



### The Ungerecht Family Tree

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(Picture of Johann Georg (George) Ungerecht and Rebecca (Bertha) Hörauf, taken about 1895?)

## Northome, MN

Northome is located in the northern part of the state, between Bemidji and International Falls (yes, where it gets cold, like -40° cold). Fred Ungerecht was the first to arrive, apparently fleeing the dust bowl conditions that North Dakota was experiencing. His brother Walter Ungerecht came in the 40's, returned to [Glen Ullin](#) in 1950 to run the family ranch due to illness in the family, then came back to Northome in 1956. Fred eventually left for Washington state, but his son Vernon stayed on the farm.

Northome is way back in the sticks, with an average population density of less than 2 people per square mile (the "uninhabited" color of most population maps). One of the attractions during the Great Depression was that there was wild game available to help out with protein. (And our families, like most in the area, were indeed poor at that time). Also, with the numerous swamps and lakes, there was always water for the cattle and the gardens, unlike the dust bowl conditions farther west. Most of the area is woods, both private and public, so some money could be made on the side with logging or trapping animals for fur. People hunted, fished, and grew most of their own food, cut their own wood for heating, and sometimes built their own log houses.



The area was first settled by Europeans about 1901, mostly by Scandinavian loggers who felled most of the large white and red pines that were in the area at that time. When the prime logging ran out in the late 1920's, the farmers took over. They were mostly Germans and Norwegians, with a few Swedes as well as those who had been in America for several generations. Finns and Russians settled farther east in the iron ore range. During the 30's many people came in from the dry Dakotas. Electricity (from the REA, or Rural Electrification Act) finally made its way to the farms around Northome in late 1949. While Fred had a phone in the 1940's, it wasn't until the 1960's that everybody had one, and until the mid 1970's it remained on the communal party-line system (each house had its own ring pattern to know when to pick up, and neighbors could eavesdrop by picking up on someone else's ring). A few old-timers went without indoor plumbing up until the late 1980's. Even today, the nearest traffic light is 40 miles away.



Fred and Walter lived on farms near each other in Bridgie Township, about 5 miles west of the village of Northome itself. Ungerecht descendents still live on both farms today, with several cousins and second cousins growing up in the area. The descendants of the two brothers have generally owned over a 1,000 acres in the area. While productive, it has never been prime farmland (it includes swamps, second-growth forest, etc).

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