

OWEN

Block 28, Lot 9 De Smet Cemetery

☛ Buried in Block 28, Lot 9 are De Smet Attorney John August Owen's father, Almond Owen, and John's wife, Maria (Willett) Owen. In Lot 8 to the north are Almond Owen's daughter, Amelia Elvira (Owen) Bowes, her husband, William S. Bowes, and family.

The Owen family members mentioned in the Little House books include Sam Owen (the man who races bay horses in the 4th of July race in Little Town on the Prairie, plus his house is mentioned in The Long Winter) and V.S.L. Owen, Laura's teacher in *Pioneer Girl*, *Little Town on the Prairie*, and *These Happy Golden Years*. Sam Owen was Ven Owen's father.

RODERICK & LAVINA OWEN (parents of Almond and Nathan)					
ALMOND OWEN (1805-1892) married MARIA EMILY LOOMIS (1808-1878) (brother of Nathan)			NATHAN OWEN (brother of Almond)		
JOHN AUGUSTUS OWEN (1835- 1903) (cousin of Samuel)	AMELIA OWEN BOWES (1849- 1946) (sister of John, lived in De Smet)	SAMUEL BURDETTE OWEN (1828-1909) shoemaker, lived in De Smet during Hard Winter (cousin of John)			
LEVERETT OWEN, WILLET OWEN, EARNEST OWEN		ADARESTA GENEVA OWEN married WILLARD SEELYE	FRANCES AMELIA OWEN married DANIEL DWIGHT (see Dwight)		V.S.L. OWEN married SOPHIA HILTON
			SAM DWIGHT	CLARENCE DWIGHT (Wilkin School student)	ADA LORENA DWIGHT married MIKE KEATING

ALMOND OWEN

Block 28, Lot 9 De Smet Cemetery
April 4, 1805 – June 21, 1892; died at age 87

Husband of (1) Maria Emily (Loomis) Owen (1808-1878); married August 5, 1834. Married (2) Sophia circa 1865.
Father of John Owen and Amelia (Owen) Bowes.
Uncle of Samuel Burdette Owen; great-uncle of V.S.L., Ada (Owen) Seelye, and Frances (Owen) Dwight.
Came to Kingsbury County in 1881.



Almond Owen

Almond Owen was born April 4, 1805 at Homer (Cortland Co.) New York. He died June 2, 1892, at the home of his daughter Amelia Bowes (Mrs. William S. Bowes), in De Smet. He married Maria Emily Loomis (1808-1878). They lived for many years near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where Almond was a farmer, teacher, superintendent, and justice of the peace. They had at least nine children, two of which lived in De Smet: John Augustus Owen, and Amelia Elvira Owen (who married William Smith Bowes, who is buried in Block 28, Lot 9 near Almond Owens). Amelia Bowes was still living in De Smet in 1940. In Lot 8 to the north are three Bowes graves: Alfred Bowes (son of Amelia and William), Mary Ida Bowes (Alfred's wife), and William Bowes (baby).

Almond Owen filed on a tree claim, the NW 17-111-57 in Kingsbury County, on August 12, 1881, making final proof in May 1891.

In January 1882, Almond Owen wrote a letter to his brother Frederick:

Dear Brother and Family:

Last summer I made a journey to Dakota. I visited my oldest son John Augustus, who lives at De Smet, the county seat of Kingsbury County. After practicing law in Chicago fourteen years he is now at De Smet, farming and practicing law. In Chicago he did some services for the Chicago and Northwestern R.R. with which they were so well pleased that, when they got control of the charters of the Winona and St. Peter R.R. and the Central Dakota R.R., they posted him as to their routes and the plans of their depots. Of this information he took advantage and went and secured a section of land near De Smet, which already valuable, will soon be much more so. There are five other lawyers in the place now, but he does as much business as all the others together.

I secured a timber claim about ten miles from De Smet, and since my return home bought another, five miles from there. A timber claim of $\frac{1}{4}$ section—160 acres—we pay for by working for ourselves—we have to break up and plant ten acres in trees.

Dakota is a beautiful country with a rich soil and a healthy climate. The principal drawback is the lack of timber and the "blizzards." In the winter in consequence of the dryness of the air and high winds, the snow flies so that one cannot see his way for two rods, and one must have a string from the house to the barn for a guide, to prevent getting lost. Such storms, however, do not last long and are only occasional. Dakota will soon be a rich agricultural state and is settling very fast...

Best regards to all your children.

Your old brother, Almond (Owen).

May 10, 1884. The De Smet LEADER.

Almond Owen, father of John A. Owen, formerly of Milwaukee, has come to spend the remainder of the days with his son.

Almond Owen died June 21, 1892, at the home of his daughter, Amelia. No obituary was found for him. On the 1880 census, Almond is enumerated with a wife, Sophia, age 54, and his son Theodore. They apparently married around 1865.



Asleep. Almond Owen / died June 21, 1892 / Aged 87 years

MARIA WILLETT OWEN

Block 28, Lot 9 De Smet Cemetery

March 30, 1838 – October 15, 1888; died at age 50

Wife of John A. Owen; married January 1, 1867.

Mother of Augustus Willet (1869-1938), Earnest A. (1871-1937), and John Leverett (1874-?).



Maria Willett, wife of John A. Owen. Born March 30, 1839. Died Oct. 15, 1888. Faithful unto death. Not lost but gone before.

October 15, 1888. Lake Preston TIMES.

Maria Willett Owen died October 15, 1888. Wife of John A. Owen and eldest child of Dr. John Willett of Flint, Michigan. Born 1846. When her mother died she became mother to her younger brother Leverett. John Owen came to De Smet from Chicago. They were married January 1867 and had three sons: Willett 19, Earnest 17, and Leverett 13.

October 24, 1888. Chicago (Illinois) DAILY TRIBUNE.

Mrs. Maria Willett Owen wife of John A. Owen District Attorney died recently at their home in De Smet Dak. of heart failure. They lived fourteen years in Chicago up to 1880, and have many friends here. Mrs. Owen was prominent in the temperance cause and was largely instrumental in securing the adoption of the prohibition clause in the Dakota Constitution.

October 26, 1888. Lake Preston TIMES.

Obituary. Mrs. Maria Willett Owen was born in Livingston County, in the state of New York, March 30, 1839, the eldest child of Dr. John Willett, who with his family removed to Flint, Michigan, in 1846. She spent her early years in the care of her invalid mother and her younger brothers, the youngest of whom Leveret, was left motherless at the age of three years, when she became to

him both a sister and a mother. Later she was engaged as a teacher in the public schools of Flint, and with the determination to have an education, went down from Flint to Oberlin, and there, unaided except by a small loan from the college, which she soon after repaid, she by teaching during the long vacations, worked her own way through college and graduated with honors in 1865.

She was married to John A. Owen, then of Chicago, at her father's house at Flint, in January 1867, and has born three sons, Willett, now 19 years old, Earnest, 17, and Leveret, 13. She has for months past realized that her days were but few, and during her last sickness, which commenced September 1, last, her chief anxiety was for this youngest boy. She moaned in her paroxysms of pain, "My poor little boy! My poor Levie! O Levie, Levie, who will take care of Levie!" She suffered much and often cried, "O help, help me" and when tender hands aided her to a change of position, she expressed her deep gratitude in the words "O! thank you," but when suffering the most, her thoughts were generally not of her own deep distress, but of those who were caring for her and she cried out, "O! I shall wear you all out." In the forenoon of October 13th she said to her boys, "I shall die in two days." She was in earnest Christian in her health and during the weeks of her sickness looked to her God for help. She was the first and only President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Kingsbury county, and also of the De Smet local union. Shrinking from general society, and avoiding public gaze, it was her request, which was respected, that when she died her face should not be publicly exposed. Both in her home life and for her public good, she worked, and felt that she could not stop work, till her poor tired heart gave out. After a return from a days work for her church, her diary of April 20, 1888, contains the words—"sick with a pain in my heart." That pain ended forever at five minutes before eight, upon the morning of October 15, 1888, and she went to her heavenly rest, leaving her husband and three boys a desolate home, but with memories—no one but they know how precious—of her pure and faithful life.

Her body was borne to the grave by her Bible class and escorted by the ladies of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Relief Corps of Harvey Post, G.A.R. (of which Corps she was also President till compelled by failing health to resign), and followed by a long procession of mourning friends.

The funeral exercises were conducted by Revs. Edward Brown, W.B.D. Gray, and F.G. Appleton, and a poem written by Mrs. Laura J. Brown for the occasion which was read by Mrs. Susie Fifield of Lake Preston. Her pastor, the Rev. Mr. Bonney was absent from the county and without knowledge of her death. The church was gracefully decorated, the pulpit covered with white, like the burial dress of the departed, and upon the wall the words in black upon a white ground, "W.C.T.U. mourns its beloved President." (-From De Smet papers)

JOHN AUGUSTUS OWEN

Buried in California

May 25, 1835 – April 18, 1903; died at age 67

Son of Almond Owen and Emily (Loomis) Owen.

Husband of Maria (Willet) Owen; married January 1, 1867.

Father of Augustus Willet (1869-1938), Earnest A. (1871-1937), and John Leverett (1874-?).

John A. Owen was born May 25, 1835 in Middletown, Connecticut, and died at Pomona, California, April 18, 1903. He married Maria Kuykendall Willet on January 1, 1867, at Flint, Michigan. He studied law in Chicago and practiced law there from 1874 until 1880.

Because of service to the C. & N.W. R.R., he was told where towns were to be located in Kingsbury County, and secured land between De Smet and Lake Preston. He had three children: Augustus Willet (1869-1938); Earnest A. (1871-1937); and John Leverett (1874-?).

John Owen was the attorney who represented George Brady, the man who shot John Hunt (mentioned in the Little House books). John Owen drafted the State Constitution of South Dakota. He was president of the Kingsbury County Temperance Union. Was director of De Smet Township schools under new law in 1883. John Owen signed Laura Ingalls' contract to teach Perry School as director of De Smet township schools. Was master of ceremonies at the opening of the graded school in 1885.

John Owen moved to Pomona CA in 1890. Was in Pasadena 1900-1901. Ancestry reports death April 18, 1903 in California.

SAMUEL BURDETTE OWEN (SR.)

Buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Brookings, South Dakota
January 1, 1828 – August 11, 1909; died at age 81

Samuel B. Owen was the father of V.S.L. Owen, and Ada Owen, who married Willard Seelye, and Frances Owen, who married Dan Dwight. He was married to Sarah Ann (Hoyt) Owen.

Samuel B. Owen was born in Homer, New York. He migrated to Racine County, Wisconsin, before 1849, later to Columbia, Wisconsin, and thence to Minnesota in the 1860s. He settled at De Smet in 1880, where he conducted a shoe store. He was a democrat, justice of the peace, and performed many marriages. He lived in De Smet during the Hard Winter.

August 27, 1909. Brookings (South Dakota) PRESS.

At End of Life. - Aged Resident passes to Great Beyond After a Short Illness

Impressive for their very simplicity, the last sad rites over the remains of S.B. Owen were solemnized at the home of his daughter, Mrs. F.A. Pond on Friday afternoon. The Rev. S.L. Boyers of the Methodist church conducted the service and he was followed by the Masons with the burial service of that order. The house was filled with the many friends of the family who gathered to pay the last tribute of respect to the departed and to sympathize with those left behind.

As noted in the Press last week S.B. Owen died at the home of his daughter Mrs. F.A. Pond at 12:30 am., Wednesday, August 11. He was born at Homer, New York, January 1, 1828. On Dec. 5th, 1847 he married Miss Sarah A. Hoyt at Ithaca, New York. A year later the family moved to Racine, Wis., and in 1871 to Kasson, Minn., where they resided till 1880 when they moved to De Smet, where they resided till 1903. Since the death of his wife in 1904, Mr. Owen made his home with his daughter, Mrs. F.A. Pond in Brookings, and his son V.S.L. Owen in St. Paul. He is survived by five children, Mrs. Dan Dwight, De Smet, S.B. Owen, Jr., Bellaire, Mich., V.S.L. Owen, Le Sueur Center, Minn., and Newton Owen, St. Louis, Mo., and a goodly number of grand children and great grand children.

SARAH ANN (HOYT) OWEN

Buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Brookings, South Dakota
May 8, 1821 – March 20, 1904; died at age 83

Daughter of Isaac Hoyt.

Wife of Samuel Burdette Owen; married December 5, 1847.

Mother of Frances Amelia “Frank” (Owen) Dwight (1848); Samuel Burdette, Jr. “Sam” (1850; Estelle Mabel “Belle” (Owen) Brown (1852-1889); Adaresta Geneva “Ad” (Owen) Seelye (1875-1905); Vidocq Seltz Lavengo (1857); Sarah Ann “Sate” (Owen) (1859); Isaac Newton “Newt” (Owen) (1862-1921).

April 1, 1904. The De Smet NEWS.

Obituary. Sarah B. Owen

Sarah B. Hoyt was born at Lock, Cayuga County, New York, May 8th, 1821, and was at the time of her death in her eighty-third year. She was married to S.B. Owen in Ithica, N.Y., Dec. 5, 1847, and they resided there until a year later, when they moved to Racine, Wis., later moving to Kasson, Minn., and resided there from 1871 until 1880 when they came west, settling at De Smet, Kingsbury County, this state. There they resided until last June, since which time they have been here with their daughter.

Mrs. Owen is survived by her husband and six children, as follows: Mrs. Dan Dwight of De Smet; S.B. Owen of Grand Rapids, Mich.; Mrs. Ida G. Seelye of Mankato, Minn., V.S.L. Owen of Adrian, Minn.; Mrs. Frank Pond of Brookings; and Newton Owen of St. Louis, Mo.

She had been a devoted member of the Methodist church for a great many years and was a prominent worker as long as her health would permit. She was also a member of the order of the Eastern Star at De Smet.

The funeral was held at the house Wednesday at 2 o'clock p.m. conducted by the Rev. G.F. Hopkins, interment taking place at Greenwood.

VIDOCQ “VEN” SELTZ LAVENG OWEN

Died in Seattle, Washington

April 1, 1857 – July 27, 1953; died at age 96

Vidocq Seltz Lavengro Owen was born April 1, 1857, in Geneva Lake, Wisconsin, to Sarah and Samuel Owen. Educated in the schools of Kasson, Minnesota, after graduation from Winona Normal School, Ven Owen began a thirty-year career as teacher and superintendent of schools in several states. In September 1880, he married Sophia Hilton; the couple had seven children.

Owen followed his father and uncle, attorney John A. Owen, and other relatives to Kingsbury County, filing on a tree claim, the NE 9-112-56, in May 1881. He also had a preemption claim in Sully County. In September 1883, Ven Owen was hired as principal and teacher of the higher classes in De Smet at a salary of \$49 per month, a position he held for almost four years. Owen was forced to resign in July 1887 after a back injury and lengthy



V.S.L. Owen

recovery, and he was replaced by Rollin Gleason. Ven Owen was rehired in early 1889, although his health remained poor during the term. On May 31, 1889, Professor Owen informed the Board of Education that four students had completed the two-year course of study adopted for the higher classes of the graded school of De Smet and had passed a rigid examination which entitled the following to diplomas of graduation: Florette Bonney, Neva M. Whaley, Alma V. Davies, and David Davies.

Ven Owen taught in De Smet until 1891, when the family moved to Adrian, Minnesota, where Mr. Owen continued to teach and served as principal. He was also hired to teach classes at Mankato Commercial College. Sophia and Ven Owen moved to Seattle in the late 1940s to live with a daughter. Ven Owen died in July 1953 in Washington State.

Mr. Owen was remembered by former students as an inspirational teacher who taught much more than was found in textbooks, including good citizenship and respect for others. A firm disciplinarian, Owen required students to stand at their desks when reciting and to use both a distinct voice and complete sentences. He gave special training in both reading and writing, skills which Laura Ingalls Wilder well remembered, keeping her first composition written for Mr. Owen, on the subject of ambition, her whole life.

August 6, 1953. The De Smet NEWS. [Note. In 1953, The Seattle Times ceased publication for 94 days while six trade unions struck for wages.]

Pioneer School Head, 96, Passes Away in Seattle.

V.S.L. Owen, early-day principal of De Smet's school, died in a hospital at Seattle, Wash., July 27, at the ripe old age of 96 years, according to word from a son, Harry L. Owen, Whiting, Ind. He had been in good health until a few weeks before his death, when a bunion developed blood poison.

Much publicity had been given Mr. Owen and his wife for their advanced years and good health. They had passed their 70th anniversary in 1950, and the anniversaries and his birthdays had brought news accounts, as he was Seattle's oldest resident. [sic; they were actually the longest married couple.]

He was an uncle of Mrs. Ada Keating of this city. Though they had not lived here for many years, or visited here, his advanced age and the wonderful health he and his wife enjoyed had brought mention in The News on several occasions. Mrs. Owen is 93 and is in a Seattle hospital.

Mr. Owen was a son of S.B. Owen, pioneer resident of De Smet, who built the present Steer building as a shoe store and residence.

After he had served as principal of the local schools in the late 80's, Mr. and Mrs. V.S.L. Owen moved to Adrian, Minn., in 1891 and later to Minneapolis, where he was employed for years in a large department store. They moved to Seattle seven years ago, two sons living there.

SOPHIA STIMSON (HILTON) OWEN

Died in Seattle, Washington

~1860 – May 29, 1955; died at age 95

Daughter of Thomas Hilton and Julia Ann (Hatfield) Hilton.

Sister of James H. Hilton, who married Lettie Mary Davis (adopted daughter of Edward Couse).

Wife of V.S.L. Owen; married September 23, 1880.

Mother of Harry, Robert, Elinor, Clifford, Homer, Sidney, and Eva.

May 31, 1955. Seattle TIMES

Owen, Sophia Hilton, of 8003 44th NE, age 95, beloved mother of Eleanor Van Koert, Clearwater, Fla; Harry L., Whiting, Ind.; Sydney A., Seattle; Homer, Bothell; Robert H. Burlingame, Calif.; and Clifford J. Owen, Minneapolis, Min. Services Wednesday 3 PM Mittelstadt's Lake City Funeral Ho., 14828, Bothell Way. (She died May 29th)



Sophia and Ven Owen