

# bio

## Eidsvollman Bio PAUL THORSEN HARILDSTAD (1764-1843)

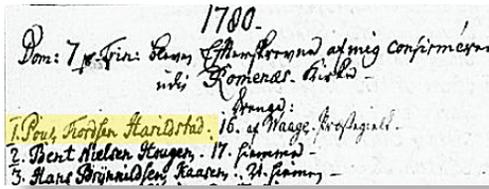
by Erik Tøndevold, Nesøya, Norway.



Gudbrandsdalen is Norway's central valley and has been called "dalenes dal" (the valleys' valley). The written history goes 1000 years back. Only one Eidsvollman lived most of his life in Gudbrandsdalen.

**NAME** Paul Thorsen Harildstad **BORN** 23 Dec 1764, Heidal **DIED** 15 Jan 1843, Nord-Fron. **OCCUPATIONS** Non-Commissioned Army Officer, Farmer, Eidsvollman **PARENTS** Farmer Tord Harildstad (1736-1818) and Berte Syversdatter (1739-72) **SPOUSE** Married 12 June 1792 to Rønnaug Larsdatter Øy (11 Feb 1769-24 June 1844), daughter of Lars Øvre-Øy.

**BIOGRAPHY** He was born on the farm Harildstad in Heidal and was noted by the curate Henrich Garboe Sahl. When Garboe Sahl was promoted in 1778 to be parish priest in Holla, Telemark, he asked Paul to go with him. There Paul was confirmed in July 9th 1780 and was no. 1 among the boys (shown above). Later he worked four years as an ambulatory teacher.



Denmark tried to be neutral in the Napoleonic Wars, but had to choose one side in 1807. For geographical reasons, France was the obvious choice. Due to treaty obligations Sweden had to be attacked, but Sweden attacked first and was stopped at Toverud on April 20th, 1808. During the battle the major was wounded, and the lieutenant took care of him. The soldiers shouted, "Who is going to command us?" Harildstad shouted, "I am your commander!" He told them to aim low and close the ranks. A few days later he wrote a letter home, but said nothing about his role in the battle. Prince Christian August (the commanding general in Norway) decorated him with the Silver Cross, and this was confirmed on September 22nd, 1808, and he got the title Danebrogsman. (Danebrog is the name of the Danish flag which, according to a legend, came down from Heaven during a battle in Estonia in 1219).

During the Constitutional Congress at Eidsvoll, Sweden was still busy in the coalition against Napoleon. After Napoleon was defeated, Sweden invaded Norway. Paul was in the Onstadsund battle, and in some literature it is stated that he commanded a company. The war lasted only a few days before a cease fire, and Norway accepted a union if the conditions were satisfactory. In earlier wars Sweden had several enemies, but this time Norway was alone.

Paul was not the oldest son. After he married in 1792, he bought the Søndre Aamodt farm, but he continued to use the surname Harildstad. Åmot (confluence of rivers) is a common name in Norway and has several spellings. The Aamodt farms are at the confluence between Sjøa and Gudbrandsdalslågen. Today Paul's great-great-great-great-great-grandson Tor Aamodt (born 1962) lives on Søndre Aamodt, which is the central part of his tourist business with rafting in the wild and scenic Sjøa river.

Paul was elected from his regiment to Eidsvoll. There he did not say much, but together with four other farmers he signed a petition for selling all the farm land belonging to the church. The pastors in the state church ought to go over to a fixed salary. This petition lost 69-40. Only three other Eidsvollsmen voted with the 37 farmers. However, the idea was not dead, only postponed to later legislation.



Eidsvollman Harildstad's signature as it appears on Norway's Constitution.

Going home from Eidsvoll he brought with him several plants, among them some trees. A large maple has survived (see Page 2). He left the army in 1815 and was a full-time farmer for the rest of his life, being the first to grow apples so far north in Gudbrandsdalen.

No portrait of him is known. He died before some of the "missing" Eidsvollsmen were painted in the 1850s.

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Danebrogsman Harildstad received the Silver Cross during the Napoleonic Wars. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

After Paul came back to Heidal, he joined the army, and in 1787 he became a non-commissioned officer. In 1808 he was promoted to "fanejunker" (regimental sergeant major).

In 1703, Russia got access to the Baltic Sea and founded St. Petersburg. This started Russia's westward expansion. Sweden lost and lost land, ending with loosing Finland in 1809. Denmark/Norway and Russia were not allies, but had some defense treaties. During Paul's years in the army he served in all the three wars against the traditional enemy Sweden.

When Sweden attacked Russia in 1788, a Norwegian army went towards Gothenburg and won the battle at Kvistrum September 29th. The war was unpopular in Sweden, and King Gustav III was forced to end the war. Going back to Norway the army had little food and had to pick cranberries, therefore this short war got the nickname "The Cranberry War". Six soldiers died in battle, and more than 1000 died of diseases.



Several of his great-grandchildren emigrated to the U.S.A. Among them (according to the present descendants list), Thor Skurengslien (1858-1910) has the largest number of descendants. In the U.S.A., he called himself Lien.



Eidsvollman Harildstad's great-grandson (and Thor Lien's younger brother) Paul Thorsen Lien and his wife, Rønnaug "Rosa" Amanda Hagen, emigrated in 1885. They're pictured here with their seven oldest children: Olaf (b. 1884), Christian (b. 1887), Ragna (b. 1889), Bertha (b. 1891), Minda (b.1893), Recca (b. 1895) and Elisa (b. 1897). *Photo courtesy of Harildstad descendant Sarah Cox, Glyndon, MN.*



Harildstad's farmhouse (circa Autumn 2010) at Sjoa shows the memorial standing right next to the large maple tree brought from Eidsvoll that still stands despite significant storm damage in 1975. *Photos courtesy of Harildstad descendant Tor Aamodt, Sjoa, Norway.*

There are "clusters" in Griggs County (North Dakota), Beltrami County (Minnesota), Marion County (Oregon) and Washington state.

His great-great grandson, Hans (called Henry in the U.S.A.) Eriksen Kolloen (1867-1931), was the oldest son but left the Kolloen Søndre farm and emigrated 1887. Ingrid (called Inga in the U.S.A.) Larsdatter Sjøseth (1871-1943), from Øksendal, emigrated in 1890. University of Washington has Kolloen Family Papers. Inga and Henry knew each other from Seattle, but went independently to Alaska in 1898. The Klondike Gold Rush was a very male event. Inga and another woman went as a team over Chilkoot Pass and down the Yukon River, and they were respected by the gold diggers. After more than three months travelling from Seattle they came to Klondike in early July. For a year she was cooking and washing. On July 15th, 1899 she married Henry. They established the Jo Jo Hotel at Gold Run Creek. Henry had a part in a gold mine at Bear Creek. In 1901/02 they returned to Seattle, built a nice house and had no economical sorrows for the rest of their lives.

Their son, Lawrence Kolloen (1907-54), was an oceanographer in Fisheries Management Washington and died in a plane crash in Alaska. Mount Kolloen (Sitka, Alaska) is named after him. Henry's brother, Peter

Current, wintertime images of the memorial stone erected during the Syttende Mai celebration of 1964 at Harildstad's farmhouse.

Norwegian inscription:  
Eidsvollsmannen Paal Harildstad 1814  
Reist 17. mai 1964 av Sjoa Ungdomslag  
Dølaringen og Nord-Fron Kommune

In English:  
Eidsvollman Paal Harildstad 1814  
Raised May 17th, 1964 of Sjoa Ungdomslag  
Dølaringen and North-Fron Municipality



Kvam Church Cemetery (Kvam, Nord-Fron, NO) is the final resting place of Eidsvollman Paul Amodt. *Kvam Kirke, 1885. Photographer from the National Library of Norway.* Below, snowy, present-day close-ups



of his memorial stone read, "Paul Thorsen Åmodt, Eidsvoldsmannen". *Gravestone photo courtesy of Jens Petter Ous, Nord-Fron*

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

To learn more about the "Silver Cross" (Harildstad's Dannebrog decoration), see: [http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dannebrogordenens\\_H%C3%A6derstegn](http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dannebrogordenens_H%C3%A6derstegn).

If planning a visit to the ancestral Sjoa region, you might enjoy the outdoor recreation offered by fellow Harildstad descendant Tor Aamodt at <http://www.heidalrafting.no/en/rafting-in-sjoa/aamodt-falls.html>.

