

## Historical Society Trek to Olsen Ranch:

Before taking the Emery County Historical Society to the Olsen Ranch, Henning Olsen of Price, Utah, stopped by the place where the old Olsen home is standing, where Art Olsen and Henning Olsen were raised by their father Delon and mother Argene in Castle Dale. Henning then led the Emery County Historical Society up Straight Canyon where he showed the group the location of the Black Diamond and Oliphant Mines that operated in the 1920's or 30's. The group stopped and examined the old coal car, which stands on the opposite side of the road. He also pointed to the covered mine portals up on the North slope of the mountain at that location.

En-route to the ranch, Henning pointed out the old log bridge and remnants of an old road on the south side of Straight Canyon, that was used by pioneers to cross the Cottonwood River on the way to Joe's Valley. Prior to that time pioneers had traveled North up Cottonwood Canyon over the mountain and then back South down Lowry Creek into Joe's Valley.

After leaving the river Henning led the group North past Joe's Valley Dam, Reeder Subdivision passing the old corral, Frenchy's Cabin and finally arrived at the Olsen Ranch nestled in among the cottonwoods and cedar trees along Lowry Creek.

The weather this day was excellent with a warm sun a light breeze and only a few puffy clouds in the sky. The yellow, gold and red autumn leaves were just starting to turn in upper Joe's Valley.

This statement was taken from a plaque found on the Olsen Ranch property.

"In 1916, Abinadi Olsen and 6 other Castle Dale residents each filed for 160 acre homesteads in lower Joe's Valley. By 1918 Abinadi and Hannah had moved into a boarded up tent near the spring in the North East 40 acres. A family garden was soon planted nearby. Thereafter they spent their summers at the ranch. Later they replaced the tent with the Spring Cabin. This was the first of a number of structures the family constructed over the years, including other cabins a root cellar, smoke house, tack room, water wheel and an ice house. Large barn, corrals, chicken coops and a pig pen were built for their animals. The rest of the property includes the South East 40 acres which encompasses the park along with the ponds. The North West 40 and the South West 40 became known as the West fields, which produced tons of hay, grain, potatoes, commercial lettuce and stalk carrots. In the summer of 2000 this marker was placed in honor of Abinadi, Hannah Olsen and their eleven children for the heritage they imparted. May this ranch which they so loved serve as a reminder of the values they embraced and help link all the generations that make up the Olsen family. The children are Chastity, Magdalena, Harris Orange, Henning Benjamin, those 2 are twins, Hazel Hill, Delon Simon, Jennie Lind, she and Delon are twins, Crystal Rosenberg, Wanda Jones, Wendell Bob Seely, Farrer Foyer, George Linwood, all children of the Olsen's. They had their last reunion in the year 2000 on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, of July"

Henning said the crystal house or the white house on the corner in Castle Dale was where his grand father Abinadi lived. His grandfather did odd jobs. He cut hair and took ownership of a place called Paradise, South and East of Castle Dale, below Clawson. Over the years a lot of people have owned Paradise. It is hard to maintain the fields of Paradise and water the ground.

Henning:  
“I am named after my uncle Henning Olsen who is a twin to Orange Olsen and they were named after their grandfathers. Henning was kind of a character. He eventually moved to Price and there are a lot of stories about him. He had a wooden leg. He married Minnie Christensen from Emery. He would ride his horse over to Emery to meet her and bring her back. They got married and spent their honeymoon at the Paradise ranch. She would always say after that, when asked, “I spent my honey moon in Paradise. In Paradise the high waters would come and they would just float the pigs down the river. It got so bad that the Olsen family finally moved back into town. After that the old timers would talk about the wild pigs on the desert.

When they first started coming up to this place in Joe's Valley they would come up Cottonwood Canyon and get in from that access. The road up Straight Canyon was eventually made.

On the way here we stopped at the place where the Black Diamond and Oliphant Mines were operated in the 1920's or 30's and the people that had an ownership or hauling interest in those mines were the Brandon's. Brandon owned a string of saloons in Emery, Carbon and San Juan Counties. He also had an interest in the Black Diamond Mine. He had several sons. These sons grew up making the liquor runs to his liquor stores. George Brandon hauled coal and had a saloon where the medical center is.

The George Brandon children that Art and I knew were Denver Brandon, Hugh Brandon and Clyde Brandon. Clyde Brandon built him a little lodge in the Reeder Subdivision. The Brandon's were good people.

My Grandfather Abnadi went on a mission to the Samoan Islands, he had 4 children and the Brandon's help support us from the proceeds from the saloon. We grew up as friends of the Brandon's. The Brandon's would haul coal out of the Black Diamond.

This is a story told to me by Hugh or Clyde. They as young boys would drive a team and wagon, up under the coal chute from the mine and when the coal was loaded, they would take it to Castle Dale and Orangeville and sell it, for heating the homes in winter. Hugh or Clyde said, “It would get so cold that they would build fire right on the wagon and put a tarp over them.” They probably had some type of metal bucket to hold the fire. Hugh Brandon told Art Olsen that they had a still at the mine and they would go for a load of coal and a load of whiskey at the same time. They would then haul both back to town.

Hugh and Denver Brandon were real characters. They worked in Hollywood, they were raised in Emery County, but they worked in Hollywood as prop people. Clyde Brandon built his cabin down here. He would take the summer off from Hollywood and he would give us pictures of Hollywood Stars like Festus on the Wagon Train, James Bond and some of those other old timers. Clyde would tell us about the movies and how they were made. He built his cabin in Reeder Subdivision, he brought up from a Hollywood set, the Daniel Boone doors. That was a big thing to go see the Daniel Boone doors that had been used in Hollywood.

Close by the mines was an old log bridge built by the pioneers. In the early days when the pioneers would try to come up to Joe's Valley and attempt to cross the river in the spring, all of their stuff would float away down the river. Hence the saying, "Come Hell or High Water." We are going to cross the river come hell or high water.

Where the Joe's Valley Dam is there was a bridge. When we would bring the cows up some would not cross the bridge. So we would have to drive them across the river. On the other side there was a little willow bunch and a nice spring of clear cold water. We would always stop and drink of that spring water when we brought the cows up. We would eat our lunch of Vienna of Vienna Sausage, that is the cowboys delight Vienna Sausage. That was the only meat you would have in a can.

On the way up with the cows we would pass a root cellar where dynamite had been stored and we would stop to explore and let the cows graze. Then past Reeder Subdivision we would have to swim the cows across Lowry Creek in high water.

The following is a story that is 80 percent true. Coming up just before you get to Reeder Subdivision, over to the left there was a little cabin. Folk lore has it that a man and a woman lived there and some how the man was shot dead. Who shot him is unknown. They buried him out back of the house in the garden.

Art Olsen told the story about how travel on the old road on the South side of the Cottonwood river had to go down under a rock ledge and that was where all the disasters happened. At the rock ledge the traveler was forced down into the river edge, where they frequently lost their clothes and other items in the high waters. Art said, "My grandmother had packed a trunk full of clothes. She loaded it into the wagon for the summer up here. As they tried to pass under the ledge, by the rivers edge, the trunk floated away in the high water. That was quite a loss as they were coming up for the year.

Forest Peterson told a story to Art about the people that came up to the Joe's Valley in 1916. Grandfather Abinadi was looking for a place when they left Paradise. They went over around Beaver, Utah looking and looked over that country, for land to own. While on that trip Abinadi (nick named Nad) said to my dad, Delon, come on I know where there is a spring. That is how they came to be here. My dad Delon organized some other homesteaders and they came to this valley. There were 7 homesteads established in this area. There were other homesteads established down where the reservoir is now and another one in upper Joe's. Which was the Kofford homestead.

When they decided to come here, one of the homesteaders was a Peterson and Forest Peterson was a little boy at the time. Forest Peterson was my Bishop when I was growing up. It was his dad that homesteaded here. He told us a story about, the old road in Straight Canyon, when the river was it's highest the ledge went right into the creek for about 100 feet. On the way back if you look close you can kind of see the ledge where it happened. When they came they had chickens plus everything that they were going to bring up for the year. Because the road was so steep and narrow, they would always send some one up ahead to stop traffic, such as another wagon coming down, until they got through.

We know that was a bad spot because of my grandmother and Forest. The way they talked about that ledge by the river. Sometimes the wagon boxes would be lifted up off the axel by the flood waters. To prevent this the pioneers had to chain the wagon box to the under carriage, to keep the wagon box on the wagon and prevent it from floating away.

My grandfather had a real disaster as they were coming up for the year in the spring of 1918. He and his wife stopped to watch the construction of the brand new road on the North side of Straight Canyon. It was being built with a steam shovel. The contractor used lots of dynamite and a lot of blasting. Abinadi and Hannah stopped and were watching the digging. When they heard the warning sound for the blast and everyone disappeared. They thought they are safe because of their distance from the blast. The blast goes off. Smoke goes up. Rocks start flying. My grandfather said to his wife, "Trade me places and you will be able to see better." Just as that happened a high flying rock, falling long after the others had landed, hit him on the shoulder and broke his shoulder, broke his arm, cracked a number of ribs and broke his leg. He also had internal injuries. Hannah yelled across the river to the construction workers for help. However the workers cannot get to him, without traveling long distances, either up or down the river. They could go up West to Seely Creek, which was just after you come out of Straight Canyon. The other option was to go East all the way back to the old log bridge you saw on the way up. Foyer Olsen tells the story that Hanna unhitched one of the team and slapped him on the rump and sent him across the high river water. One of the workers got on the horse and rode him back across the river.

The examination of Abinadi told them that Abinadi was hurt real bad. They loaded him into the wagon and took him to where he could be transported to the hospital in Provo. One of the workers took a team and wagon to the ranch to tell Foyer and George Olsen that it would be a while before their parents would be coming and to carry on and take care of things. These young boys were capable of doing just that. Abinadi never did really recover from that accident. He was left with an arm that was only good for eating and writing.

Those are some of the hardships experienced by the early settlers. The first settlers came in to this area about 1877, when Orange Seely and a group of other people came in from Brigham Young's last call.

Before the dam was built this was a big river in the spring time. Seely Creek, Lowry, Black Canyon and Cottonwood creek all flowed into Straight Canyon to make a river. The river was quite treacherous. If you look at the river channel in Castle Dale and Orangeville you can see how wide the old river bed was.

My great-grandfather was the second bishop in Castle Dale. His name was Henning. In those days we did not have the county government to organize things so the bishops took care of the needs of the settlement. If they needed a shingle mill or a saw mill the bishop organized it. Individuals did not start businesses, when they were first brought in to this area in the spring of 1885. The settlers needed shingles and they needed more lumber. Bishop Olsen called his 19 year old son and two older step brothers of Abinadi to go up to Potters Pond and Potters Canyon to build a mill. We still have the shingle making guillotine that shaved the shingles off when they drug the lumber in. The mill site was just 100 yards West of Potters Pond. The stream is still there that powered the water wheel.

In July of 1885 these 3 men in their late teens and early 20's went up and pitched their tent. Then their father the bishop came up from the valley to see how things were going. This was more than just a job it was a mission. They called it a mission. They were set apart by the bishop to perform that mission. The bishops real name was Henning Olsen Ungerman. He went by the name Olsen and his older family kept the name Ungerman from his first wife.

Bishop Henning blessed the boys and set them apart, he also blessed the mill site in humble prayer to the end and the purpose that would give the best service within their kin. That we would never under any circumstance turn away a man from the mill yard without filling his order and loading his wagon. They would be liberal to all in their camp that might come within the light of it's fires ( like for food, housing or other needs). He said this is the Lord's country and the Lord's people, you shall be blessed in this labor and I promise you in the name of Israel's God during these years and the duration of this mission, you my sons, neither you or your hired men shall come to sorrow or serious accident of any kind.

Turning to Nad or Abinadi, he said, "See that this is a house of prayer and a house of song. You are to take charge of the mill. Henning you are responsible for the building of the roads, bridges and hauling the timber and help wherever needed. Near accidents did happen, but none were serious, so that blessing was fulfilled.

A few years later Hannah was at the mill site, with Orange Seely the second's wife Trina, and their little daughters. Little Pearl was playing with the logs, when one big log rolled on her. There were no men in earshot or close by, those two women lifted that big log off this little girl. They talked about that for years, how these two women lifted this heavy log, that took horses and mules to drag it in but these two women lifted the log off.

Nad and his 2 brothers were there at the mill two summers. Then Nad married Hannah. Now all the bachelors have a cook in camp, they really liked that. It didn't take her long to clean up the camp and probably them too. The place began to look like a home and she was cooking good meals for them. The other two never married, they were bachelors all their life.

The mill supplied lumber and shingles for the valley of Castle Dale, Orangeville and others. The mill closed in the autumn of 1894. The mill was in operation about 9 years. Vaughan Reed later found some old shingles near a tree from the mill and took them down to the library when the library was just getting started. We hope to find some of those shingles in the library artifacts. By December of 1894, Abinadi was on his way to his mission in Samoa, where he served 3 and one half years.

Now the story of Joe's Valley begins. When he came back from his mission, he spent some time in Paradise and then he came up here. In 1916 they homesteaded here. William King was one of the original homesteaders. He soon gave up his interest to Leo Peterson. Leo Peterson was the top one up the creek now owned by Pressit, the second was owned by Marinas Peterson now owned by Lane Wilberg and family, then Olsen's here. Off in the corner to the West it was Claiborne Elder, he had a saw mill there. Then Fred Larsen the game warden, (he was a good one, he would track you day and night) he probably did what it takes ten wardens to do now days. He supposedly had a whole room full of rifles and things he had confiscated.

Just North of us Alisha Jones (went by the name of Ally Jones), Two Peterson's, Jones, Elder, and Larsen, the Fred Larsen homestead is the one with the cabin off to the right as your coming up, that Clay Willberg and his family have now. One of his sons is fixing it up. Where the reservoir is now there were 600 acres of land. James and Sarah Reynolds homesteaded in that area and there may have been others.

North of here in upper Joe's valley was the Charles E. Kofford homestead, he filed on some water in 1901 that was one of the earliest water filings. The people that own that property still have a good supply of water thanks to that filing by C. E. Kofford. He built the cabin in upper Joe's off to the right that is built of part stone and part wood. Some of Abinadi's family spent time there before they got this place.

When Abinadi and family came here, they began by clearing all the sage brush and lots of rocks that were piled up over in the fields. The younger boys did that, they were Bob, Wendell, Foyer and George. You can still see the piles of rocks they piled up. The cedar fence posts came from Reeder Mountain, some of those are still standing. The first cabin was built with a floor and side walls of wood and then they put a tent over the top they spent a summer in that. The Spring Cabin was built next to the spring. Hannah had a little pantry over the spring to keep things cold. Then they built the Fawn Light Cabin. Later the Mohawk Cabin was built. Each cabin has a name. They did have a smoke house here where they smoked their hams. Also they had a potato cellar in addition to a corral, a barn, a chicken coop and a pig pen. They did have an ice house, where ice would last late into the summer they used the ice to make home made ice cream.

Hannah would send the boys out into the sheep herds looking for bum lambs. They would bring the lambs to her in a gunny sack. She collected quite a number of bum or orphan lambs which she fed and raised.

In 1921, the Olsen's raised 230 bushels of wheat, 169 bushel of oats, 100 bushel of potatoes They planted or sowed some wheat, rye and alfalfa. They planted 7000 thoroughbred straw berrys and 200 goosberrys, currents and plums. They broke 20 acres of new ground and sowed seven acres of alfalfa and orchard grass. They hauled 300 posts from Reeder Mountain.

In 1924 the President of the United States signed the deed over to Abinadi for this homestead. It had taken him and his family 7 years to prove up on it. After that a lot of improvements were made.

In 1930 these seven homesteads came under fire financially because of the depression. All the homesteads changed hands except the Fillmore and the Olsen property. The Fillmore's subdivided their property. The Olsen homestead is the only one that is still owned by the original family. My dad's brothers and sisters each have a lot here and it all remains in the family with restrictive covenants. If they sell, they sell to another family member.

The Mohawk Cabin is where Abinadi entertained his guests. He had a fireplace there which was part of the first printing press for Emery County. He also gave Patriarchal Blessings there as he was a Patriarch. The place was called Crystal Park after a daughter.

My dad was a bachelor until he was 43 when he married Argene and when I (Art) was born, he was 46. He loved company. Cousins from both sides introduced them. Argene was from Provo. Her dad was a veterinarian in Provo. There is a diamond around here some place from one of Delon's previous fiances. Dad said he could not find a woman that wanted to live this kind of life but my mother did. When she arrived, dad had hired a man to come in and milk the cow. Mom watched that for a couple of days and she decided that she would dismiss the hired hand and learn to milk the cow her self and she did. She had to adjust to a rough life and to Castle Dale.

Two of the original homestead cabins are still standing here.

I (Hemming) was about 10 when they ended the real heavy farming with wagons and horses up here. We also had a 1955 Farnall C tractor. To bring a team and wagon up to the Olsen Ranch would take most of the day up Straight Canyon, from Castle Dale or about 3 hours trotting on horse back.

Our Uncle George Olsen took a team and wagon out on Horn Mountain, where the tv towers are and helped haul in a dinosaur for the CEU museum.

Dad wanted to have electricity up here so he put a water wheel behind where the smoke house is. He then diverted the water up above where the spring is now and sent it down across the water wheel. It actually turned that water wheel that had a bunch of gears on it and an automobile generator. The lights would vary up and down in brightness, it wasn't very efficient. That water wheel is now being used as a picnic table. There is an old metal water wheel in the ground where the old shingle mill once stood, as a kind of monument.

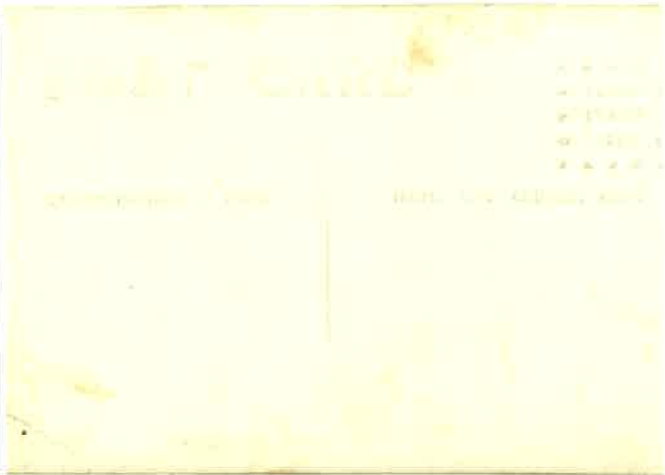
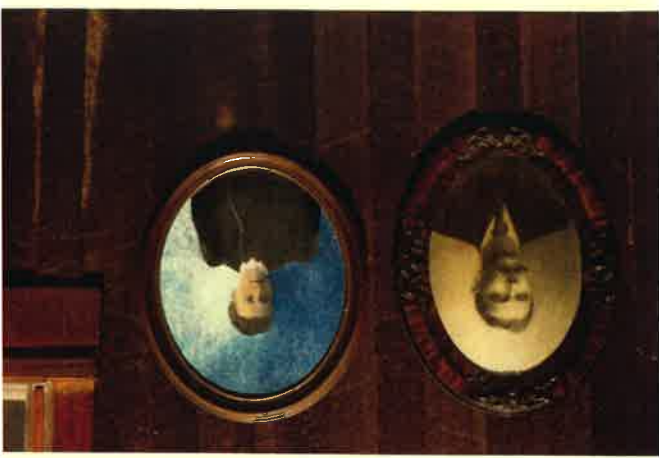
Delon had a dinner bell in a little tower built by Bruce Olsen. The bell was made in 1906.

Alan Olsen son of Foyer Olsen said, my dad and Uncle George spent a lot of time up here because Uncle Delon was working in the mines, making money for the development of this ranch. They cleared this field with teams and big chains dragging down across the ground. My dad and Uncle George dug the pond you see there with a Fresno scraper. My dad when he was of school age would miss the first 2 weeks of school, because he and Uncle George would have to dig the potatoes out of the ground and haul them to town. There was a saw mill up on Reeder Mountain and my dad and Uncle George would haul lumber from there to build some of the cabins here. Every even year we have a family reunion here. When it started there were about 50 or so, now there are 400 to 500 members that gather here for three or four days.

Alan Olsen said, "the thing about this place is that grand father "Nad" dedicated this place as a place where the family could gather together as a family. There is a special spirit here and most people feel it when they come here. We have a special bond with this place. When we come here we camp, we clean up and you can't even tell we had been here. We love this place and it is really special to be here and to be a part of the great family that established this place."



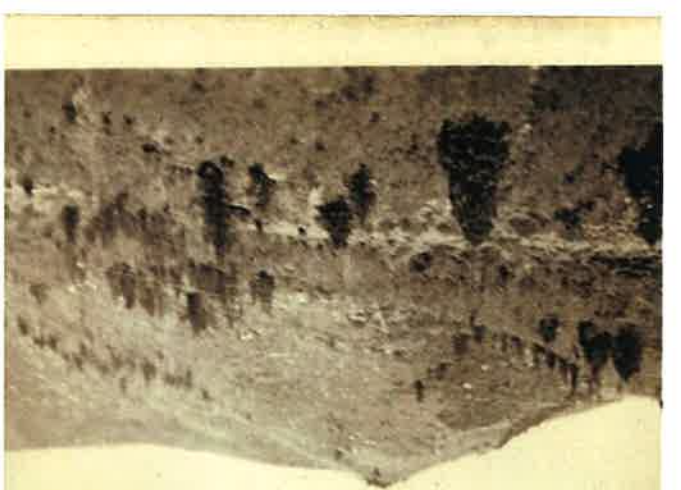
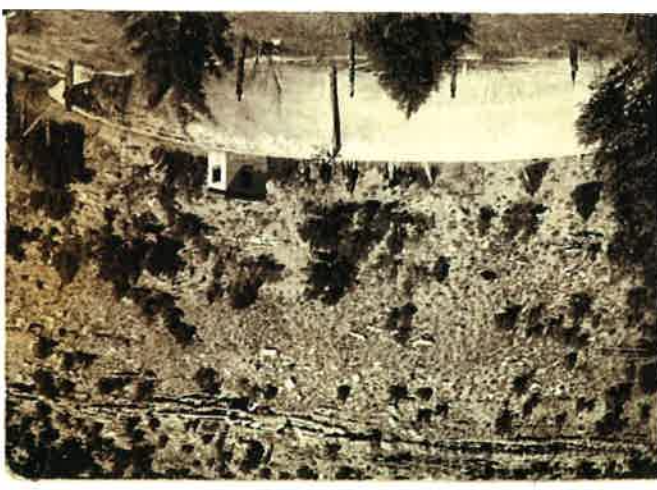
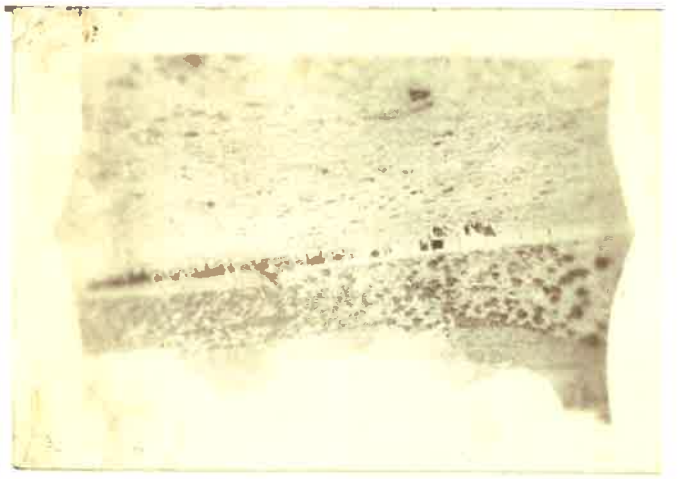
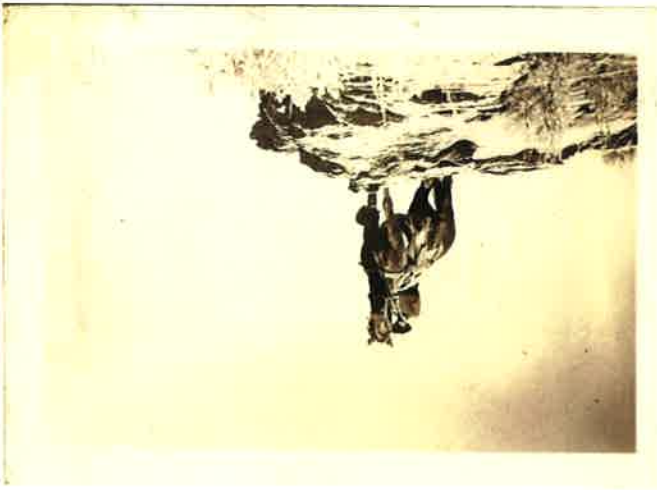
Forest  
14  
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Forest  
14  
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1972  
Alice



Drum family  
New Valley 1973







Hearts of Love  
like sweet-hells





