

Kelson Family

Kristian Ingemann Kjeldsen (Kelson)

- Kristian Ingemann Kjeldsen was born on July 22nd, 1901 in Golstrup, Denmark.
- His parents were farmers and millers who supplied flour throughout their district.
- He had three brothers.
- At age 22, Ingeman (as he was known) left Copenhagen, Denmark aboard the *Athenia*, arriving in Canada at Halifax's Pier 21 in May 1923.
- On the travel document he signed coming into Canada, he listed his current occupation as "farm labourer" and stated that in Canada, he intended to work in "farming". At the time, Canadian immigration was restricted to agriculturalists, farm labourers and domestic servants.
- His surname, Kjeldsen, was Anglicized in Canada to "Kelson".
- Arriving with the required immigrant \$25 cash, he indicated he had paid for his own passage, and was using the Canadian National Railway (CNR) to reach his friend Jens Jensen, in "Borks" [Burks] near North Bay, Ontario.
- After three years in Canada, Ingeman sailed back to Denmark in June 1926.
- Just over a year later, on September 11th, 1927, he returned to Canada as a "Canadian Government Returnee" aboard the *United States*. His destination was Copper Cliff, Ontario, to be a "farm labourer".
- Sometime during the middle of a cold winter of 1928, the hardy, self-reliant Ingeman arrived in Hudson and then walked to Red Lake.
- There on the shores of Howey Bay, he built a beautiful log cabin and later established a logging and sawmill operation.
- In the summer of 1928, he again crossed the Atlantic Ocean, arriving in Denmark in July 1928.
- A month later, on August 31st, he married his sweetheart Kristine Sidse Hansine.
- When Ingeman returned to Canada with his new wife, this time his travel document listed him as a "landed immigrant" with his current and intended occupation as "miner" returning "home" with his bride to Red Lake.
- After Kristine's death in 1954, Ingeman eventually remarried. His second wife's name was Arlene Isabel Ames.
- Ingeman died in 1977.

Kristine Sidse Hansine Kelson (nee Hansen)

- Kristine Sidse Hansine was born in Thorslunde, Denmark on April 18th, 1898.
- She had three brothers, Lars, Hans and Jens.
- She graduated from Roskilde High School in Roskilde, Denmark on May 31, 1919.
- Kristine arrived in Canada in September 1928, one month after she and Ingeman were married.
- In June 1930, Kristine made the long voyage back to Denmark to give birth to their daughter Inga – determined that the baby be born "a true Dane".
- She was one of the Red Lake community's first non-Aboriginal women.
- She worked at Viking Island Camp in the 1950s.
- After an agonizing terminal battle with gastric cancer, Kristine died in 1954.

The Couple

- Ingeman and Kristine were married on August 31st, 1928 in her hometown of Thorslunde, Denmark.
- They returned to Canada on board the *S.S. United States*, arriving at Pier 21 in Halifax on September 27th, 1928, and continued their Canadian journey by train on the CNR.
- By 1930, Ingeman and Kristine were expecting their first child, Inga.
- As Red Lake's first Danish family, the Kelsons cheerfully withstood the rigors of living in a rough, developing frontier community. Depending on the season, the Kelsons travelled on foot, by dog team, canoe, boat, barge and/or snowshoes.

Kelson's Farm

- In 1933 and 1934, Ingeman began to develop the land which became later known as "Kelson's Farm".
- He was granted permission by Howey Gold Mines Limited to clear the land for use as a fire strip and paid them a small annual tax for use of the land.
- After trying gardening and a small sawmill on the property, he let the land go to pasture land.
- Over the years, several district pioneers lived on Kelson's land, beginning with Jean "John" Gomez to whom Ingeman first sold the property in 1952 after coming to the conclusion that it was not profitable for him.
- Gomez built a house across the bay where he lived a simple life, selling eggs and other produce for several years.
- In the 1950s, Gomez sold 61 acres of the land to Olga and Claud "Paddy" Wilson, who took up residence in an old cabin on the lake shore. For years, Olga grew a beautiful flower garden and bountiful vegetable garden.
- The property was then purchased by Kenneth McDougall, followed by the Ontario Housing Corporation and the Municipality of Red Lake.
- The Kelsons' daughter, Inga, was proud that the family's former pasture, Kelson's Farm, continued to retain its name, even when it became a beautiful subdivision of Red Lake.

Children

Inga Frances Maua Dawson (nee Kelson)

- Inga Francis Kelson was born August 27th, 1930 in Roskilde, the former medieval capital of Denmark not far from Copenhagen.
- Inga was christened in the majestic Roskilde Cathedral, the sepulchral church of the Danish Royal Family (all the kings and queens are buried here), now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- At three months old and accompanied by her mother Kristine aboard the *United States*, Inga made her first voyage across the Atlantic.
- During the crossing, the ship ran into a ferocious North Sea storm and was bounced around like a cork. Years later, Inga recalled that her mother had said some port holes popped open and water had run down the halls. Kristine had been violently ill during the entire voyage, while Inga had slept contently in a basket.
- They arrived in Halifax on December 13th and continued by train to Hudson, then Red Lake, where Inga became one of the pioneer immigrant children.
- From an early age, Inga learned to hunt, fish and command a boat.
- A fluent speaker of English, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian, Inga was always observant and keen to hear the old-timers' stories.
- She had an encyclopedic mind and incredible faculty for recalling in detail the history of Red Lake and its pioneers. To Inga, this skill was simply the result of both her and the community growing up together.
- Although Inga started her elementary education at Madsen Public School, she completed it at the Red Lake Public School. She went on to become one of the earliest graduates of the Red Lake Continuation [High] School.
- Inga participated in school plays and sports, loved attending parties and dances, and was crowned "Miss Red Lake" and later, "Red Lake Curling Queen".
- Inga worked in Red Lake as a telephone exchange operator first for Hasaga Gold Mines and later, Norwesto Communications as well as selling airline tickets.
- Looking back years later, she laughed when she recalled the relaxed atmosphere surrounding locally-produced gold. One story she tells is about the taxi driver who picked up the gold bricks at the mines and brought them to Inga for safekeeping until the bricks could be flown out on the next available aircraft – she simply stashed the bricks under the counter and went about her work.
- In the 1950s, Inga became a nursing assistant and clerk-typist at the Red Lake Red Cross Memorial Hospital. With considerable organization and management skills, she kept track of the physicians, nurses, staff and patients.

- When a young Estonian immigrant named Vello Maua came to work at Red Lake, it was not long before Inga and he fell in love.
- They married in the Anglican Church – her bridesmaid being Mae Gustafson (Yakiwchuk) – and had the reception in June 1954 at her parent's home at 37 Hammell Road (later the home of Enda Mae Aiken).
- The same year that Inga gained a husband, she unfortunately also lost her mother Kristine.
- In 1961, Inga and Vello's son Karl was born in Red Lake.
- When Vello began working as an electrician at Campbell Red Lake Mines, the Mauas moved to Balmertown.
- In 1966, they moved to Dryden, where two years later, Inga gave birth to their son Erik.
- After 27 years together, Inga and Vello separated and in 1985, divorced. Six years later (1991), Vello died in Dryden.
- Inga adored her parents and always marveled at their pioneering exploits.
- Pursuing a long-held dream, Inga returned to school and in 1978, graduated with a Registered Nursing Assistant diploma from the Lake of the Woods District Hospital Training Centre in Kenora. She also held First Aid qualification from St. John's Ambulance.
- In addition, Inga was well-known for breeding and showing miniature schnauzer dogs, and for being the owner of Inga's Dog Grooming. Right up until her late sixties, Inga groomed dogs in Dryden, Red Lake and Sioux Lookout.
- Both in Red Lake and in Dryden, Inga was a renowned curler who delighted competing in bonspiels and in making friendships on the ice.
- She was also a skilled crafts person in needlepoint, knitting, crocheting, arts and crafts as well as gardening, cooking, baking and furniture refinishing.
- She was also a long-time member of the Dryden & District Agricultural Society, winning many prizes at their fairs, and was a devoted organizer and judge of the Society's horse shows.
- Inga loathed injustice and compassionately defended the underdog.
- Seemingly incapable of sugarcoating an issue, she was forthright and had firm convictions.
- She had a mischievous sense of humour.
- Back when Inga was 15, her first love had been William "Dyck" Dawson, who had played in a Red Lake band in the mid-1940s. They parted and married others, but fate reunited them in 1981.
- They moved to Vernon, B.C. where they were married in June 1986.
- Bill was a talented artist, musician, composer and champion fiddler and both he and Inga became members of the B.C. Old-Time Fiddlers Association.
- However, Bill passed away in April 1999, one day after his 73rd birthday.
- The following year, Inga moved back to Dryden to be closer to her family.
- She successfully rebuilt her life, focusing her energies on wellness, hobbies and being the consummate grandmother.
- After her initial cancer diagnosis, she was thankful for living another 20 years cancer-free to see her sons grow up, marry and have children, careers and homes of their own.
- Paramount in Inga's life were her four grandchildren: Autumn, Storm, Kelson and Christison. The children basked in her boundless enthusiasm and imaginative play ideas.
- Even while battling cancer-related fatigue in her last years, Inga created forts in her living room, donned "medieval" capes and headgear, and marched to the nearby forest for picnics and dragon hunting-and-slaying sessions. Later, Inga and the boys spent hours researching on the Internet, or crouched over a map, deep in discussion about where various people and animals lived.
- Despite a terminal cancer diagnosis, 76-year old Inga went ahead with a long-planned trip with former area resident Helve Reppo. Unfortunately, they were only a short time in San Andres, Columbia when Inga fell and suffered swelling in her brain.
- After just one day in a South American hospital, Inga summoned the strength through sheer will to board a jet and return to Canada. She was admitted to Dryden Regional Health Centre and died a week later, on February 24th, 2006.
- Honouring her fervent wish, Inga's ashes were buried in her mother's plot in Red Lake Cemetery.
- She often joked that her headstone would read, "Inga Kelson – Made in Red Lake, born in Denmark".