

WALTER WILLIAM KALLSEN

Walter was born on Aug 4, 1893 in Big Springs, Ne on the Kallsen homestead where all his brothers and sisters were also born. Walter's birth date is recorded on his death certificate, his WWI and WWII draft cards and in the Social Security Death Index. I do not currently have on file any birth or delayed birth certificates for Walter. Walter and his twin William Walter were the third birth to Henry Kallsen and Anna Roeh Kallsen. William died when he was 7 days old of diarrhea according to Maxine Kallsen Mauser the daughter of Walter and his wife Meta.

In the 1900 census the family is in District 0097 in Big Springs, Deuel County, NE. In the 1910 census the family is in District 0111, in Big Springs. The family occupation is listed as farming.

Maxine Kallsen Mauser shared that school was held in the living room of the Kallsen home and most of the time the teacher stayed at the Kallsen home. When Walter was in 8th grade his oldest sister was the teacher and she started teaching school after graduating from 8th grade. He did not attend High School as there weren't any at that time.

Walter was drafted into service in WWI and served as a Private 1st Class in Company B, 137th Infantry in the US Army. He sailed from the US to France on April 25, 1918. During his service his discharge papers from Deuel County, NE state that he served in Meuse Argonne, Gerardmer and Grange-le-Compte. He was gassed in action on Oct 28, 1918. Maxine Kallsen Mauser notes that he was in the hospital for two weeks because the gas actually caused him to go blind temporarily. Maxine also stated that he wrote home stating that while he was blind all of his nurses were female, but that after his sight was restored the caretakers were all male. Kent Mauser, grandson of Walter, remembers that after the experience in the war, Walter had different dietary needs but doesn't recall exactly what they were other than there were things Walter was advised not to eat after having had his gall bladder removed. There is a letter that Walter wrote to home that was in the newspaper. I don't currently know which newspaper it was published in. In that letter he mentions being in the hospital and that their division started the drive close to Verdun on Sept 26th in which they were on the drive for 6 days



Walter Kallsen as a young man



Walter in his WWI Uniform

and nights without sleeping. A related clipping notes that Otto Mauser was ready for the trip overseas when the armistice was signed and he was returned to the camps where he was looking after the horses and it is reported that “The officers seem to take kindly to the western farm raised boys, like Otto Mauser and George Cruickshanks, who know without being shown which end of the animal to put the crupper on” Walter’s final payment roll from the National Archives show a balance paid of \$118.86 He arrived in the US port on April 23, 1919. His headstone application for Military Veterans lists a Purple Heart under the medals. Sadly most of the Army records from the archives were lost in a fire, so personnel records are also not available. Further research reveals that the purple heart was reinstated in 1932 and WWI soldiers who had been wounded in action with the enemy were eligible. This information was located at va.gov.

(<https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/purple-heart.pdf> accessed Dec 2020)

In 1920, Walter is listed as the Head of Household with his two brothers Carl and Herman living in the same household. They are enumerated in District 0119 in Big Springs. This may be the timeframe that Henry moved into a home in town.

On December 18, 1923 Walter married Meta Johanna Dehning in Pottawattamie, IA according to their marriage record in the Iowa records. When asked how her parents met and why they were married in Iowa Maxine recalled these details. The Kallsen family was living in Big Springs, NE, while the Dehning family was living in Cass County, NE which is the opposite side of the state. Meta’s father Henry Peter Dehning bought land for his sons Henry William Dehning and Eddie Paul Dehning in 1917. Eddie Dehning married Alma Kallsen, Walter’s sister, and the two families became acquainted. Meta would come out to help Alma with the children and got to know Walter well. Maxine noted that they would have interacted at the box social parties in Big Springs. When they were ready to get



Walter and Meta on their wedding day



Walter and Meta Unknown Date

married, Walter got on a train, went out to Cass County, picked up Meta and they decided to get married in Iowa just to “make people talk”. Maxine said that the story around town for a while was that they “had to” get married. However, Maxine as their first child was born in 1925, so Meta and Walter must have had some fun with the rumors.

Maxine Kallsen remembers that as a young girl the men would make beer in the bathtub for the men to drink. She was told that she was not to tell anyone about the beer. Prohibition in the United States was in place from 1920 to 1933, and even home brew was in violation of the law, so being quiet was important.

In the 1930 census the family is recorded in District 0002 in Big Springs, Deuel County, NE. The family is farming. Walter and Meta at this point have two children as well as Walter’s brothers Carl and Herman in their home. They record that they are renting their home and that they own a radio set.

In the 1940 census the family is listed in district 35-9, Park, Garden County, NE. All four of the children are now born, Walter’s brothers are living elsewhere and they state that they are in the same home that they were in in 1935 and that they own the home. Walter records that he attended school through the 6th grade and Meta records that she attended through 8th grade. In this census, they are in a different home location than in prior census enumerations.

Walter loved to fish and his grandson Kent Mauser remembers going fishing with him as a child.

Walter was a lifelong member of the Lutheran Church in Big Springs. The Lutheran church record book I have starts recording births, deaths, confirmations and baptisms in 1910. We don’t in those records have a copy of Walter’s birth or baptism, but we do see his confirmation in 1910 with two of his sisters as well as his funeral record.

Walter died on Nov 19, 1962 after a long illness related to his experience in WWI. He is buried in the Big Springs, NE cemetery.

Walter and Meta had five children

- **Maxine Alma Kallsen (1925 -)**
- **Lorna Mae Kallsen (1926 - 1929)**
 - **Lorna drown in a cistern as a toddler**
- **Irvin Walter Kallsen (1929-1993)**
- **Vern Kallsen (1930-2017)**
- **Gladys Bernice Kallsen (1932-)**



Walter and Meta in Front - Gladys, Irvin, Vern and Maxine in back

META JOHANNA DEHNING



Meta as a young girl

Meta Johanna Dehning was born on May 24, 1900 in Wabash, Cass County, NE the 10th of 11 children born to Johann Heinrich Dehning and Katherine Marie Reichmann. Her birth date is recorded in her Social Security files and in her death certificate. Birth certificates were not required when Meta was born and we don't have a birth certificate or baptismal record at the time of this writing.

Much of Meta's information is listed above with Walter as they were together from the date of their marriage in 1923 until his death in 1962. That was 38 years and 11 months of her life. Meta lived another 29 years and 6 months after Walter's passing.

As mentioned above, Meta lived with her family in Cass County, NE until she was married to Walter. They are enumerated in Wabash and Elmwood in Cass County in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 census. Meta's father was a farmer and was an immigrant from Hanover, Germany. While there she attended the Wabash schools and was confirmed in the Lutheran faith in 1923 according to her obituary. This must have been in Cass County, as the Zion Lutheran Church records in Big Springs, NE do not show her as a confirmand.

Maxine Kallsen Mauser, Meta's daughter, remembers that losing Lorna was very hard on Meta. She stated that her grandmothers stayed with the family for months after Lorna passed and that after the funeral Meta could not stand the smell of roses.

Kent Mauser, Meta's grandson, remembers that Meta was pretty athletic and an active person. He remembers playing "burn out" with Meta where they would throw a baseball back and forth without gloves and see who would last longer, he remembers her winning a lot.

Meta's obituary recounts that she was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, Zion Lutheran Church, Lutheran Women's Missionary League and the Homemakers Club.

Meta was a resident of the Ogallala Nursing home for several years as she wasn't great at cooking for herself and needed additional care. Meta maintained her feisty spirit even at that point. Kent Mauser remembers going to see her with her brother Vern, and taking her out for a beer and a drive around town. She was also



Meta believed to be age 18

on a restricted salt diet while in the nursing home, and would pick up salt shakers off of the tables and put them in her purse. Every so often family would go to visit and return all of the salt shakers she had accumulated to the dining room.

Meta died on June 1, 1992 and is buried in the Big Springs, NE cemetery. This is all recorded in her death certificate, her Find A Grave Record and the Big Springs, NE Zion Lutheran church records.