of interest



BENRUD READER
891 N. Roadrunner Road
Apache Junction, AZ 85119