**Ecke (Ida) Bohning Miller**

**Born:** November 23, 1842 – Ostfriesland   
**Died:** March 23, 1903 – Lincoln County, South Dakota  
**Wife of Jurend (Jerry) Miller – Mother of Thirteen**

Ecke Bohning—also remembered as **Ida** by some family—was born on November 23, 1842, in Ostfriesland. She was the daughter of **Göhe "Joe" (or George) van Böhning** and **Wilhelminia Reemts**, whose Dutch names were also recorded as *Greau* and *Vilhelmemeo*.

At the age of 14, Ecke set sail with her parents for America in pursuit of a new life. The journey, however, was bittersweet. During the long 13-week voyage, her mother fell ill and died at sea—she was buried in the ocean, a heartbreaking start to the young girl's American story.

After arriving in the United States in 1856, Ecke and her father settled in **Ridott Township**, near Freeport, Illinois. Ecke was 16 when she met **Jurend (Jerry) Miller**, a German immigrant who had come to America in 1851 with his brother. They married in 1860, when Ecke was just 18 years old. This marked the beginning of a lifelong partnership and the creation of a large and loving family.

**Pioneering Life and Family Roots**

Jurend and Ecke began their married life in Ridott Township, where they lived for eight years and welcomed their first three children: **Ailt**, **Wilhelmina (Minnie)**, and **Albertha (Bertha)**.

In 1868, they moved west to **Grundy County, Iowa**, where they farmed and raised six more children: **Joe**, **Albert**, **Martin**, **Hannah**, **Andrew**, and **Helmer**. Then, in 1881, the family relocated once more to the **Dakota Territory**, settling on a homestead six miles southwest of **Lennox, South Dakota**. There, they completed their family with the births of **Jurena**, **William**, **Eiko**, and **Annie**.

In total, Ecke bore **thirteen children**—and remarkably, all of them survived to adulthood, married, and had families of their own. Their names honored family traditions: the first four were named after grandparents, and one son, **Eiko**, was named after Ecke herself.

**A Quiet Strength**

Ecke’s character was remembered lovingly by her children and grandchildren. She was a woman of few complaints, deeply committed to her family, and content with what little she had. One family member wrote:

*"She never really had anything, but she made the best of it, and I don't suppose she ever spent five cents on herself. Grandma was never cross."*

She created a warm, welcoming home—often with help from her elderly father, or possibly another kind-hearted relative from Holland, who lived with them until his death. The home was always full of life, laughter, and hard work.

Ecke’s quiet strength carried her family through the challenges of pioneer life. She passed away on **March 23, 1903**, after battling breast cancer for over a year. She was 60 years old. Her husband, Jurend, moved into the town of Lennox with their youngest daughter, Annie, and passed away four years later in 1908.

**Legacy**

Ecke Bohning Miller's legacy lives on in the countless descendants who came from her thirteen children. She is remembered not only for her resilience and grace but also for her love, devotion, and enduring spirit—a true matriarch of the Miller family. Her life helped shape generations and her memory, as one descendant wrote, *“is a benediction.”*