

Coal, Cuba, and Courage: The Adventurous Spirit of Annie C. Lind

by H. Elaine Lindgren

Annie Christine Johnson Lind was a remarkable woman who lived in rural Burleigh County from 1887 until her death in 1945.¹ She sought adventure, endured tragedy, and always took pleasure in challenging the "establishment." It was Annie who initiated a move to Cuba in 1900 where the Lind family participated in the formation of an American colony. After her return to North Dakota in 1902, she and her husband John resumed farming and made plans to begin mining the coal that underlay their land near Wilton. Five years later, just before the Lind Coal Mine was ready to begin operation, tragedy intervened, and the mine became Annie's sole responsibility. She courageously took on the challenge of running a mine and a family by herself. During that time, Annie continued to confront her powerful neighbors, the Washburn Lignite Coal Company and the Northern Pacific and Soo Line Railroads.²

Annie Johnson was born in Varmland, Sweden, December 11, 1864. At the age of seventeen, she immigrated with her parents to Hastings, Minnesota, where she was employed as a housekeeper by Judge Francis Marion Crosby. While in the judge's service, Annie took the opportunity to study the law books in his office. From the pages of these books, Annie built a fundamental knowledge of the law that proved valuable in later years.³

On July 22, 1887, Annie became a citizen of the United States and moved again with her parents, this

time to north-central Dakota Territory, where they settled in Grass Lake Township in what is now Burleigh County.⁴ Annie filed a claim on a homestead in her own name on June 6, 1889.⁵ Two weeks later, on June 21, she married John A. Lind in nearby Washburn.

John Lind was an immigrant from Sweden, born in Uldevalla in 1852. While in Sweden, he worked for Lindholmens Manufacturing Company in Goteborg as a machinist. In 1880 John and his brother,

Charles, immigrated to Altoona, Pennsylvania, and worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad. During this time, the

brothers changed their names from Aspelin to Lind. In 1883 John

migrated to Dakota Territory to establish a homestead. The evening before he was to go to the land office to select his property, John overheard two men speaking in Swedish, discussing the merits of available land. One of the men considered two quarter-sections to be the best: one had a spring on it, and the other looked like the entire area was tillable. Early

the next morning John hurried to the land office and selected the quarter-section with the spring.⁶ It was the northeast quarter of Section 6 in Ecklund Township where he settled and became known for his skill at blacksmithing.⁷

Between the years 1889 and 1898, Annie and John Lind had six children: Antoinette, born in 1890, John in 1891, the twins, Alfred and Charles in 1893, Anne in 1896, and Agnes in 1898. When the youngest child, Agnes, was not quite two years old, the Lind family embarked on an unlikely adventure.



The Cuban Adventure

At the same time the immigrant stream coming from Europe to North Dakota was expanding, some residents of North Dakota were busy seeking economic opportunities elsewhere. With the defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War, there was considerable American interest in capital investments in Cuba, Mexico, and Latin America. One historian described the Cuban opportunities in particular and pointed out the unscrupulous tactics of the land companies who hoped to lure colonists to Cuba. He noted:

. . . the greatest activity and enterprise was shown by real estate companies which secured options here and there, circularized farming areas of the United States with glowing literature, and conducted parties of home seekers to the particular jungles where they proposed to grow oranges and bananas.⁸

Among Annie Lind's papers was a booklet addressed to Mrs. John Lind, Wilton, North Dakota, published by the Cuban Land and Steamship Company: *What the camera saw in "La Gloria."* Since the document is not dated, it is impossible to determine whether this pamphlet might have been the catalyst that led Annie to arrange for passage to Cuba or if she received it after returning to North Dakota. In any case, it is representative of the kinds of literature that were intended to persuade.

The brochure described in glowing terms the colony of La Gloria, the first American colony to be established in the province of Puerto Principe, on the northern coast of the island of Cuba. It read:

The following pages show La Gloria as it is to-day, a typical American colony, the largest in the Island of Cuba, nestling at the foot of the Cubitas Mountains, swept by cooling trade winds, having an abundance of pure drinking water, with an elevation sufficient to ensure good drainage, and soil that needs neither fertilization nor irrigation. A delightful climate that affords great relief and in many instances a cure for all rheumatic, bronchial and catarrhal affections.

Amid such surroundings life proves pleasant and profitable: and a few American dollars combined with American enterprise and determination, will enable a man in a few years to provide for a life income. . .

La Gloria has: A fine school, Three



John A. Lind,
1883.

On opposite page: Annie C. Johnson in 1887 before she married John Lind. All photographs in this article are courtesy of John and Bill Lind, Bismarck, North Dakota, unless otherwise noted.

churches, Money order post-office, Grocery stores, Shoe store, Dry goods store, Hardware store, Barber shop, Blacksmith shop, Tailoring establishment, Bi-monthly newspaper, Job printing office, Saw mill, Cabinet shop. To which will be added in the near future numerous commercial and mercantile enterprises.⁹

Pictures and additional text portrayed an already established and thriving community. If it was not this specific piece of literature that persuaded the Linds to embark on their Cuban adventure, something or someone convinced them Cuba offered economic opportunities of such magnitude that it was worth the risk to move themselves and their six children to the island colony. Family stories indicate it was Annie, rather than John, who initiated this investment. The specific circumstances that led to her interest in Cuban settlement remain a mystery.¹⁰

On December 22, 1899, an article in the *Wilton News* reported that the entire Lind family intended to board a steamer in New York on January 13, 1900, bound for La Gloria, in the province of Puerto Principe (Camaguey), Cuba. There was some indication that John had misgivings about their decision. The paper noted:

When interrogated as to whether or not he had sold his farm, he stated that he had rented it to his brother-in-law for a period of two years as he was sufficiently provided for, in case Cuba



Certificate for ten shares of capital stock of the Cuban Land and Steamship Company, issued to Anna C. Lind, July 24, 1900. Map of Cuba showing La Gloria and Nuevitas by Brian R. Austin.

did not suit him, to return and again take up his residence in a country in which he know he could thrive at all times and under any circumstances.¹¹

Historical examination of the American colonies in Cuba has been limited.¹² There is evidence, however, of a renewed interest, with the recent publication of two articles on the Swedish-American settlement of Bayate, Cuba, established in 1904 by Alfred Lind (no relation to John Lind).¹³ Two sources give detailed information on the colony of La Gloria. A retrospective view of the colony comes from *The Last American* by Enrique Cirules, based on interviews he conducted in Cuba in 1970-71 with Willie Stokes. As a one-year-old child, Stokes moved with his parents to La Gloria in July of 1900 and lived there his entire life; he was described as the last American resident of the colony.¹⁴ *Pioneering in Cuba: A Narrative of the Settlement of La Gloria, The First American Colony in Cuba, and the Early Experiences of the Pioneers* by James M. Adams, published in 1901, chronicles the first six months in the life of the colony: Adams accompanied the first group of colonist to La Gloria and remained there, probably at the request of the Cuban Land and Steamship Company, to report on the development of the community.¹⁵

According to Adams, colonists arriving at La Gloria in early 1900 came in three waves, all sailing from New York aboard the steamer *Yarmouth*.¹⁶ The *Yarmouth* was described by the *New-York Daily Tribune* as "the first of three splendid steamships comprising the fleet of the Cuban Land and Steamship Company, which will make bimonthly trips between this port and Nuevitas, Cuba."¹⁷

The first contingent arrived in Nuevitas on January 4, 1900, where they learned, ". . . the town of La Gloria was as yet only a town in name, the foundation of its first building, the hotel, having just been laid. The lumber for the structure lay on the docks at Nuevitas."¹⁸ Since it would take another four days by ship to reach La Gloria, some forty miles to the west, the passengers spent a night of discomfort in Nuevitas before continuing. Adams remarked, "I slept, at intervals, on the lumber designed for the hotel at La Gloria. Often had I slept in hotels, but this was my first experience sleeping *on* one."¹⁹

Once the ship landed at the "port" of La Gloria, it was still a four-mile trek overland to the "city" of La Gloria, a trail Adams described as: ". . . one of the most wretched ever followed by a human being . . ."²⁰ He went on to elaborate the discrepancies in the colonists' expectations and the realities they faced, due largely to misrepresentation and disorganization on the part of the land development companies. He wrote:

We were in need of almost everything to furnish our tents or to begin agricultural operations. There was, to be sure, the "commissary," where the company had confidently assured us in its advertising literature "every necessary article from a plough to a knitting needle would be on sale; at the most reasonable prices." As a matter of fact, the commissary was almost as bare as the famous cupboard of old Mother Hubbard. . . .

The chief of the immediate problems which confronted the colonists and the officers of the company was the allotment of the land. . . . The colonists had contracted for it in small holdings, varying from a town lot, 25 x 100 feet in size, to a forty-acre tract. . . . According to the terms of the contracts, he did not purchase the land at all, but bought stock in a cooperative company and the land was a gift to him. . . . At the company's headquarters in New York, no plan of subdivision had been formulated further than a general promise in advertising circulars to allot the land in order of the numbers of the contracts. . . . Of the four or five thousand persons who had invested up to that time less than three hundred were at La Gloria, and there was not in Cuba even a list of the people who had made contracts with the company. . . .²¹

The Lind family arrived with the second group of colonists around January 20. Adams recorded, "Among the new arrivals were quite a number of women and children."²² He makes one specific reference to Annie (Mrs. John Lind) in a section of his volume devoted to listing the names of several colonists serving as officers in the newly formed organizations of La Gloria. She was an officer of the Cemetery Association.²³

Stories Annie told her grandchildren corroborate Adams's narrative and reaffirm the exploitative practices of the land companies. Upon the family's arrival in New York, Annie was told the fee for their passage to Cuba had been raised, but steamship officials had not counted on Annie's cunning. Before embarking on their journey, Annie had taken care to sew large pockets in her skirt. Here she kept the family's valuables, including the letter she had been sent, which quoted passage to Cuba for the whole family at \$100. En route to Cuba someone entered the Linds' stateroom. Annie suspected the intruder of searching for the letter in order to destroy the evidence of the earlier quoted price for passage, thereby forcing the Linds to pay the higher price. The letter, safely in Annie's pocket, was still there at the end of the voyage requiring the company to accept the \$100 as payment in full.²⁴

When they reached their first stop in Cuba, the port of Nuevitas, the Linds had to wait before proceeding inland to La Gloria. Instead of taking a ship on the outside water route as did Adams, the Lind family took an inland route. Annie and her children told of a boat that had to be poled and of having to walk part of the way. After the boat ride, the Linds climbed into ox carts for the rest of the journey. In places, jungle plants had to be chopped down to make way for the carts. Finally after the exhausting journey, the "city" of La Gloria appeared. As Annie remembered, it was "just people and tents."²⁵

In these crude circumstances, the Linds and their six children set up housekeeping, eventually building "a home with a wooden floor." The home doubled as a café and Annie became known for her excellent meals and fresh bread. Insects were a constant problem. Annie related her solution to insect-free meals. She put the table legs in cans of kerosene to keep the bugs from reaching the food.²⁶

The set of Cuban documents, which Annie kept throughout her life, is not complete but from the available documents, it seems the extent of the Lind investments was limited. John's initial investment on April 28, 1899, before the colony was established, was a contract for sale of twenty shares of capital stock in

"The American Colony of the Company" which referred to a deed for "5 acres of land" for the sum of \$90. Additional investments included a contract for sale, dated March 7, 1900, for two lots for \$50; a deed dated March 5, 1901, for a plantation lot for the sum of \$50; and an agreement dated September 6, 1901, for six town lots at \$150. Available records show John Lind's investments in the Cuban Land and Steamship Company totaled \$340.²⁷

Annie's records show a contract for sale, dated March 7, 1900, for ten shares of capital stock in The Cuban Land and Steamship Company for two town lots at \$50; a contract for sale for ten shares of capital stock in The Cuban Land and Steamship Company, dated March 31, 1900, for two town lots at \$50; and a contract for sale of land with The Cuban Colonization Company for two business lots in the city of Columbia, a community near La Gloria, for \$40. Records of Annie's investments totaled \$140 for six lots. There were no deeds in Annie's name and some of her contracts of sale of stock were later assigned to John Lind.²⁸

Many colonists, facing the unexpected rigors demanded by the primitive conditions found in La Gloria, returned home immediately. Annie, John, and their children were among those who saw the rugged journey to its end and elected to stay at least for awhile. Annie was apparently more committed to the venture than was her husband, who stayed for about a year and then returned to their North Dakota farm. Annie and the children remained in La Gloria for almost two years.

Excerpts from a letter Annie wrote to John in April 1901, after his return to the United States, document her continuing efforts to develop the land by planting grapes and her reluctance to leave Cuba, although she seemed willing to let John make the final decision:

... I haven't seen any of the grape roots. If you sent them to Florida it is possible that they were sent by express to Nuevitas and so they'll have to sit there until someone calls for them...

If you want us to come next spring it would be best if you let us know right away so that we can come there and plant and plow. I think it would be better for us to stay where we are for the time being, but you are to decide so that you are satisfied. We have been promised a school for next Fall but I can't guarantee we'll get it. It'll soon be 11:00 o'clock so I'll close. Nettie sends thanks for the money and every-

one sends greetings to papa.
Your Anna²⁹

Annie's reference to the promise of a school is another indication of the lack of expected facilities in La Gloria. Ultimately, Annie herself must have begun to doubt the wisdom of continuing the effort. A letter from Cuba dated November 14, 1902, acknowledging receipt of final payment for two lots in Columbia, was sent to Annie at her Wilton, North Dakota, address, establishing that Annie and the children were back on the farm with John by that time.³⁰ Since this letter indicated Annie had completed payments for the lots and was inquiring about getting a deed in her name, she must still have held out hope of an economic pay-off.

The money the Linds invested in their Cuban enterprise represented, for them, a substantial sum, particularly when considering the costs involved in traveling to and establishing residence in Cuba. However, the consequences of their investments, personally and to the state of North Dakota, were minor when compared to the experiences of William Lemke, a prominent North Dakota politician who held state offices and served in Congress. Lemke was the principal stockholder and director of the Land Finance Company, who, along with 187 other people, most of whom were also residents of North Dakota, invested about \$250,000 between 1907 and 1911 in land in Mexico. Historian James Vivian describes the dissolution of the company in 1975 as a "pathetic epilog in the story of a business venture that irritated and intermittently jolted North Dakota's affairs for at least fifty years."³¹

Although Annie's adventure in Cuba lasted only a short time compared to Lemke's and did not involve large sums of money nor did it attract statewide attention, the two investors had some things in common. Both were drawn into risky speculation and maintained a staunch optimism that did not easily wane even when the operations were failing.

It is important to note that, after returning to North Dakota, Annie took great pains to establish her right to the lots in Columbia, Cuba, by attempting to obtain official deeds confirming her contracts for sale. She apparently worked through two lawyers to achieve this end. A letter from W. D. Pierce dated November 17, 1902, not only acknowledges the completion of her payments for the two lots in Columbia, Cuba, but gives detailed instructions on how she might obtain official deeds.³²

Another letter, dated May 10, 1905, revealed she was still trying to obtain deeds made out in her name. Her attorney, Dan W. Clifton, advised her, as did the first lawyer, of the complicated process necessary to get official deeds. He wrote:

I also find, that a Married Woman can not hold, or have a Deed made out in their name, only with the written consent of the Husband. This must also be in Spanish and take the same course as the Power of Attorney or to avoid that, you can have the Deed made out in both your own, and Husbands names and then sign power of attorney by both and have deed made in name of both your Husband and yourself in Spanish. . . . This is a lot of red tape but never the less it has to be complied with and I would only be to willing to attend to it for you. . . I would also offer you a piece of advice and that is to sell those lots at Columbia the very first opportunity you had. As I am very much affraid they will never amount to much as there is at present not more than 25 persons living there now and not one but would gladly sell even at a loss to get rid of their property. I don't want to discourage you but as a friend I think best to tell you my opinion. La Gloria is dull enough but Columbia is worse. I will try and send you some money soon if only part, will have about 100 oranges this year if nothing happens to them. Had to build a new shed as my old one was made of palms and I was affraid of lice.³³

Since Annie's papers include deeds made out to John Lind but only contracts for sale of stock and receipts of payments for Annie, it seems likely that she was unsuccessful in obtaining official deeds to the property in Cuba. Her persistence indicates it was important to her to make the attempt.³⁴ Given her interest in the Cuban opportunity, Clifton's remarks about getting rid of the lots in Columbia must have been disheartening, forcing Annie to consider the futility of continuing the Cuban investments. Records show no additional investments or correspondence after the receipt of Clifton's letter in 1905.³⁵

In spite of her recognition that the Cuban investments were probably a dismal failure, Annie must have continued to harbor optimistic thoughts. She took care to keep the Cuban deeds and documents related to these investments in a small safe in her home. In later years when her house burned to the ground, the safe

and its contents survived, pulled from the ashes of the foundation. Annie kept them until her death on March 13, 1945, at the age of eighty years.³⁶

The Lind Family Coal Mine

Although the Linds' Cuban adventure would have to be considered a financial failure, Annie's life on the farm near Wilton would further test her grit and optimism. Their land was located north of Bismarck in the heart of rich coal deposits. Many families and landowners around that time were beginning to operate small commercial coal enterprises. Larger mines, such as the Wilton Mine, were also under development.

The Washburn Lignite Coal Company was founded in 1900, the same year the Linds left for Cuba. General W. D. Washburn bought 100,000 acres of railroad land in the Wilton area and broke ground for Wilton Mine #1 on land just west of Annie and John's home place.³⁷ An official report noted:

Within sixty days, the main entry was in about 600 feet with 150 feet of room. The mine is lighted by electricity. . . . The mine is now turning out 100 tons of coal per day, and by the close of the present year the proprietors expect to remove 400 tons per day . . . a day and night force are employed seven days a week. . . .³⁸

When Annie returned to Wilton from Cuba in 1902, Mine #1 was in full production. Anticipating further expansion of mining in the area, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul and Sault Saint Marie Railway (Soo Line) purchased a 100-foot right-of-way from the Linds in 1903.³⁹

A majority of the underground mines developed in North Dakota in the early 1900s were small enterprises, owned and operated by families. In 1910, 103 mines were listed in the Report of the State Engineer. Forty-five of the mines were listed as having as few as one, two, or three employees, all producing less tonnage than the Lind Mine. Fifty-two were listed as having from four to eighteen men. Larger enterprises, with work forces ranging from twenty-two to one hundred, included the Noonan Coal Mine, the Scranton Coal Mine, the Smith Dry Coal Mine, the Zenith Coal Mine, and the Lehigh Coal Mine. The largest mine, Wilton Coal Mine #1, owned by the Washburn Lignite Coal Company, was in a class by itself. In 1910 the Wilton Mine already employed 200 men and produced a daily average output of 400 tons.⁴⁰ The Wilton-Washburn

enterprise led the field of coal development in North Dakota during the decades of 1900-1920.⁴¹

The success of the Wilton Mine, along with that of small family enterprises, probably encouraged the Linds to develop their own mine. In 1906 John Lind excavated an incline tunnel to the coal deposits on their land, looking forward to expanding the operation and opening a mine for commercial trade, but he would not live to see the official opening. On the evening of May 10, 1907, John went to the mine to do some work. The tragedy that unfolded was reported in the *Wilton News* some two weeks later:

Another mine catastrophe occurred here when John Lind and his son and daughter lost their lives from suffocation in a mine on their farm. Lind had a private mine from which he supplied his home with fuel. It is reached by an incline of 400 feet, the bottom of the shaft being sixty feet below the surface. Lind had been working on the shaft preparatory to operating it, but had not provided an air shaft. At night when he went to the mine to do some work and later his wife sent their son, 16 years old, into the mine for help. The son not returning, the mother sent a 10-year-old daughter to ascertain what delayed the boy. Neither returning, the mother herself went in search of the family. She entered the mine about half way when the light of her lantern was extinguished and she was compelled to return by the fumes of escaping gases. She enlisted the help of neighbors and a doctor of Wilton and it was discov-

ered that the father, son and daughter had been overcome and were dead . . .⁴²

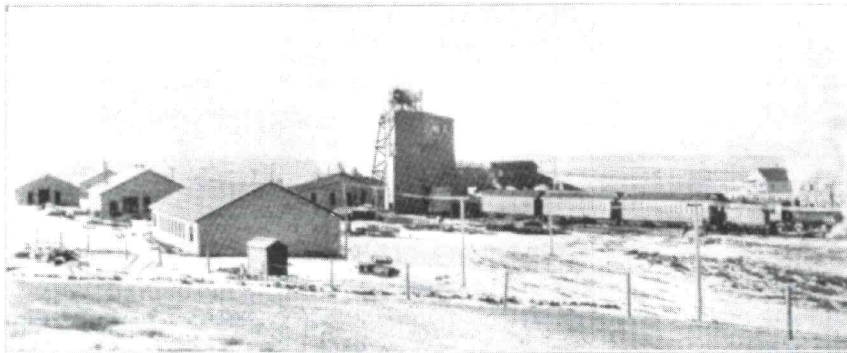
A 1909-1910 report of the state engineer indicates there was an ignorance about mine safety, as the deaths in the Lind Mine evidence. The report noted, ". . . Due to the entire absence of explosive gases which necessitates an abundant supply of good air, ventilation is sometimes neglected and the air furnished is not sufficient. Although this condition imposes no danger it sometimes reduces the efficiency of the miners. . ."⁴³

At age forty-two, Annie was a widow with four remaining children: Antoinette, almost seventeen, the twins Alfred and Charles about fourteen, and eight-year-old Agnes. In spite of this tragic event, Annie continued with the plans to develop the mine commercially. She officially opened the Lind Coal Mine several months after the deaths of her husband and their children, John and Anne. At first, Annie leased the mine to a nephew, then for a few years to non-relatives and in 1919 her son, Alfred, took over as superintendent. Throughout this period, Annie lived close by, retained ownership, and continued to oversee the operations of the mine. The Lind mining operation lasted until 1936.⁴⁴

Over the years, North Dakota state engineers' reports provided descriptions of the Lind mine:

The Lind mine is owned and ably operated by Mrs. A. C. Lind. It is located about two miles east of Wilton, and on a twelve-foot bed of lignite of which about seven feet is mined. There is about fifty feet of overburden, and the

The Coal Mine With the Largest Output in North Dakota



The Washburn Lignite Coal Company's plant at Wilton, North Dakota, is considered to be the largest coal mine in the State, and only shows what can be done by a mining company in North Dakota if sufficient capital is available for development purposes.

Advertisement for the Washburn Lignite Coal Company, from a special Business Bulletin devoted to the coal industry, published by the Minot Association of Commerce, dated January 15, 1918.

The opening of the Lind mine in 1907, showing the incline shaft on the far left.



coal is delivered through a slope, being hauled up by a team at the surface. Tamarack props are used in the rooms, no timbering is done in the entrees, and little system is adopted in the plan of work, but the mine appeared safe, and was well ventilated by a furnace and air shaft on December 20, 1909.⁴⁵

The report from 1913-1914 added:

The powder is bought in 200-pound lots and stored in the mine. Shot firing is done at noon and in the evening. A tiple which permits the direct loading of cars into wagons and sleighs has been built. Fair ventilation is secured by means of an air shaft.

The mine was listed as having six mine cars with a capacity of 1,000 pounds each.⁴⁶

A 1926 report further described the operation of the "small wooden tiple," in which the coal was delivered to it "by a cable hoist pulled by a team of horses." Also noted in that report was a fire burning in the old section of the mine "for a considerable time, concrete brattices have been erected, sealing off the fire area. No trouble is encountered from the fire as it is thoroughly sealed off."⁴⁷

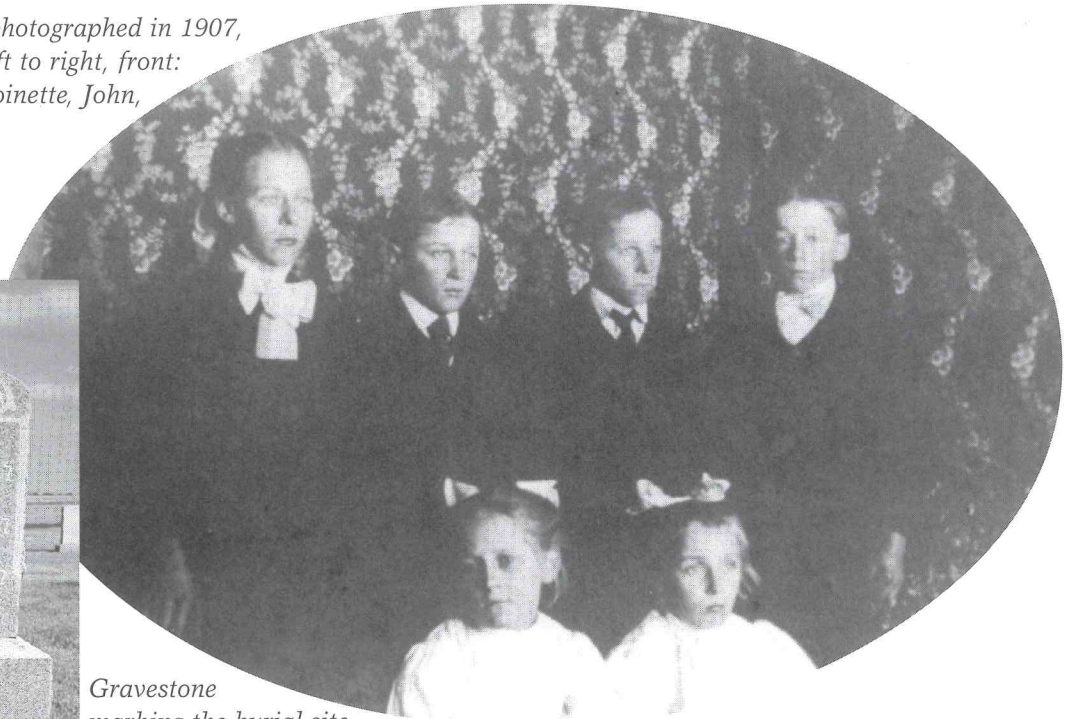
The Lind Mine remained a small operation, with a workforce of only a few men. Over the course of its operation, the number of employees during the winter season ranged from a low of three men in 1916 to a high of nine men in 1933.⁴⁸ It was common for Annie to board at least two miners and she cooked meals

regularly for miners and haulers.⁴⁹ Peak production of the Lind Mine, more than 4,000 tons, occurred in the years 1917, 1920, 1921, and 1935. Between 1909 and 1936, the mine produced 78,048 tons of coal, mostly for local trade. The price per ton was \$1.50 in 1909, hitting a high of \$2.46 in 1925 and declining to \$1.47 in 1936, the last year the mine was in operation.⁵⁰

In April 1915, for some unknown reason, Annie decided to change residences. She contracted with a Wilton builder, John Skei, to construct a small home on her land in Grass Lake Township, less than a mile from her home place in Ecklund Township. For \$860 the contractor agreed "to furnish all materials for and erect a frame house 20 x 24 - 12 ft. post. Barn 14 x 34 - 8 ft. post with shed roof. Toilet 4 x 4 - 6 ft. post, according to plans and specifications. . . ." Annie provided him with a down payment of \$560 in June 1915.⁵¹ By 1916 she was comfortably settled in her new home. She was in sight of the old home place and could still keep a careful eye on the continuing development of her powerful neighbor, the Washburn-Wilton enterprise.⁵²

As Annie was settling in to her new home, Wilton Mine #1, west of the Lind Mine, began to play out and the Washburn Lignite Coal Company stepped up the development of Mine #2 located east of the Lind Mine. This effort required the construction of a railroad spur of the Soo Line which connected Mine #1 and Mine #2 on the easement purchased in 1903. A special miners' train began operation in 1917, transporting miners from their homes in Wilton to Wilton Mine #2.⁵³ Mine #1 was already connected to the main Soo Line west of the mine where the railroad went north from Bismarck to Wilton.

All six of the Lind children, photographed in 1907, before the mine accident. Left to right, front: Anne and Agnes. Back: Antoinette, John, Alfred, and Charles.



Courtesy of the author.

Gravestone marking the burial site of Annie's husband, John Lind, and their two children, Anne and John.

Operations at Mine #2 soon surpassed that of Mine #1. The map on the next page shows the location of the tipple for Mine #2 just across the road from Annie's home place. The underground excavations of Mine #2 extended under most of Section 5 and across the section line into Section 6 just south of Annie's boundary line. In fact, the mines were so close in Section 6 that the Lind miners on one occasion accidentally "holed into the Washburn mine."⁵⁴ Before Mine #2 closed in 1930, there were also underground tunnels extending south in Section 8.

In 1922, due to the rapid growth of Mine #2, Washburn negotiated with Annie to purchase another right-of-way, this time running north from Mine #2 across a quarter of Section 32 and connecting with the Northern Pacific Railroad which crossed both quarter-sections of Annie's land.⁵⁵ By 1926 several brick buildings had been constructed near the tipple area of Mine #2 and included "a power plant, office, store room, blacksmith shop, bathroom with showers, fan building and powder magazine."⁵⁶ Several small homes were brought in for miners just across the road from Annie's place.⁵⁷ She was surrounded by coal mines and railroads.

In 1928 the Washburn family sold the mines to Otter Tail Power Company of Fergus Falls, Minnesota,

and in March of 1930, the Washburn-Wilton property was leased to the Truax-Traer Company of Minot, marking an end to an era. Underground mining gave way to new operations which converted to large-scale strip mining.⁵⁸

Annie was not intimidated by her successful and more powerful neighbors. Her grandsons, Bill and John Lind, vividly recounted Annie's enthusiasm as she remembered her "troubles" with Washburn and the railroads. Annie relished telling stories about defending her rights. These accounts reflect her satisfaction with attempts to resist intimidation and an eagerness to take on her adversaries, even in court.⁵⁹

In the court records located for this article, Annie was always the plaintiff, initiating the action. Her own accounts portrayed herself as triumphant, but documents indicate that she did lose some of her confrontations. Unfortunately, transcripts of the cases that ended up in court have been destroyed, so the legal arguments and the colorful personal testimony that may have been recorded cannot be reviewed. From the sources available, it would seem that Annie initiated several actions related to her railway right-of-way agreements.

In 1904 Annie requested and was granted a private crossing over the Soo Line right-of-way in Section 6.⁶⁰ A warranty deed, bearing her signature and dated

February 7, 1910, granted a right-of-way in Section 32 to the Northern Pacific Railway Corporation but delineated conditions to be met by the railroad concerning water rights:

... that said Northern Pacific Railway Company as a part of the consideration and agreement now on file in the County Court and heretofore referred to as a part of this indenture, shall build a substantial culvert on Southwest Quarter of Southwest Quarter . . . of said section thirty-two (32) for water to flow under from spring and that said Railway Company shall not use any of said water.⁶¹

A judgment recorded in 1911 dismissed Annie's complaint, which claimed the right-of-way in Section 6 had been abandoned, and required her to pay the court costs of \$27.70.⁶²

In July 1932 Annie made another attempt to regain this property but was again denied. The court's judgment noted, "That the Plaintiff, Annie C. Lind, be and she is hereby forever enjoined, and restrained from asserting any right, or interest in or to said premises, or lien or incumbrance thereon or from asserting any rights to any roadway or crossing over or across the above described real estate." This time Annie had to pay \$71.10.⁶³

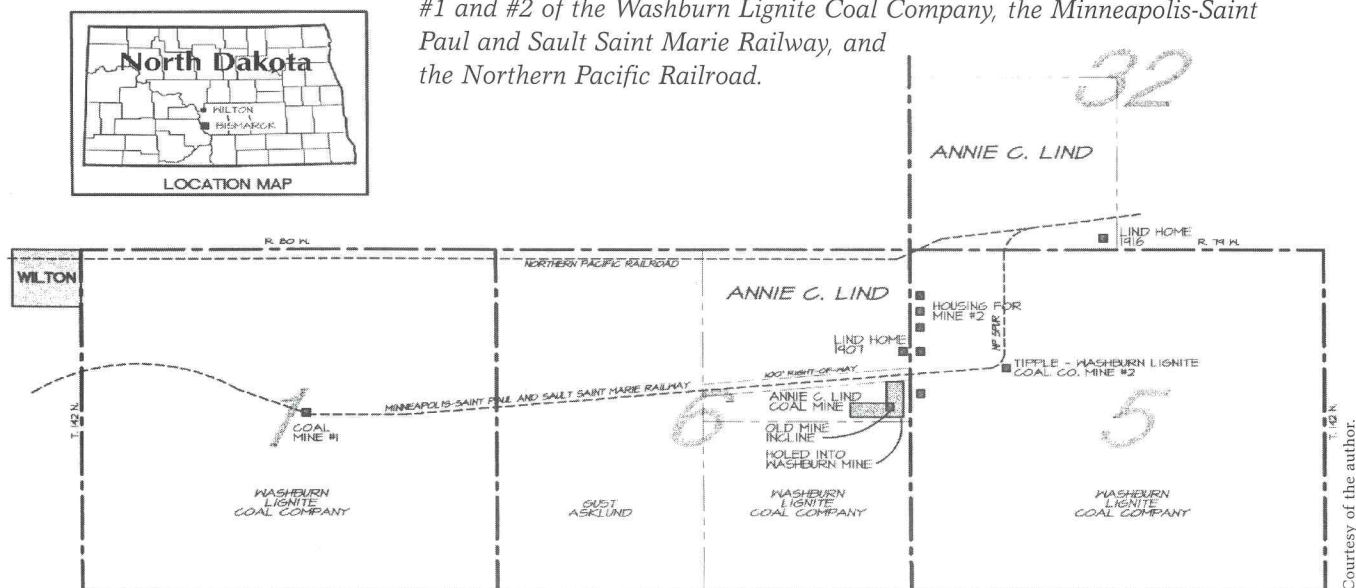
A reasonable explanation of these lawsuits is that in 1911, before Mine #2 had been developed, Annie tried

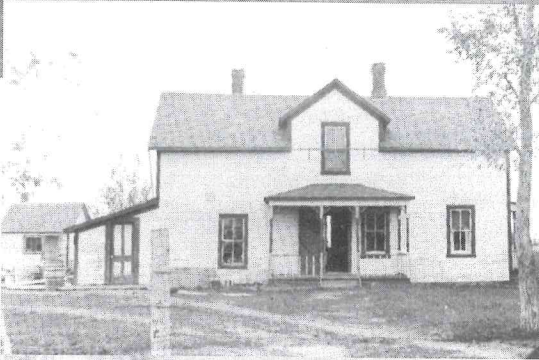
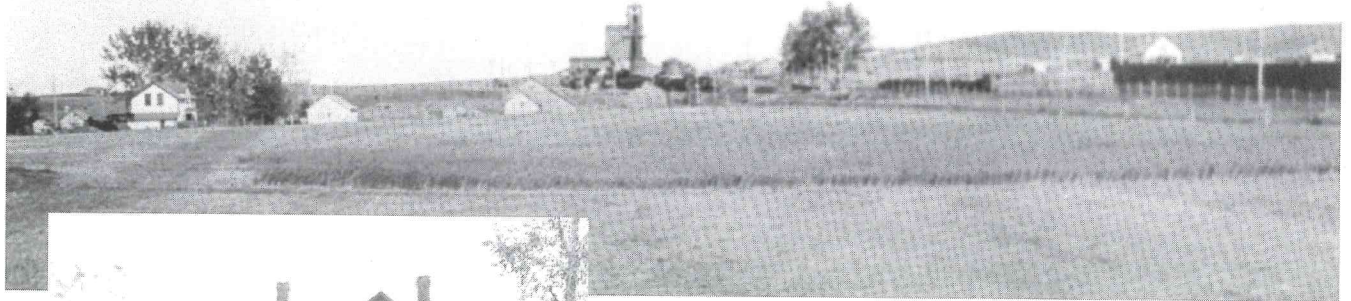
to regain her rights to the 100-foot strip just north of her home place, thinking no development was going to occur. After Mine #2 closed in 1930, she made another attempt, but the railroad would not yet relinquish the land. It is probable that there were a number of disagreements regarding the right-of-way easements with the Soo Line and Northern Pacific that the parties settled informally.

A mystery surrounds another case in which Annie, as the plaintiff, established her right to the two quarter-sections of land that had been hers since the death of her husband. The defendant was John Albert Johnson, who apparently leased the Lind Mine and was superintendent from about 1916 to 1918.⁶⁴ At the trial, Annie testified in her own behalf. Others called to support her statements included her son, Alfred Lind, a nephew, Axel Hedburg, and friends and neighbors T. R. Atkinson, John Ecklund, and C. E. Carlson. Johnson testified in his own behalf with no supporting statements. On June 3, 1918, the jury declared, "We the jury in the above entitled action find in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendant . . ." ⁶⁵ Since family members do not remember Annie mentioning this confrontation, one can only speculate that Johnson felt he could intimidate Annie, a widow, to relinquish her land. In any case, no one else supported his claim and the court confirmed Annie's ownership. Annie's two quarter-sections of land remain in the family, currently owned by four of her grandsons.

Throughout her years, Annie continued to apply the

Map showing the location of Annie Lind's home property in relation to Mines #1 and #2 of the Washburn Lignite Coal Company, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul and Sault Saint Marie Railway, and the Northern Pacific Railroad.





Annie Lind's home place (to the left), with her house facing the tipple of Mine #2 (center) of the Washburn Lignite Coal Company across the road to the northeast. Middle: A front view of the house, which faces east. Bottom: Annie Lind and her four surviving children, about 1920. Left to right: Agnes, Charles, Annie, Alfred, and Antoinette.

savvy she had begun to acquire so many years previously in the Hastings, Minnesota, office of Judge Crosby. On a shelf in her home, she kept and frequently referred to a set of reference law books which she eventually passed on to her son Alfred.⁶⁶

In November of 1919 during a fuel crisis, the governor of North Dakota, Lynn Frazier, issued an executive proclamation announcing the seizure of thirty-four unionized mines under martial law provisions.⁶⁷ The seizure was short lived but as a result of negotiations with the national United Mine Workers, miners were to be granted an increase in pay. Annie's grandsons remember her telling of receiving a letter stating that if she didn't comply with new regulations she would go to jail and have to pay a \$50 fine. Her reasoning at the time was, "I've worked hard, guess I could write a letter saying I am not going to comply. As far as going to jail I guess it would be kind of nice to have the county take care of me for awhile." She wrote a protest letter but she received no answer, nor did she go to jail. As to why the matter was dropped, Annie's response was, "Well, that lawyer would be the same one I beat on the water rights."⁶⁸

Forever an Optimist

On June 2, 1939, Annie's home in Grass Lake Township was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Miners working nearby saw the strike and were responsible for saving most of her furniture. As the house burned, Annie saw John Skei, the man who had built the house, in the crowd. Annie was not one to waste time with regrets, and, on the spot, she gave him a down payment of \$100 to construct a new home. She later changed her mind when family and friends

convinced her to buy a home in the nearby town of Wilton instead.

Annie's grandsons remember her as a "no-nonsense person," outspoken, and keenly interested in world affairs. She read the newspaper every day and was always ready to discuss politics but had little time for "gossip." She was an avid supporter of a proposal for the establishment of an international language called Esperanto. During World War II, Annie foresaw political complications resulting from the United States' cooperation with the U.S.S.R. and warned, "The way they persecute their people, they will soon be our enemies." Annie had a reputation for being well-organized, and every afternoon she set aside time to read a little and take a short nap.

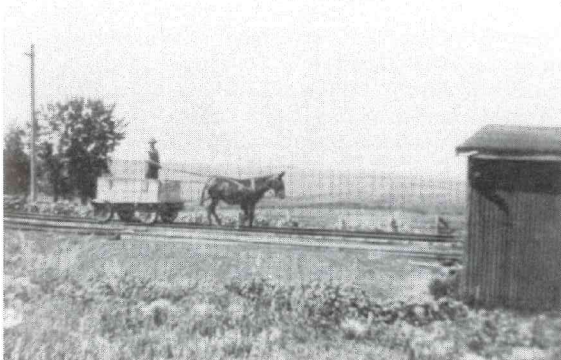
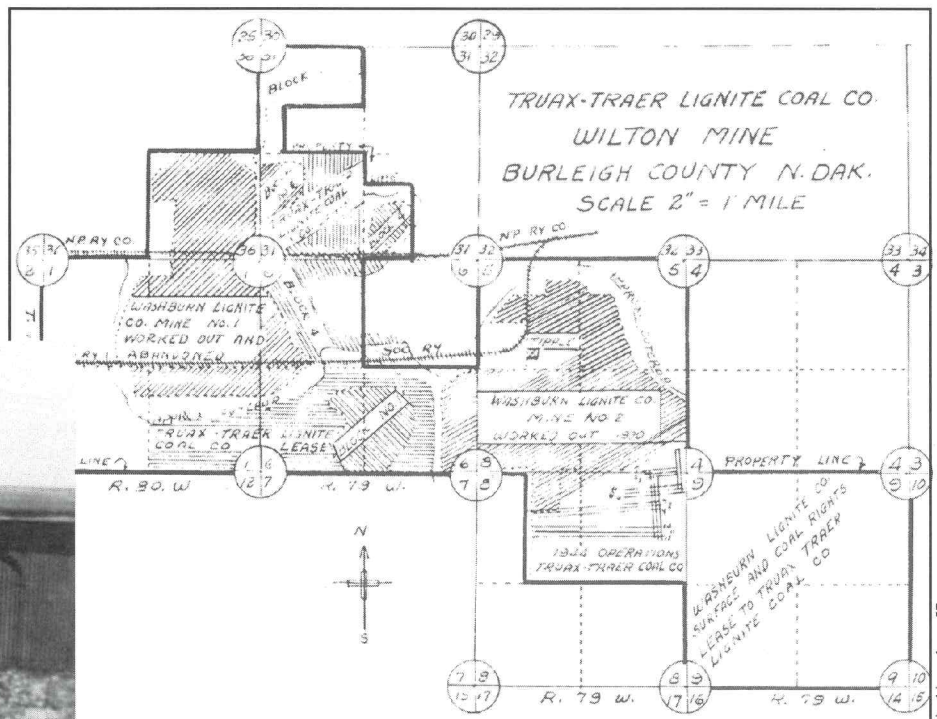
Annie was a member of the Sunne Lutheran Church and all of her children were confirmed in the faith. She attended services regularly until her hearing failed. After Annie's attendance dropped off, the minister came to call, probably concerned one of his flock might be straying. His concern was heightened when he noticed a copy of the *Koran* on Annie's shelf along side the law books. He need not have worried about her leaving the Lutheran fold. Annie's library merely reflected her eclectic mind. According to the family stories, the minister proceeded to lecture Annie



Annie Lind, on the porch of her house in Wilton, North Dakota, in the early 1940s.

Map of Wilton Mine and the underground mine workings, dated December 1944, showing the property line, the worked-out Wilton Mines #1 & 2, and the active operations.

Inset: Coal car pulled by a mule; the photograph was probably taken in the vicinity of Wilton Mine #2.



cited in endnote 57.

about how good the Lord had been to her. In her own indomitable and challenging style, Annie offered her own interpretation of the situation by telling him an old joke: "A man who had cultivated a large, beautiful, and bountiful garden was visited by his minister. The minister proceeded to tell him to thank the Lord for his garden. The man replied, 'You should have seen this place when the Lord had it all to himself!'"

Stories, documents, and related accounts all confirm Annie was an incurable optimist. She left a legacy of coal, Cuba, and courage; among the first to take on a risky adventure, fight for her rights, or put the minister in his place. Throughout her life, in spite of failure and tragedy, Annie maintained her undaunted spirit and went out of her way to seek adventure and confrontation.

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NOTES

1. Annie signed her name on some documents as Annie and on others as Anna.

2. Information collected on the life of Annie C. Lind began with an extensive interview with her grandsons, Charles William (Bill) and John Lind of Bismarck, North Dakota, on August 20, 1992; noted hereafter as the Lind interview. Both of the Linds gave me access to their collections of family records. Of particular interest were original documents related to the Cuban investments of Annie and her husband, John Lind, which included contracts for sale of stock, stock certificates, receipts, deeds, letters and an advertising pamphlet. The collections also included photographs, newspaper clippings and miscellaneous papers. Since 1992 I have had access to the collections and have reviewed the documents several times, photocopying many of them, and have maintained contact with the Linds, both by telephone conversations and repeated visits to Bill Lind's home.

3. Beth Hughes Bauman and Dorothy J. Jackman, editors, *Burleigh County: Prairie Trails to Hi-Ways* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1978), 149.

4. Citizenship document, State of Minnesota, Annie C. Johnson, July 22, 1887. Lind Family Collection, Bismarck, North Dakota.

5. Annie C. Johnson filed on a homestead in Grass Lake Township (SW quarter of Section 32, Township 143, Range 79) June 6, 1889. On November 7, 1890, she relinquished the claim to her husband, John Lind, who filed on the land as a Timber Culture. He received the final certificate for this property August 5, 1899. Microfilm, Dakota Tract Books, Reel 41, Vol. 130. North Dakota State University Library, Fargo, North Dakota.

6. Bill Lind, telephone conversation, October 29, 1999.

7. *Burleigh County: Prairie Trails to Hi-Ways*, 149.

8. Leland H. Jenks, *Our Cuban Colony* (New York: Vanguard

Press, 1928), 141-2.

9. *What the camera saw in "La Gloria."* Pamphlet addressed to Mrs. John Lind, Wilton, North Dakota. No postmark. Included descriptions and illustrations of the following images: A Typical Plantation, A Comfortable Home, An Orange Tree, Public School, Methodist Church, view from the Porch of the Company Office, Tennis Court, and A Prosperous Plantation. Lind Family Collection, Bismarck, North Dakota.

10. Lind interview.

11. *Wilton News*, December 22, 1899.

12. See, for example, Russell H. Fitzgibbon, *Cuba and the United States, 1900-1935* (Menasha, Wis.: Collegiate Press, George Banta Publishing Co., 1935); Lowry Nelson, *Rural Cuba* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950); A. Hyatt Verrill, *Cuba Past and Present* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1914); Irene A. Wright, *Cuba* (New York: Macmillan, 1910).

13. Marilyn McGriff, "Minnesota Swedes Raising Cane," *Minnesota History*, 56, no.5 (Spring 1999):286-300; Thomas Gustafsson, "Den svenska kolonia på Kuba," *Vi*, NR 41/42 (9 oktober, 1997):22-29.

14. Enrique Cirules, *The Last American* (Havana, Cuba: Jose Marti Publishing House, 1987).

15. James M. Adams, *Pioneering in Cuba: A Narrative of the Settlement of La Gloria, The First American Colony in Cuba, and the Early Experiences of the Pioneers* (Concord: Rumford Press, 1901), 25.

16. *Ibid.*, 18.

17. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 31, 1899:10.

18. Adams, 17 and 32.

19. *Ibid.*, 41.

20. *Ibid.*, 47.

21. *Ibid.*, 69-74.

22. *Ibid.*, 86.

23. *Ibid.*, 218.

24. Lind interview.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Documents of land transactions for John Lind. Lind Family Collection.

28. Documents of land transactions for Annie Lind. Lind Family Collection.

29. Partial letter, dated April 1901, written in Swedish by Annie from La Gloria, Cuba, and sent to her husband John who was at that time visiting relatives in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Translation by James Kaplan, Fargo, North Dakota. Lind Family Collection.

30. Letter written by W. P. Pierce of Columbia, Cuba, November 14, 1902, to Mrs. Anna C. Lind, Wilton, North Dakota. Lind Family Collection.

31. James F. Vivian, "Chasing Rainbows; William Lemke and the Land Finance Company, 1907-1975," *North Dakota History* 54, no.3 (Summer 1987):15. For additional information on Lemke's career see Vivian's article, 15-25, and Edward C. Blackorby, *Prairie Rebel: The Public Life of William Lemke* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963).

32. Letter from W. P. Pierce to Anna C. Lind, Wilton, North Dakota, November 14, 1902. Lind Family Collection.

33. Letter written by Dan W. Clifton of La Gloria, Cuba, May 10, 1905, to Mrs. Annie C. Lind of Wilton, North Dakota. Lind Family Collection. The letter is quoted as it was written with no corrections of spelling or grammar.

34. Among Annie's papers are two documents signed by the Secretaria de Estado y Justicia, República de Cuba, both dated January 9, 1903. She must have attempted to get the necessary governmental documents but since she was still in the process of acquiring the deed in 1905 her efforts must not have been successful.

35. Lind Family Collection.

36. Lind interview.

37. *Wilton Diamond Jubilee, 1899-1974* (Wilton: Wilton News, 1974), 13. For an extensive history of the Washburn Lignite Coal Company, see Frances Wold, "The Washburn Lignite Coal Company: A History of Mining at Wilton, North Dakota," *North Dakota History* 43, no. 4 (Fall 1976):4-20.

38. *Eleventh Annual Report of the Commissioners of Railroads to the Governor of North Dakota* (Bismarck: Tribune, State Printers and Binders, 1900), 227.

39. Judgement Number 1897 *Annie C. Lind, Plaintiff vs. Bismarck, Washburn and Great Falls Railway Company, a corporation and Minneapolis, St. Paul, & Sault Ste Marie Railway Company, a corporation* (December 21, 1911). Judgement Book C, Burleigh County, Bismarck, North Dakota, 492-3. Within the text of this judgment there is a reference to the sale of the right-of-way by Annie C. Lind and John Lind on June 1903 to the Bismarck, Washburn, and Great Falls Railway Company. This railway corporation merged with the Minneapolis, Saint Paul and Sault Saint Marie Railway Corporation in 1904 (Soo Line).

40. By comparison, the Lind Mine that year employed four men and produced an average daily output of fourteen tons. *Fourth Biennial Report of the State Engineer to the Governor of North Dakota for the Years 1909-1910*. Public Document No. 30 (Bismarck: Tribune, State Printers and Binders, 1910), 70-5.

41. Colleen A. Oihus, *A History of Coal Mining in North Dakota, 1873-1982* (Educational Series 15, North Dakota Geological Survey, 1983), 42.

42. *Wilton News*, May 24, 1907.

43. *Fourth Biennial Report of the State Engineer*, 57.

44. Lind interview.

45. *Fourth Biennial Report of the State Engineer*, 86.

46. *Sixth Biennial Report of the State Engineer to the Governor of North Dakota for the years 1913-1914*. Public Document No. 19 (Devils Lake, N. Dak.: Journal Co. Publishing, 1914), 126, 90.

47. *Eighth Annual Report*, Coal Mine Inspection Department, State of North Dakota. Bismarck, North Dakota, 1926, 22.

48. John M. Kjos and Michele Schreiner. Technical Report, AML Cultural Resources Study, Vol. 3. Submitted to AML Division, North Dakota Public Service Commission 1984. Unpublished Manuscripts Archeology and Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, North Dakota, Burleigh-7.

49. Lind interview.

50. Kjos and Schreiner.

51. Contract Agreement with builder John Skei. Lind Family Collection.

52. Lind interview.

53. Wold, 13.

54. The map on page 11 was compiled using the *Standard Atlas of*

Burleigh County, North Dakota (Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1912); "Series 505, Workman's Compensation Bureau Coal Mine Map Inventory," State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, North Dakota. This series includes plats of the Lind Mine for the years 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, of Wilton Mine #2 for the years 1923 and 1929, and the Truax Traer Coal Company map of the Wilton Mine, 1944; and interview information.

55. Warranty Deed, Annie C. Lind to Washburn Lignite Coal Company, September 26, 1922, Burleigh County Book 177, Deed Record No. 177, Bismarck, North Dakota, 87.

56. *Eighth Annual Report*, 21.

57. Lind interview.

58. Wold, 18.

59. Lind interview.

60. *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners of Railroads to the Governor of North Dakota* (Bismarck, N. Dak.: Tribune, Printers and Binders, 1904), xxi.

61. Warranty Deed, Annie C. Lind to Northern-Pacific Railway Corporation, Burleigh County Book 88, Document No. 20351, Bismarck, N. Dak., 431.

62. Judgement No. 1897, 493.

63. Judgement No. 6308, *Annie C. Lind, Plaintiff, vs. The Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway Company, a corporation, The Truax-Traer Coal Company, a foreign corporation, and any and all persons claiming any estate or interest in or lien or encumbrance upon the property described in the complaint herein, Defendant, and Washburn Lignite Company, a corporation, Defendant and Intervenor*. Judgement Book L, Burleigh County, Bismarck, North Dakota, 347.

64. *Seventh Biennial Report of the State Engineer to the Governor of North Dakota for the Biennial Period Ending June 30, 1916*. Public Document No. 25. (Fargo: Walker Bros. & Hardy) 1515; *Eighth Biennial Report of the State Engineer to the Governor of North Dakota for the Biennial Period ending June 30, 1918*. Public Document No. 26. (Bismarck: Tribune Printing Co.) 2009.

65. Judgement No. 2627F *Annie C. Lind, Plaintiff, vs. John Albert Johnson, Defendant* (June 3, 1918). Judgement Book F, Burleigh County, Bismarck, N. Dak., 276-7.

66. Henry Campbell Black, *A Law Dictionary* (St. Paul: West Publishing, second edition, 1910); *American Law and Procedure* (Chicago: LaSalle Extension University, 1910, 1911, 1912).

67. Thomas Shilts, "To Prevent a Calamity Which Is Imminent": Governor Frazier and the Fuel Crisis of 1919," *North Dakota History* 63, no. 1 (Winter 1996):6.

68. Annie's grandsons, Bill and John Lind, offered their recollections of her conversations, personality, and personal history that follow in the interview with the author on August 20, 1992.