

The Three Kjersteens

Part I

Let us picture to ourselves a low room 14 x 14 feet. Of course adjoining this room was a small bedroom, a pantry and a staircase leading to a very crude upstairs, this making the whole structure 20 feet long. This was our pioneer home on the edge of the prairie, bordering Skunk river woods.

In the center of this room sat a very, very old grand aunt [Kristi – Kjersteen 2nd] manipulating the spinning wheel. An attempted illumination was given out by a flickering grease lamp. Hard by sat mother [Martha Karina Follinglo Anderson] knitting stockings for her young hopefuls, of which there at that time were three boys [Lars Johan – Lewis], the two first comers lying flat on their stomachs on the floor as close to the spinning wheel as almost to be a nuisance, viewing the mechanism of the spinning wheel and the grand old lady. The third one was crawling around on the floor in close proximity to the trundle bed, which had been drawn out ready to receive the first victim, after the onslaught of the sandman. Father [Ole Andreas Larson Tjernagel], as was becoming a sturdy pioneer, sat and viewed the whole thing with mixed satisfaction and pride.

The hum of the spinning wheel, and the clicking of the knitting needles, we knew was a prelude to what was coming, namely a story of her many experiences, leading up to her finally settling on a small farm in central Iowa. The prelude was repeated, and kept on, as a beautiful accompaniment to the, to us, all-absorbing theme.

Her name was Kjersteen [Also spelled Cherstine]. I take the liberty of calling her Kjersteen the 2nd. We shall now turn back and listen to her telling us about her Grandmother, Kjersteen the 1st [Kristi Pedersdtr Arstad Eltravag].

Away back, over a hundred years ago, on the coast of Scotland, were two dairy maids, two sisters, Kjersteen [Kristi Pedersdtr Arstad Eltravag] and Bertha. Their little cottage was situated in a nook right close to the sea. Their cows were kept on a small island a short distance out from the mainland. It necessarily became their daily chore morning and evening to get into their boat and row out there to do the milking, and to feed the calves. In the winter time the work was more than doubled. They often times took big chances in rowing across in their frail skiff. One evening while out on their island, they became suddenly enveloped by a thick fog. The girls took alarm and made for their boat, knowing from past experiences that such conditions were usually the forerunner of a storm. In their excitement they became confused and lost their sense of direction, or in other words got completely lost in the fog. By the time the fog had cleared away, the poor girls

found themselves in the throes of a fierce storm, drifting lustily away from the shores of Scotland.

What followed for several days and nights we shall have to leave to our imagination, as I can't remember any detailed description of the trip as related by Grand Aunt. I do remember however that she said they were very fortunate in that they had finished their milking and that they had the milk in the boat, in light wooden containers, otherwise they would have starved to death. In short, they drifted clear across the North Sea and landed on the shores of Norway. At that time in Norway, and especially along the craggy shores the people were full of superstition. Therefore when Kjersteen and her sister neared the shore, they were taken for to be some dangerous spirits of some sort, and were met with clubs, boat hooks, etc. for they reasoned like this, how could human beings exist in a little open boat on the North Sea in such weather? Kjersteen, being the oldest and the most resourceful of the two, rose in the boat and made the sign of the cross. This was all the password needed. They were welcomed ashore. The Scottish girls made a solemn vow never to cross the North Sea again. This they lived up to. It was not long before they had mastered the Norwegian language, and had captivated the hearts of some young Vikings, of which a young man from Tjernagel [Andeers Halvardson Tjernagel] was one of the lucky ones. He married Kjersteen.

This couple can show up some over six hundred descendents living in the United States, most of them in our own state of Iowa, according to our secretary's report at our last family reunion. The sister, being that she does not play any part in this particular story, we shall leave most happily married in Bromness, Norway. It behooves us now to enter upon Grand Aunt's activities and achievements. In due order of things, she married a young man by the name of Phillipus Knutson Lio. They raised a family of four children, Maria [2nd Anna Maria Phillops (Lio)], Helga, Knut and Peter. Not until their oldest daughter Maria had married, and left for the golden shore of America, some time in the late forties, did it dawn upon grand aunt and her husband that in order to give their remaining children a fair chance in life, they ought to sell their small possessions and embark for America. While in this suspense, not knowing just what to do, they received a letter from their daughter Maria who was already established in a log cabin at the head of Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin, urging them strongly to come. This decided the all important question. Consequently they made haste to make arrangements for passage on a small sailing vessel that would leave Stavanger, Norway in the spring of 1851. They knew they were facing all kinds of hardships, but the old Viking spirit, and the spirit of the brave Scottish lassies told them to go through with it.

Those early passenger sail ships were very poorly equipped and unsanitary, not to mention cholera infested. Each family, or passenger, had to furnish their own provisions and bedding. The ship was to furnish water, and a free-for-all cook

stove. The time it took as a rule to cross the Atlantic in those days was from six weeks to three months. Gathered on the wharf this particular morning were quite a few ambitious men and women bound for somewhere in the United States. Each would have an interesting story to tell about their adventures in the forests, on the prairies, and on the Great Lakes, of their adopted country, but we shall have to leave them to shift for themselves, and confine ourselves to the Phillops family, who seemed to be endowed more than the average with an adventurous spirit.

There is one character however, and his young wife Madaline [Malene Kristendsdtr Tjernagel Phillops], who cannot be left out of the picture. They played such a prominent part from the very beginning of the great undertaking, and up to the time that our heroine settled in our community, that they are indispensable. His name was Peter Larson Tjernagel. He was always called Big Peter [Store Per] s, owing to his size, and enormous strength. In our narrative we shall call him Peer (a Norwegian abbreviation of the name Peter.) He was grand aunt's nephew, and wherever he happened to be, he was the life of the party. He was an athlete of the highest order, a humorist, a musician, and to crown it all, a man with an even temperament--in short a man that everyone loved that had the privilege of coming into contact with him. As an evidence of this, although it is now sixty-eight years since he was laid to rest in the picturesque pioneer cemetery, his record has been handed down. Old, young and middle-aged are still talking about him.

Peer had his violin with him, and his masterful performance served many a time during the long tedious journey to drive away blues, and melancholia. His Spring Dances, Hallings, and other national dances of that period would lure sulking maidens out of their retreats, grouchy young men brooding over their last attack of sea sickness out of their hiding places, tired men and women from their duties, as well as squirming children, yes they were all cooped out on the deck to do justice to the national dances, which were so liberally and enticingly reaching out towards them from Peer's violin.

At other times his violin would get them started on folk songs. This hit the soft spot of any Norwegian, because who can you find in Norway that doesn't sing? It touched the heart strings and moistened the eyes of the most stoical ones, for it reminded them so forcibly of the beautiful fjords and picturesque landscape left behind never to be seen again by most of them. Sundays were always devoted to worship and offering up thanks to the good Lord for having preserved them up to this time, and praying for His merciful guidance during the rest of their journey. The good substantial old Lutheran hymns were made to resound with more than equal fervor to the folk songs of the previous day.

In this manner they glided on towards their destination. They arrived in Quebec without any serious mishap after a long voyage of ten weeks. Our particular party were bound for Waupaca, Wisconsin. Now the question arose which route to take,

whether it should be the overland route, or the water route. They finally decided on the latter, the deciding factor being the miserable accommodations offered by the railroads. They would have to ride in freight cars, which had but recently brought cattle and hogs to Quebec.

This was not the worst feature however. These same cars had carried many dead and dying cholera patients into the interior of our country. This dread disease was raging at its fiercest just during this period, collecting a great toll among our Norwegian immigrants. Our party was now facing the grim reality of being in a strange country. Nothing brought this home to them quite as vividly as the language question. All the English words they had at their command were yes and no. Peer figured however, that he could speak a universal language with his fists if it should come to the worst.

Promptly after their decision was made, they were unceremoniously huddled into a small river boat, and started to meander up the St. Lawrence River. All they could say was yes, Waupaca, Wisconsin. This was indeed a unique mode of traveling, and it seems almost incredible that a party could travel clear from Norway and into the heart of Wisconsin by water. They passed through rivers, and canals, over the Great Lakes, sailed up to the extreme end of Green Bay, where they made arrangements for a smaller boat to take them through the Winnebago River, and across the Lake of Winnebago, as close as possible to where Aunt's daughter and her husband Mikel Lio [Mikkel Johanneson] had built a log cabin.

But right there is where their troubles began. They had proceeded about half way up the Winnebago River, and had reached the thickest part of the forest, when their boat was halted by drift logs, and partly submerged trees, as well. The captain immediately ordered all the passengers on shore, their luggage, as well. Being that our friends were not able to understand the language, they naturally believed that the captain intended to lighten the craft, and try to circumvent the logs in some way, but not so. He promptly turned around and steamed back down stream towards Green Bay. When it dawned upon our party what the unscrupulous captain was up to, all they could say in a beseeching tone was yes, Waupaca, Wisconsin, no?

Woe to that captain and his crew, if Big Peer could have been wafted back into that boat just for a few minutes. Now they were in a real predicament. No food to speak of, and no shelter. A council was called, and the following plan was quickly acted upon. Peer should stay right there and look after the women and children, while the rest of the men folks should immediately start out on a foraging expedition and incidently try to meet up with human beings of some kind. It was a pretty sorry looking group of women and children who sat there huddled together waiting for something to develop that might relieve the painful situation.

Nor did they have long to wait, for looking up the river, they saw a flotilla of

Indian canoes, manned by a goodly number of Indian warriors, who were then on the war path. Now pandemonium was let loose in our little group, the children began to bawl, and the women started to act up in a manner peculiar to the weaker sex. Peer thought, now its up to me to deal with this situation. His first thought was to fight the whole bunch if they should decide to molest his charges. Again he thought they might slip by in their noiseless canoes. Meanwhile he took time to relive some of the blood-curdling Indian stories he as a boy had read back home in his native country. This made the present situation far from reassuring.

Sure enough they beached their canoes right in front of our party and jumped ashore. As soon as he beheld their fine athletic bodies, their bows and arrows, tomahawks and scalping knives, yes, even firearms, the idea of fighting them was quickly dissipated. He thought of his violin. With this he could speak another universal language. With an air of unconcern, he lifted the cover of his massive immigrant chest and drew forth his violin, clapped down the cover, sat down on it, and the concert was on.

The first selection he gave was one of their dear old Lutheran hymns. This gave the little group a short respite, and an assurance that the good Lord and his protecting angels were hovering near. It also affected the hearts of the Indian warriors. As the concert proceeded on, these sturdy bronzed figures came closer, and closer, and finally encircled the whole group. Our artist now started to offer music of a lighter vein, such as folksongs, love songs and finally wound up with a rollicking "Spring Dance". After the concert there was no applauding, but the grim visaged countenance of our Indian warriors were transformed into winning smiles, when they beheld the tearstained eyes of the women and children, who were seemingly recovering from their first shock. The Indians saw at a glance what was needed here, food and shelter, of which they generously supplied both. They could not speak to each other, except through the medium of sign language. Of course, Peer would tell them a story through his violin, whenever he deemed it expedient. This was a language they understood, and fully appreciated.

In this manner they spent four days, and four nights, with the Indians as their next door neighbors. At this time succor rolled into camp in the shape of a yoke of oxen, hitched to some wheels made out of disks, sawed from a proper sized log to make a wheel. The rest of the foraging party came in straggling groups, at irregular intervals. This unwieldy outfit had been secured somewhere at the head of the Winnebago River, from a settler who was more than glad to lend a hand. When the men came back, the Indians, true to their nature, took their departure just as quietly as they had come. (It seems to me a rather interesting coincidence that after a lapse of seventy years, a newhew of Peer [Helge (Henry) Mathias Tjernagel] should be called by the mission board of the Missouri Synod to serve as a missionary among this same tribe of Indians, thus giving him the privilege of hearing them sing the

very same Lutheran hymns that Peer played for their grand and great grandfathers.

Their chests, bundles of clothing and meager supply of provisions was forthwith bundled on top of this so-called wagon, and the procession was ready to start. All the people both young and old had to walk, traveling behind the wagon. Grand aunt, her daughter Helga and Madaline, Peer's wife, and some other women whose names I cannot recall, and some children were placed in the center of the line. Outside of the group of men already mentioned, namely Aunt Kjersteen's husband Phillipus, and their sons Knute and Peter, there were two brothers of Madaline, Jokum and Endre Christensen [Jokum Kristenson (Tjernagel), full brother of Malene; Endre Kristenson (Tjernagel), half brother of Malene] Tjernagel, and others whom I am not able to identify. (Will add here that Jokum became later a well known and well to do business man of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Was known there as Captain Christensen. Endre after sailing the Great Lakes for some years, came to Iowa and settled on a farm in Scott Township, Hamilton County, a neighbor of Peer.)

Thus, after having arranged things as well as they could, and after having bid their never to be forgotten camp goodbye, with Peer bringing up the rear, the cumbersome journey was on. It is needless to say that a journey through a thick, trackless forest was very slow and tedious; we will not linger with them on the way, but will join them again as they emerge from the forest, and slowly wend their way up towards a small clearing, where stood the unfinished log cabin where grand aunt expected to meet her daughter Maria.

At this stage of the story, the spinning wheel paused, big tears rolled down the wrinkled cheeks of good old grand aunt, but she took herself in hand, as she had to do so many a time during her eventful life, and resumed her story. When she neared the cabin, a little girl about three years old, her granddaughter [Dorothea Severine], came running to meet her, and told her that her mama was dead, and that she had a little sister in the house, whose name was Kjersteen [Julia Cherstine, the 3rd Kjersteen]. This was almost too much of a shock to be able to stand up under. The whole party became partly paralysed. To think that they had traveled many thousand miles, endured all kinds of hardships, and then to find conditions like this. This, their much dreamed of goal, where they had intended to settle down and build for themselves a home.

To add to their misery, an unusual siege of rain set in, which lasted for many days and nights, accompanied by heavy winds and fierce thunder claps, which scared our newcomers nearly out of their wits, thunder and lightning being almost unknown in Norway. There wasn't room enough in the little cabin to house all the people and their baggage. This housing problem was overcome by cutting some oak and hickory saplings and leaning them up against the house proper, covering them with Norsk aakle, light woven woolen blankets, a fabric which was well nigh

everlasting.

While this merciless rain kept pouring down, in order to try to keep up their spirits, so as not to succumb to melancholia, they chased each other out into the rain for a thorough soaking, thus keeping busy drying their clothes over the fireplace. Grand aunt's big problem was what to do for the two little motherless girls, Dorothy, about three years old and Kjersteen just an infant, her own grandchildren that it seemed to her Providence had thrust upon her. She could see no other way than to take them and raise them as her own children, providing the father was willing. This offer was gratefully accepted by the stricken father.

After this sad affair had been settled, the great question arose for the whole party, what to do next? After their sad experience here, followed by the drenching rain, and seemingly poor soil, this locality did not appeal to them. They must get somewhere and right soon, where they could get work and get on a earning basis, because their pocketbooks were not what they used to be. The Koshkonong settlement in Dane County, Wisconsin was decided upon but now how to get there? Rolling stock even of the crudest style was very scarce in those parts. They finally got their heaviest luggage on top of a load of home made shingles, bound for the same settlement. No such a thing as a lift for any of the people. The word hitch hiking had not been invented. The rest of the luggage the men had to carry on their backs. Peer carried a load big enough for a pack mule, walking barefoot so as to save his shoes. Poor old Kjersteen carried Kjersteen the third in her arms, depending on some good old Bossie along the route to supply the necessary nourishment for the baby, little Dorothy tripping merrily along by her side.

In this manner they finally reached their destination. The party now dispersed, some of them to the Great Lakes where they hired out as sailors. Others got work in the logging camps. Peer and the Philops family remained in the settlement for the time being, working at odd jobs, thus ekeing out a living, and incidently laying aside a few dollars preparatory for another crusade. They liked the Koshkonong country, but the most attractive parts had already been taken. They were now dreaming about the prairie country in LaSalle County, Illinois, which was known as the Fox River settlement. By saving and scraping they were soon ready to take up the march into Illinois. Consequently, in the early fifties, we find them in the Fox River settlement. Their mode of locomotion was much the same as the former one. Shortly after coming here grand aunt had the pleasure of seeing her daughter Helga married to a thrifty young farmer by the name of Ole Dalaaker, to which was appended the name Jackson. (This man, by the way, was a grand uncle of Red Dale Jackson, who became famous for his endurance test flying, and who was born and partly raised in our neighbor community near Stanhope, Iowa.)

We shall now leave the Philops family for awhile and follow Big Peer's last move, into our own state of Iowa. After several years of hard work, we find our

hero the proud owner of a fine yoke of oxen, hitched to a prairie schooner, inside of which could have been seen Madeline and two little girls [Bertha Cjerstine Larson Tjernagel], needless to say the pride of his life. In his pocket he carried enough cash to take him through, and pay for an eighty acre farm.

There was quite a long train of prairie schooners which left the Fox River, and Lisbon settlements at that time. It was said that Peer's oxen were the prize winners of the whole caravan. He was the only one that did not carry an ox whip. They were broke without a whip. Of course he would shake them at times, or give them a slap with his bare hands, just to show them that he wished to be considered authority. Nothing worthy of notice happened until they got on a ferry crossing the Mississippi River between Rock Island and Davenport. Just as they were in midstream, a pet cow was jostled overboard. The owners of the cow stood there wringing their hands, not knowing what to do. Meanwhile, Peer got down on his knees, braced himself, coaxed the cow to swim to him, grabbed her by the horn and lifted her bodily up on the ferry, to the great admiration of the whole party. After a trek of about twenty days they arrived at their destination. This was in summer of 1858. It did not take long for Peer to select his eighty acres, and inside of an incredible short time there was a log cabin built. They located in Scott Township, Hamilton County. The first few settlers got together at once and organized a school district and levied a tax. In the spring of 1860 they built the Sheldall School House. They also elected a board of trustees, clerk, and road supervisor. Peer was made the first road boss of Scott Township. It was while establishing the first road in the township that he got into the following little scrap.

A burly blacksmith, and his powerful son, the owners of a certain rail fence, refused to comply with the law and move same, in order to open up the road in question. He told them that if the fence was not moved inside of a certain designated time, he would be there in person and move it himself. To this they retorted saying, you can come, the fence won't move, but you will! At the time set Peer was there, leaning up against the corner post. The other party came to try to live up to the threat. When he thought they had come close enough he announced, the show is on and simultaneously jerked up the corner post, and its appendaged rails wedged into it from two sides, and flung it all in their direction saying, my friends, you had better move, this fence will be coming your way! They moved, I shall not attempt to go into details as, much against his will, he had to take the fighting spirit out of one Kale Walter, the bully of the prairie. Nor how he subdued four strapping Yankees who tried to get the best of him.

Perhaps the following incident might tend to portray his dual purpose nature, seriousness and humor properly mixed. A number of the settlers loaded up their ox carts with wheat and drove over to a mill on the Boone River to have it ground into flour. When they got there well along in the afternoon the miller, a grouchy

sort of a fellow who seemed to be tired and lazy, decided to shut down for the day. No urging or good promises seemed to affect him. Peer did not say anything, but making sure that the miller watched him walked out to the cart, took one sack under each arm, and the third sack hanging from his teeth, scrambled up some steps, and let them down, not at all easy, on the floor next to the hopper. The miller, quite considerably excited, asked him what he was trying to do. The answer came slowly and deliberately, but to the point -- I am going to grind. The miller started the machinery without a whimper.

Many things could be told about this interesting and powerful pioneer, but old Kjersteen is waiting for us, down in the Fox River settlement. I am very sorry to have to chronicle the following, the saddest part of our story. Peer and Madaline's oldest girl [Helga Larson Tjernagel], age seven, was caught in a prairie fire and burned to death. This tragedy was a terrible hard blow to the stricken parents, and the good neighbors as well. And sadder still, Peer, after the first severe pangs of sorrow had subsided some, wanted to buy something for his remaining girl and his wife. The nearest trading point was Marshalltown, a distance of 45 miles. He had no ready cash, but he had one hog. This hog he butchered, loaded same into his wagon and started out for Marshalltown, where he figured on doing some bartering. He came as far as about where the town of Yeering now is situated, when he was suddenly stricken with a severe pain in his abdomen. His otherwise powerful hands let go of the reins, and his spirited horses started to run. But fortunately there were others on the road who caught his team. Seeing his helpless condition, they carried him into a house nearby, where in spite of all that could be done for him by those good people, he died inside of an hour. He reached the age of thirty-six years. (This took place in the year 1863.) His only child, a daughter, is still living. She is now old and feeble [Bertha Cherstine Larson Tjernagel]. It was said of her that when she was in her prime, and her husband brought home a barrel of salt, she would lift it out of the wagon, and carry it down into their cellar [In 1897 the legal weight of a barrel of salt at the New York Saltworks was 280 lbs.].

Part Two:

When the Civil War broke out old Kjersteen's boys, Knute and Peter, were both old enough to go into the service. She had many forebodings, being acquainted with their adventurous nature, fearing they would join the army. Sure enough at the very first opportunity, Knute enlisted in the 36th Illinois regiment. Just at this time Peter was back in Wisconsin, working in a lumber camp. His mother was hoping against hope that he would receive no information as to the step Knute had take, but not so. He came home quite unexpectedly, and forthwith joined the same regiment. They tried to console their mother by saying, this war won't last long and we will soon be back with you again.

The spinning wheel paused again. Her baby boy, Peter, never came back. Pete fought in seven of the big battles of the Civil War. Among others can be mentioned the battle of Missionary Ridge. He participated in the battle above the clouds on Lookout Mountain, was wounded but soon got back into action again, was taken prisoner at the battle of Stone River, was sent to Libby Prison where he suffered many tortures before he was liberated.

After the war was over Knute came back home to his parents, in the Fox River settlement, Illinois. He was very much grieved on hearing of Peter's death. Being a man of action, and quick decisions, he made the remark, we go to Iowa as quick as we can get there.

This plan was soon realized for by this time, there were railroad accommodations clear to Nevada, in Story County. Knute soon had his father, mother and his two nieces, Dorothy and Kjersteen, comfortably established on a little farm of his one half mile north of Story City, he himself taking over the management of Madaline's (Peer's widow) farm. Later he married the widow. By his foresight, good management and hard work, he added tract after tract of land to the original eighty, so that at the time of his death he had a well improved farm of four hundred acres, and a very handsome sum of money in the bank.

Doctors were very scarce as yet among the people in these parts. Mothers and babies had to be cared for. In this capacity old Kjersteen was often called upon. She faced storms and blizzards without any thought of ever being compensated. Her chief worry was, will I get there in time to be of any real service. So it came to pass, that on the 17th of May, 1865, a disturbance which old Kjersteen was drafted into took place at our home, where yours truly*(15) happened to be the center of attraction, or distraction. The good lady hastened to tell father, and she was not a little excited. It's another Big Peter, and weighs thirteen pounds, and you must call him Peter, to which father and mother answered, so be it. The first treat in the shape of nourishment administered to the new arrival by the good old well meaning nurse, and which was not eagerly swallowed, was a doughnut. It has been the great regret of my life that I should have to disappoint my good old grand aunt, and my dear parents, in not being able to live up to what they could reasonably expect of me, when they gave me the honor of bearing the same name as much loved uncle. There is this consolation though. I believe I deserve some credit for having survived the doughnut, and could live to tell the tale.

The rest of the story is soon told. The old folks had the pleasure of seeing their granddaughters married, Dorothy to a businessman in Story City, by the name of Olen, who later moved out to the state of Washington, and Kjersteen to a civil war soldier by the name of E. J. Peterson, who owned and operated a big farm, one mile north of Story City. Old man Philops died in the early seventies and was buried in the Fairview Cemetery, Story City. After this, old grand aunt made her

home for awhile with her son Knut, but her last days were spent with her daughter Helga in Illinois.

She died at the good old age of ninety-four years. Thus ends a little chapter of some of our first Norwegian Iowa pioneers.

Notes

These stories are copied from the Tjernagel family tree compiled by Mildrid Tjernagal Nickson. Mildrid's system of naming our Norwegian ancestors is different than mine, so the names she uses do not match in most cases. Part one is taken from Mildrid's notes under Kristi Pedersdatter Arstad Eltravag. In my family tree she is shown as Kristi Pedersdatter 1737-1775. Part two is taken from Mildrid's notes under Kristi Pedersdatter Tjernagel. In my tree this is Kristi Pedersdatter, born 1797. (Phil Rhodes)

A preliminary search by Mildrid Nickson found that Arstad and Eltravag were both place names close enough to Tjernagel for Anders Halvardson Tjernagel to have met Kristi and later make her his second wife. Next search needs to be of church records in Sveio to find any additional information on her past. The records go back to 1723 or so and would include Kristi's life span.

So is this is one of the sisters that drifted in a small boat from Scotland to Norway? See the story of "The Three Kjersteens". The other sister was named Bertha, according to tradition. Their brother was Peder Sabo, according to the version written by Lars Johan (Lewis) Tjernagel.

Peder Gustav Tjernagel, second son of Ole Andrias Larson Tjernagel and Martha Karina Follinglo, in 1931 sent to his brother, Rev. Henry M. (Helge Mathias) Tjernagel, the story of "The Three Kjersteens", intending that it be published in the Palimpsest as you can see by his note to H.M.T. that accompanied the story. (Mildrid Tjernagal Nickson)

"I send you again another story. If it fares out, I thought it might not be more than right that the Palimpsest published a story of some sort about our first Norwegian Pioneers. I don't know how far I have succeeded. This is for you and Bertha to decide. Perhaps you had better let Borghild look it over and correct the spelling before you read it.

As you see, I have taken the liberty of having Gamla Kjisti tell the story. When I was at Milwaukee Jokum told me something about Peer's playing the violin while crossing the Atlantic, so that I feel justified in saying what I did. I have the year 1851 when they came across. Martin Philops said they came in 1850. If you think it worth while to spend any time on, fix it up to suit yourself. I think myself there is material enough to make an interesting story, providing it is put together right. I am not going to rush you with this work, do it whenever you can. You may let the story go ahead of Nagelson if you so desire.

It's a true story, you don't need to entertain any qualms of conscience on that account. I have heard parts of this story told by Endre, Jokum, Knute and Kjersti, and Martin Philops [Peder Martin Phillops, son of Knute and Malene. Treat it to suit yourself."