

Background Information

My name is Tyler Tempus, a high school senior at Northwood-Kensett. I was interested in a ghost story that was in the Northwood Anchor, that was written by Ron Olson several years ago. The Anchor often reprints this article at Halloween. I researched the ghost story by getting a copy of the paper that I saw it in. I went to the bridge that the story was about. I found a sign celebrating the state of Iowa's 150th anniversary. The sign said "Swensrud Bridge - Elling Ellingson Swensrud left his cabin across the river to marry Anna Abrahamson in Northwood 1858 - the first recorded marriage in Worth County."

After I took a picture of the sign, I went to the Recorder's Office in the Court House in Northwood. I found the record of the marriage and the background of Elling and Anna Swensrud. Anna died in 1867 and had four children; Edward, Anton, Andrina, and Andrew. Elling soon remarried to Ingeborg Jacobson in 1870. They had ten children; Julia, Tilda, Lena, Martin, Louis, Ella, William, Ida, Emma, and Elmer. Ingeborg died in 1928. Elling Swensrud lived on the north side of the bridge most of his life. He helped build the North Shell Rock church community. From my research I believe the ghost from the Anchor's story is Elling Ellingson Swensrud and this why:

In the story from the Northwood Anchor, published on October 31, 2012, on a moon-lit night in mid-October in 1950, while driving home, Dewayne Roppe saw an odd, old looking fellow with white whiskers driving a team of dapple grey horses across the bridge with no lantern.

When Mr. Roppe saw this, he asked the driver, 'Where are you going? Can you see?'

But the driver of the horse team didn't answer and didn't pay attention to Mr. Roppe at all. But the driver kept saying 'Git up! Git up! Git up!' to his horses.

Mr. Roppe recalls, "But the spookiest thing was what he had in the back of the buckboard. It was a long wooded box, looked kind of like an old casket to me." After a half of a block or so the driver and his team just disappeared.

Mr. Roppe looked into what he just saw by asking his neighbors who live near the bridge if they have ever seen anything like this. They all said no.

From my research I found that Elling Swensrud died on October 2, 1908, Elling lived at his cabin near the bridge until his death, since then no one else has died there. But the main reason I think the ghost is Elling Swensrud is that I found an picture of him that matches description of the ghost given by Mr. Roppe in an 1920 Plate book of Worth county.



Directions to the Bridge from Northwood is go West on Highway 105 for 2 miles to Mallard Avenue and then turn north for 4 miles and the bridge will be on the north side of the road.



Picture of Mr. Elling Swensrud

E. E. SWENSRUD.
Born in Norway, Feb. 13, 1833.
Settled in County, 1855.
Died Oct. 3, 1908.

Paper and research by Tyler Tempus

