



Tell Us Your Story

Sue Burgess

I was born in a small town of 1500 in northeastern Iowa, and lived in Postville until the age of 13. My Great Grandfather, Carl Holter lived there from age 25 until the age of 93. Carl was born in 1847 in Christiana, Norway into a farming family. His father died when Carl was 13 so he had to work. He worked in a grocery store and a hat store, before coming to Chicago in his early twenties. From Chicago he moved to Memphis, Tenn, where he worked in a bakery before moving permanently to Postville.

Why he chose Postville, I am not sure, but many Norwegians moved to northeastern Iowa in the 1800s. Carl was fortunate to have studied English in Norway so that he had an advantage over many other emigrants. How much education he had I am not certain.

In order to earn a living, he worked on a farm for a few years, then in a general store. Later he and a partner started a clothing store and Carl eventually was the sole owner. During his business life he aided in the organization of a bank and for 12 years he served as a member of the "city" council.



My Great Grandmother Holter was the daughter of a farmer who was also a Baptist circuit rider. Grandmother Mary received an education at the Wilton Seminary (college) and taught school for 10 years before her marriage. She was forced to retire as teachers were not allowed to be married in Postville until the 1950s. After raising their family, they retired in Long Beach, Ca. where Great Grandmother died. Carl returned to Postville to live with his daughter and her family until he died in 1940.

Photo: Sue's Great Grandfather, Carl Holter

