

The Establishment of Tronruds in the United States

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The arrival of the Tronrud family in the United States is an event shrouded in mystery. By the time my father's generation started looking into family history, those people who made the journey were long dead. He (Edwin Tronrud) talked to many people to learn their recollections and what he learned has become the standard version of the story, which has been repeated in books like Mary Edythe Tronrud McCleerey's book *Tronruds of Montana* and Herman Tronrud's book *I've Always been Lucky*. Unfortunately my father didn't write down details of who gave which piece of information so it is difficult to verify the account he reconstructed.

I've been looking into this matter and find that many of the details of the standard story are not consistent with the records I've seen. While I've been able to find practically none of the direct immigration records, I have gleaned information from various censuses, and combined that with information other people have collected from sources in Norway. I've decided the best way to present this story is to tell it, and then later present the sources that support this version. I'm sure there are errors in my version, since some records are inconsistent and I would really like to see direct records from the journey.

But first, some background details.

On Names in Nineteenth Century Norway

At the time of these events people in rural Norway didn't use the same system of names as most of Europe and the United States. They did not use a "family" name. Each person had a personal name (a "first" name), a specification of the person's father's personal name, and the name of the farm they lived on. The center of this story, and an ancestor of nearly all Tronruds in the United States today, was named Anders Christianson Heieren. His personal name was Anders, his father's name was Christian, and he grew up on the farm Heieren. ("Heieren" is pronounced like "high" and the bird "wren".)

Also these Norwegians were rather liberal spellers. They don't seem to have held much of a distinction between "Ch"'s and "K"'s. Sometimes it's "Christian" and other times it's "Kristian". In Norway they had more of a preference for "K" and in the United States "Ch" but you can find either letter in both places.

Another interesting aspect of the names used by the Tronruds born in Norway is their intense reuse of names. One really has to add the name of the father to distinguish between the various Andrews, Antons, Marys, and others. This family in the old country tended to skip generations. Anders' father was named Kristian and he named his first son Kristian. Christ Tronrud (the son) named his first son Andrew, the Americanized version of Anders. This practice appears to have died out quickly in the Wisconsin branch of the Tronruds, but the Montana branch adopted, for the first couple generations, the practice of naming sons after fathers and having a Junior and Senior.

Many of the Norwegians Americanized their names when then moved to the United States. For example, Anders became Andrew, Anton became Tony, Thorvald became Thomas, and Maria became Mary. Actually a lot of names became Mary. I've seen Maria, Mari, and Maren in Norwegian records and they all seem to have become "Mary"s. Mary (Sletten) Tronrud was called Mari while in Norway and her sister was Maria. It must have been confusing.

The Stage

The story of the Tronrud family plays out in the county of Buskerud. Norway is split into a number of districts. They aren't really the same as a county in the United States but I'll call them that anyway. Oslo has its own county (called Oslo of course) but Buskerud is the one just west of that. The "county seat" of Buskerud is at its southern end in the town of Kongsburg. All of the old records of Buskerud have been collected in an archive in Kongsburg called "The Regional State Archives in Kongsberg". (<http://www.arkivverket.no/eng/The-National-Archives/Kongsberg>)

Norway does not have the separation of church and state that the US has. The local form of government is not a township but a parish. Each parish was centered on the oldest church in the area and in Norway that church could easily be a thousand years old. People went to the church to record births, marriages and deaths.

The three parishes in which the last generation of Tronruds in Norway lived are Norderhov, Modem and Sigdal. In the years since, Norderhov has been merged into Ringerike. These parishes are shown in Fig. 1. This map also shows the general location of a number of the farms which enter the story.

Norwegian Events

I'll start the story with Kristian Syversen Heieren. This fellow owned the farm Heieren which was (and is) located in the Sogna river valley west of the town of Hønefoss. Hønefoss is located at the joining of several river valleys on the north end of the lake Tyrifjorden. It is about 35 miles northwest of Oslo. (At that time Oslo was going by the name Christiania (Kristiania).) The Sogna river is a fast moving river that starts in the mountains and flows, generally, southeast. The valley is a couple miles wide with rolling farm fields and steep forested walls. During the ice age the glacier scraped the valley bare to the granite bedrock. This hard rock is now covered with a thin layer of soil.

Kristian was born in the year 1792. In 1814, when he was 22 years old, he married Kirsti Andersdatter Drolshammer. She had grown up several miles

170. 1818. *Født Mandlion.*

No.	Nar og Datum.	Barnets fulde Navn.	Daabs Datum: en-ten i Kir-ken eller hjemme.	Forældrenes Navn, Stand, Høandtering og Boepæl.	Faddernes Navn, Stand og Opboldessted.	Hvor anført i det almin-delige Jevn-førelses-Register.	Anmærkninger.
59	Marts 28	Anders	Juni 21	Gns. Christian Syveresen Heieren og Kirsti Heieren	Gns. Jens Drolshammer, 2 ^{de} Niels Heieren, 2 ^{de} Mark Drolshammer, 2 ^{de} Anne Heieren, 2 ^{de} Margit Heieren, 2 ^{de} Hans Heieren		Engelbroskede bise: 64.

Figure 2: Birth Record of Anders Christiansen Heieren.

upstream of Heieren on the farm named (of course) Drolshammer.

Their first son was born in 1816 and was named Syver Christiansen Heieren (after Kristian's father) and their second son was born on March eighteenth of 1818 and named Anders Christiansen Heieren (after Kirsti's father). Anders' status as second son was his problem. Syver would inherit Heieren and Anders needed a home. In his early twenties Anders moved to the Sigdal parish and farmed in the Simoa river valley.

On November 25, 1842 Anders married Ingeborg Andersdatter Hilsen. The marriage registration (Fig. 3) shows that Anders lived in Sigdal and Ingeborg in Modem. Since Anders was still going by the name Heieren he didn't own the farm he worked. He was either renting or was a hired hand. Their first son (Christian) was born (if the date I have is correct.) thirteen days after the marriage. The 1865 census says that this child was born in Modem and not Sigdal. This implies that after the marriage Ingeborg remained home on Hilsen for the birth.

Their second son (Andreas, known as Andrew in the US) was born in 1846 in Norderhov. This implies that the family had purchased the farm Tronerud and became Tronerud. Tronerud (or as it is now named on the Norweigan maps, Tronrud) is just a mile or so further upstream from Drolshammer. Anders became a neighbor of his grandfather, the man he was named after.

451. 1872

C o p u l e r e d e.

No.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	No.
16.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	
	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	
	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	

C o p u l e r e d e.

No.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	No.
	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	
	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Brudgommens Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	Bruders Navn, Alder, Haandtering og Ejendomsstod.	

Figure 3: Marriage Registration of Anders and Ingebor.

According the 1865 Norwegian census their family included nine kids – seven sons and two daughters. In the table I’ve listed the Norwegian census information for these children alongside what we know of the Tronruds who came to the United States. The alignment is good enough to prove that this Norwegian family is the right one.

Census Birth Year	Norwegian Name	US Name	Known Birthday
1843	Christian	Christ	December 8, 1842
1845	Andreas	Andrew	February 24, 1846
1847	Petter		
1850	Ole		
1852	Thorvald	Tom	1853
1855	Edvard	Edward	October 1856
1857	Anton	Anton/Tony	1858
1859	Karine	Karine/Careno	1859
1860	Maren		
		Clara	?
		Caroline	?

(“Census birth years” are often off by one year in either direction. A census usually has the age of a person and the calculation of their birth year differs if their birthday occurred before the day of the census or after.)

There are three points to note about this list. First, Christ was born 13 days after his parents’ wedding day. Either Scandinavians were quite liberal at the time, or these dates are not entirely reliable. Please remember that most of these bith dates come from recollections recorded many years after the fact.

Second, there are three children in the 1865 Norwegian census who show up nowhere in US records or recollections. There will be some hints about Petter and Maren later, but Ole is a complete mystery.

Finally, there are two daughters of Anders and Ingebor who are remembered in the US, Clara and Caroline, but are not listed in the Norwegian census. I can’t explain why. The children that are listed come in a regular spacing of about two years, leaving no room for kids to have been born and moved away before the census. Of course, Clara and Caroline have been big

mysteries to everyone and I have seen no record of their existence in the US, only stories about them. It's possible that their memory does not reflect blood relatives, but close friends of the family that died long before the birth of those people who passed the stories down to us.

Christ married Anna Jonsdatter Rolfstøvern in 1868 and I'm unaware of any other marriages in this group while they were still in Norway. Rolfstøvern was located another three and a half miles upstream from Tronrud.

The 1865 census shows Anna's family as well.

Census Birth Year	Norwegian Name	US Name	Known Birthday
1818	John Olsen		
1821	Kirsti Pedersdatter		
1847	Ole Johnsen		
1849	Anne Johnsdatter	Anne	1850
1856	Petter Johnsen		
1859	Karen Johnsdatter		
1862	Johnas Johnsen	John	Dec 1862
1787	Kirsti Torstinsdatter		

Kirsti Torstinsdatter appears to be the mother of either John or his wife Kirsti Pedersdatter. At the time of the census, Ole Johnsen was the head of the household and John was his helper – Pretty good for an 18 year old.

In the US I've always seen the name as "Stovern" but the proper name of the farm in Norway is "Rolfstøvern". You have to get the spelling right to find records in Norway.

The Troneruds eventually decided to move to America. We do not have any record of why they made this decision, but there are a number of reasonable possibilities. First, following the end of the Civil War and the return of peace there were enormous opportunities in America and many Norwegians at that time were moving to take advantage of them. Second, the Anders children had the same problem Anders had when he was starting out: Only one son could inherit Tronerud, and there were now seven.

The third possibility is a story related by Edwin Tronrud, who probably heard it from Inez (Kraemer) Tronrud who lived for quite a few years with her father-in-law, Andrew Tronrud, in Montana. Norway was a part of Sweden

in the 1800's and Sweden drafted young men into their army. Life was not good for Norwegians in the Swedish army, so this family with seven sons decided to leave the country rather than serve.

Moving to America

This period of the family's history is the most confusing. None of the dates given by the available sources seem to agree with each other, and only one primary record has been found. Two of the best sources are the 1900 and 1910 censuses in which people were asked what year they came to the US, however these censuses were recorded many years after the fact and the questions may not have been answered by the most knowledgeable person in the household.

Andrew was the first to go, leaving Norway in 1869. Christ and Anna, along with Petter, left on July 13, 1870 (see Fig 4). Anders left in 1872, and Edward and Anton left in 1880. Tom shared Andrew's interest in mining and may have came early with him (He would have been 19 years old when Andrew left). Anton came around-about 1880 and after a short stint in Menomonie left to work in the mines in Butte City (Montana) with Andrew and Tom. I don't know when Ingebor came because she died before the 1900 census, the first to ask for immigration dates. In 1880 she lived in Menomonie and two of her sons, who just came over, lived with her. I have no idea what happened to the others, or why Petter didn't end up in Wisconsin with Christ and Anna. Petter seems to have simply disappeared.

Around 1885 Anna's brother Johnas came to the US and bought a farm about a mile and a half upstream from Christ and Anna's farm on Vance Creek. John Stovern is the root ancestor of the Stoverns in the area.

What these people did in their early years in the US is unknown. Hard facts show that Menomonie, Wisconsin was an important staging ground for the family. Everyone we know spent time there in the 1870's. Unfortunately the courthouse later burned down and all government records were destroyed.

The 1880 census provides a great deal of information about the family at this time. It shows that Andrew was living with Tom in Butte City, both working as miners. Edward and Anton were living in Menomonie with their mother Ingebor, with Edward working as a bartender and Anton in a sawmill.

Christ and Anna were living in the Vance Creek valley near Prairie Farm,

1882

Udflyttede (ogsaa Døen). 1870

No.	Opgiven Datum.	Navn.	Alder.	Til hvad Eieb.
31	13 Juli	Kristian Tronrud	26 1/2	Kort: Amerika
32	~	Anna Tronrud	20 1/2	
33	~	Petter Tronrud	21	

Figure 4: Emigration Record of Christian, Anna and Petter Tronrud.

This record shows that Kristian, Anna and Petter all left town on the same day. No one else left with them that day. I'm told the word in front of Petter's name says that he was unmarried. The word before Kristian's name says that he was indigent. They were all heading for Amerika! This record was found at the Regional State Archives in Kongsberg, Norway.

Wisconsin. With them was the beginning of their family, Andrew, Caroline, John and Inga. Christ's father, Anders was also living there. Up to this time, Christ's family was living in a small log cabin, but space was getting tight. In 1880 he built the large log house that he lived in for the rest of his life. My father believed that Anders was staying there to help build that house. It stood for a hundred years, but was only occupied until 1940. After that it was called the "haunted house".

Staying with Christ and Anna was a 20 year old woman named Otelia Heieren, who was listed as a servant. I believe this was Edward's fiance, staying 30 miles away for propriety's sake. On October 30, 1880 Edward married Otelia and moved to a farm next to Christ's farm on Vance Creek. Their marriage registration, found at the Dunn County Courthouse in Menomonie, shows that Otelia's father was Syvert Kristianson - Anders' brother! Edward and Otelia were first cousins. Such marriages were legal at that time, but became illegal in Wisconsin sometime before 1951. (I have a copies of the 1911 and 1951 Wisconsin State Statutes.) They may have lived long enough to see marriages like theirs made illegal – how would that have felt?

On May 15th, 1881 Andrew married Mary Sletten. Even though Andrew lived in Montana, they came all the way to Menomonie to get married, and then returned to Butte City. Tom and Edward were the witnesses, which means that Tom came to Wisconsin for the marriage ceremony too. I believe this was the first time that the entire family was together since Andrew left Norway 12 years before and I doubt they ever got together again after that.

The Wisconsin Tronruds

In all later years there has been the "Wisconsin Tronruds" and the "Montana Tronruds". Every Wisconsin Tronrud I know of is a descendant of Christ and Anna Tronrud. Those two were prodigious at producing children, with four sons and four daughters that lived to adulthood, and four who died young and are hard to identify today. The children who lived were Andrew, Caroline Strand, John, Inga Landskov, Ole, Peter, Mary Amundson, and Alma Erickson/Anderson/Diffendaffer/Peters. Alma was born when Anna was 46 years old. With the exception of Caroline, these children lived their lives very close to the Vance Creek area. Christ and Anna are buried in the Akers Cemetery west of Prairie Farm and just north of the Vance Creek



Figure 5: Photo of Christ and Anna Tronrud taken around 1880.

This is a copy of a photo from the collection of Herman Tronrud, but he did not have the original. I have seen other copies of this photo in other collections, but I've never seen the original.

Valley.

Vance Creek is a small river that flows from west to east and drains into the North Fork of Hay River just south of Prairie Farm. Its valley is about a half mile wide with steep walls. It had been logged early on so the flat and well watered land was available for purchase by farmers who wanted to clear the White Pine stumps. The tiny creek is only a few miles long and begins from many springs just to the west of Christ and Anna's farm. Near their log cabin the river is only three to four feet wide but surprisingly deep. Prairie Farm was one of the largest towns in Baron County in the 1870's and was a center of the logging industry.

I don't know much about the crops grown by Christ and Anna, but this was before dairy was the dominate industry in Wisconsin. Surprisingly enough, the stories my father heard centered on tobacco! He also mentioned that Christ grew wheat.

The Montana Tronruds

Andrew and Mary founded the Montana Tronruds. Andrew and Tom had been working in the mines in Butte City for years and somehow Andrew met Mary. She had just come to the United States around 1880. The story is that she came to visit her brothers who were also miners. Andrew and Mary traveled to Wisconsin, along with Tom, and were married on May 15th, 1881. It was a big family reunion.

They lived their first years of marriage in Butte, but then bought a ranch near Melville, Montana, twenty miles or so north of Big Timber. While the ranch dominated the lives of Mary and the children, Andrew still loved the mining life. When times on the ranch were slow he would travel north to work in the town of Castle which was near a number of silver and lead mines.

The Homestead Act allowed one to claim 160 acres of land to farm, but 160 acres could not support a ranch in Montana. Many of the original stakeholders in Melville could not make a go of it, but Andrew could make extra money by working in the mining towns – building and blacksmithing – and was able to buy up the neighboring land. Eventually this land was divided up among the four sons. Two of these ranches are still operated by Tronruds.

Andrew and Mary had five sons and four daughters. Their children were



Figure 6: Photos of Andrew and Mary Tronrud

These photos came from the collection of Duane and Diane Tronrud. The signature was scanned from his naturalization paper.

Adolph, Caroline Schallock, Amelia Bennett, Clara Monroe, Anton, Petra Martin, George, Morris, and Victor. Many of them, along with Andrew and Mary, are buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Big Timber, Montana.

The Other Wisconsin Tronruds

Edward and Otelia also settled in Vance Creek and they appear to have left no descendants – But they did. They had seven children, however only one male, Almer Carl Tronrud, lived to adulthood and he never married. All of the members of this branch of the Tronrud clan have family names other than Tronrud. The names of the daughters were Minnie, Thilda, Sofie, Anne, Ovidia, and Nettie.

I think it must have been hard running a Wisconsin farm at the end of the nineteenth century with only one son. The 1900 census is interesting because Minnie Tronrud shows up twice. She is listed on the farm in Vance Creek, but there is another Minnie Tronrud of the same age working in St. Paul, Minnesota. Seventeen years old seems young to be on your own in the big city in 1900. The 1905 Minnesota census shows that the third sister, Sophie, followed Minnie. She was 15 years old, but was living in Minneapolis and working as a stenographer.

These girls found husbands, changed their names, and can no longer be recognized. My best lead is that the youngest daughter Nettie married Anton Peterson and lived in Minnesota and later in Clear Lake, Wisconsin. She died there on May 6th 1976 and is buried along with her husband in the West Akers Cemetery, just south of Vance Creek. Their children mostly lived in Minnesota.

Anders and Ingebor lived with Edward's family until they died in 1906 and 1890, respectively.

Sometime around 1920 Edward, Otelia, and Almer left their Vance Creek farm and moved to Amery, Wisconsin. Edward and Otelia died in 1935 and Almer died in 1973. They are buried next to each other in the Amery Cemetery.



Figure 7: Photo of Anton Tronrud

This photo came from the collection of Duane and Diane Tronrud. The signature was scanned from his naturalization paper.

The Mining Brothers

Tom and Anton appear to have stuck with mining and never married. The family lore is that they eventually went north during the Klondike gold rush. The last record I have found is that they both became American citizens in October of 1894 in Butte City Montana. (The same year Andrew became a citizen. This was a popular year for naturalization in Montana.) The Klondike gold rush started in 1897. Anton, at least, returned to Montana and was living with Andrew and Mary on their ranch according to the 1910 census. He died on December 18th 1915 and I do not know where he is buried.

I have no record of Tom after a listing of his name in the Butte City directory in 1895.

One of the accounts of the Tronruds coming to America mentions that Mike Barbo came with them as he was married to Clara Tronrud. We understand she died of diphtheria in Wisconsin and is buried there. Early on Mike Barbo came to Montana and homesteaded about 2 miles north of Andrew Tronrud. My grandpa said that a few years later Caroline, Andrew's other sister came to Montana to visit. She had a child with her and she kept house for Mike Barbo for a while and then left again and left the child with Mike. They assumed she went back to Wisconsin but were not sure. She never did return and there seems to be no accurate record of where she went or when she died. The child stayed with Mike and grew up, was married and had a ranch on the Boulder River south of Big Timber. His name was Severt Breck. When Mike died in 1916, according to courthouse records in Big Timber, Severt Breck took care of funeral arrangements and he was buried in the Breck lot in Big Timber. When Severt died the records show Mike Barbo as his father and his mother unknown.

Figure 8: Excerpt from *Tronruds of Montana*, page 4

This story was written by Mary Edythe (Tronrud) McCleerey daughter of Adolph son of Andrew son of Anders. While she lived in the same house as Andrew, she was about seven years old when he died.

The Girls

The text in Fig 8 is the only record I have of the lives of Clara and Caroline. Since Andrew died when Mary Edythe was so young she probably learned this information, second-hand, from her father Adolph, who was born long after these events. Mike Barbo also died before Mary Edythe was born.

This story has one major problem – there is no mention of Clara and Caroline in any records. Andrew, himself, had daughters named “Clara” and “Caroline” and Christ had a daughter named “Caroline” and since these two named so many of their children after siblings it does seem likely that they had sisters with these names. The 1865 Norwegian census says otherwise.

Mary Edythe said that Clara Barbo died in Menomonie, Wi. There is no death records in Dunn County prior to 1880 since the courthouse burned down around 1880 and all government records were lost. There are burial records for the cemeteries around Menomonie and there is no mention of Clara Barbo.

Mike Barbo clearly existed, however. He homesteaded a ranch near Andrew and Mary in Montana and was bought out by Andrew when his efforts

Date of Death	NAME OF DECEASED	Date of Burial	Disease or Cause of Death	AGE			RESIDENCE	Married
				Year	Mos.	Days		
1876		11/12/76	lung fever	2	27		Menom.	
July 10	Careno Barbo	July 12	Lung Fever	17				

EVERGREEN CEMETERY, MENOMONIE, WIS.						
WHERE BORN	FATHER'S NAME	His Nationality	MOTHER'S NAME	Her Nationality	Lot	WHERE BURIED
Norway	And Tronrud	Norw	Engberta	Norw		17 Row 107

Figure 9: Record of the burial of Careno Barbo in the Evergreen Cemetery in Menomonie, Wi.

proved futile. He worked at times in Butte City and patented an invention (patent #847,720, Oct 3, 1906) while living there. He died on October 6th 1916 and is buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Big Timber.

There is, however, a burial record (Fig. 9) for a young woman named Careno Barbo. The father of this unfortunate young woman was “And Tronrud” and her mother was “Engberta”, not far from “Ingebor”. Since she was seventeen in the year 1876 she must have been born around 1859.

“Careno Barbo” is a pretty good match for the “Karine Tronrud” from the 1865 census. I’m pretty sure that the person lying in the unmarked grave in row 1, lot 7, in the Evergreen Cemetery is my long lost great-great aunt.

The marriage record in Fig. 10 (found by Becky Lewis) shows that the wife of Mike Barbo was also called “Karine” and matches well the daughter of Anders and Ingebor Tronrud. She must have come to America in the first half of the 1870’s, got married at 16 years old and died of “lung fever” (some respiratory disease that progressed to pneumonia) about eight months later. Mike was twice her age and lived until he was 75 but he never married again.

There are still many questions about this relationship and the life of Mike Barboe. He was born in Norway and came to the US in his early twenties. When he married the daughter of Anders in 1875 he was about 34. How could he have met a 16 year old girl in Menomonie? Did he meet Andrew and Tom in Butte City and learn of her through them, or had he lived in Menomonie all along and only went to Montana after becoming a widower?

Finally there is the matter of Caroline and the child she left with Mike.

Registration of Marriages.
02531

1. Date of Registration.....	Dec. 15, 75
2. The color.....	White
3. Full name of husband.....	Mikkel And. Barbo
4. Full name of wife previous to marriage.....	Berthe Karine Thronrud
5. Occupation of said husband.....	Common Laborer
6. Residence of said husband.....	Menomonie Wis
7. Birthplace of said husband.....	Norway
8. The place, town or township, and county where the marriage was contracted.....	Menomonie
9. Time when the marriage was contracted.....	Nov. 21, 1875
10. By what ceremony contracted.....	Clerical
11. Name of person pronouncing marriage.....	G. Hoyme
12. Residence of person last named.....	Menomonie
13. Names of subscribing witnesses.....	P. Solberg & Andrew Barbo J. B. Katsalke
14. Date of certificate of marriage.....	Nov. 27, 1875
15. Name of the father of said husband.....	Anders Oleen Barbo
16. Name of the mother of said husband.....	Karin Siverson
17. Name of the father of said wife.....	Anders Thronrud
18. Name of the mother of said wife.....	Ingeberg

Figure 10: Marriage registration for Karine Tronrud and Mikkel Barbo.

The handwriting on this record is particularly poor and the spelling is a wonder as well. "Tronrud" is spelled as "Thronrud" which I've seen elsewhere. Karine is given the first name "Berthe" – I don't know why, but given that she's marrying Mike and her parents are Anders and Ingeberg Tronrud I'm confident that this is our girl. Becky Lewis located this record and gave me a copy.

Mike did spend much of his life ranching with Severt Breck and his family, and is buried in the Breck family lot in the Mountain View Cemetery in Big Timber. Severt's tombstone says that he was born in 1868 (apparently in Norway). Becky Lewis located the birth record for Severt Bræk at the National Archive in Trondheim, Norway that shows that he was the illegitimate son of Mickel Andersen Bæbu. All the details line up with our Mike Barbo.

The Trondheim archive also holds Severt Bræk's emigration record. In 1886, when he turned 18, he left Norway for the town of Calfax, Dakota (There was only one at the time.). Eventually he met up with Mike Barbo and Mike worked on Sivert's ranch in Montana.

While Karine seems to be pretty well sorted out, assuming that her name had been misremembered as "Clara" by later Montana Tronrud members, the matters of Caroline and Maren remain. There is no record, anywhere, that indicates that Anders and Ingebor ever had a daughter named Caroline. There is hope, however, that we can resolve the fate of Maren.

In my father's (Edwin Tronrud) writings he retells the story that Christ and Anna had two children in Norway. One was a daughter named Maren who died at sea while traveling across the Atlantic. This story is quite doubtful since Christ and Anna left Norway less than two years after their marriage. Could this, instead, be a distorted memory of Maren the sister of Christ? If she was traveling to America at the same time as Karine she would have been a young teenager, old enough to be expected to make the passage without being a great burden on her parents. How tragic to have lost both daughters in the space of a few years.

Resources

The Norwegian Historical Data Centre has a web site that allows you to search the 1865 and 1900 Norwegian censuses at <https://www.rhd.uit.no/indexeng.html>. The 1865 record for the Anders Christiansen Tronerud family can be found at https://www.rhd.uit.no/folketellinger/ftliste_e.aspx?ft=1865&knr=0613&kenr=009&bnr=0106&lnr=000

The trick to finding the Norwegian census record for Anna Stovern is adding the prefix “Ralfe” to “Stovern” and getting the “ø” in the name. The John Olsen Rolfestøvern family can be found at https://www.rhd.uit.no/folketellinger/ftliste_e.aspx?ft=1865&knr=0613&kenr=009&bnr=0091&lnr=000

The Syver Christiansen Heieren family can be found at https://www.rhd.uit.no/folketellinger/ftliste_e.aspx?ft=1865&knr=0613&kenr=008&bnr=0124&lnr=000

For US history, my father Edwin Tronrud wrote up the stories he learned from talking to many people, as well as an interesting description of his time in the Army Air Corps during WWII. This book was xeroxed and distributed to close family members but never formally published. For those interested, I can provide a copy that include annotations I have made.

My uncle Herman Tronrud’s book *I’ve Always been Lucky* contains a great many recollections of this grandson of Christ and Anna. My aunt Alice Newville wrote a book named *The Twentieth Century – My Part* but she focuses mostly on her life and not these earlier events.

A huge amount of information about the Montana Tronruds was collected by Mary Edythe Tronrud McCleerey (granddaughter of Andrew and Mary Tronrud) and published in *Tronruds of Montana*.

Acknowledgements

This tale is based on the work of many people. My father, Edwin Tronrud, did a great deal of work talking to as many relatives as he could in the 1960’s, 1970’s, and 1980’s. His writings are the best records of those recollections. I have also talked with my uncle, Herman Tronrud, whose memories were invaluable. Information about Mike Barbo and Severt Breck was supplied by Becky Lewis, a descendant of both. I have supplemented this information with secondary sources, such as census records, obituaries, and tombstones. My wife Evelyn has been a great help in finding records on the Internet. Most of these records were found using Ancestry.com, and traveling to cemeteries and archives.