

# 30

April 7, 1926 Willmar Tribune

## OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

### EARLY PIONEER INCIDENTS

No. 30

We sometimes use the expression, "horse sense," but Pioneer Thomas Osmundson had a yoke of oxen which displayed "ox sense." Some 50 years ago Pioneer Even Railson brot in the very first steam engine in to this country, also a sawing outfit to convert some of the fine Norway Lake timber into lumber. Thomas Osmundson was there at the operation bringing with him a yoke of oxen for logging purposes. The oxen evidently did not approve of their new job, must have got a spell of homesickness. At noon when the men went for dinner, they gave the oxen dinner hay, but did not tie them. When the men came back after dinner the oxen had disappeared. After spying in all directions, they finally saw their heads above the water on Norway Lake. They did not mind the roundabout way or detour. They made the short cut, took the winter route across the lake, swimming across from the Railson point to the Osmundson shore with the yoke on, leaving their job to some one who did not know better. For further explanation ask Gunder Osmundson, who saw the adventurers landed safely at the shore. Think those oxen were entitled to some comment for bravery and love for home.

Another story can be told about Pioneer Thomas Osmundson. At the time of the Indian outbreak in August 1862, when the families gathered for refuge at the Norway Lake Isle of refuge, left for the East by the way of Paynesville enroute for St. Cloud, some of the settlers managed to get some stock with them, and consequently had a little herd. When they reached their destination the St. Clouders were not willing to ferry them over the river. There was no bridge at that time, and they tried to induce them to stay on this side. But Osmundson let them know they would put up a fight if necessary rather than to stay. St. Cloud was then a shanty town. The people were finally forded over but when it came to bringing over the cattle, they stubbornly refused and locked the ferry. Osmundson had an ox well broke to ride on and could guide him at will. Osmundson was from Hardanger, in Norway where the Handanger heroine, Guri Endresen, was from and seemed to be endowed with the same Handanger traits. He was a cousin of Elling Ellingson, pioneer homesteader on the Gunder Pederson place in Mamre; also cousin of G.O. Kambestad of New London. He jumped upon his ox and made him go for the stream, swimming across the river under his command. After some urging the rest of the cattle followed suit and one after the other made for the river till the entire heard were over on the other side, after which they proceeded on their journey, spreading out to find places where they put up until by the aid of the government and patrolling soldiers, they again could venture to return and re-establish their homes, which the majority did, and many were their stories they could relate about those horrible tragedies.

Quite a contrast between the cradling of their grain with a cradle and the modern self-binder. The time they threshed out their grain with flails or sticks, to the modern steam threshing outfit of today. The self-binder goes "click, click" in the field; the young people go, "klunk, klunk" on the piano and in the evening the young folks put on their best, to to church, step into a glass house, press the button for a lively spin to take in evening shows and movies, which should please the older pioneers who used to live in shanties, shacks and dugouts, looking forward for better times, fine improvements, modern houses, good modern equipments, both on the road and on the farm, and all this has come into realization. The old pioneers would feel sore and unhappy if they should see the young generation continue to go thru what the old settlers did. We don't begrudge them what little pleasure they can have. I don't last long. The first thing we know we are parent, grandparents, great grandparents, and finally, the final rest, leaving everything to our followers, the same as our forefathers did to us. But the old folks should not be overlooked, put out or neglected, but be shown the courtesy, respect and attention they have deserved in making an Eden out of the wild Indian territory. They did not line up with automobiles on cemented paved streets under electric illumination like to day. They rode on the same streets but in different circumstances with oxen, sometimes in mud to their knees, in a lumber wagon, and their solid comfort was a piece of a board across the wagon box for a seat. Spring seats were a luxury. If a young man was seen driving along in a spring seat it was considered a sure sign for a matrimonial tieup. Girls were not decoyed by snuff and cigarettes.

People were more satisfied and agreeable than now. They did not have collisions where on tried to pick the eyes out of another. The word, "neighbor" did not exist merely in cold letters, but was real. Friendship was not marked off by zones, but friends and neighbors to the limit as far as the eyesight could reach.

The women even in those times were carrying something in their hands when going visiting. But it was not a vanity bag containing powder and pocket mirror. It was their knitting and no one ever made such good mitts and socks as those made by pioneer mother and grandmother.

PIONEER KID.

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April 14, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

HARVESTING IN EARLY DAYS

No. 31

It might be of some interest for the now growing generation to know how grandparents and great grandparents harvested their grain. If I say they were cradling it, they will not understand, but they may go to the Webster's Dictionary for explanation.

The head of the family swung the cradle all day, which was supposed to be the toughest job the farmers ever had. The wife and mother followed with a hand rake making bundles, taking a handful of straw and making a band by which to tie the bundles and placing them nicely away. They did not cover much ground a day, but what they did cover was clear gain as they were not in debt for machinery over their ears and were generally satisfied. I remember them saying when they went to market with 30 bushels of wheat they returned with \$60 in gold. While cradling was going on, the oldest kid was assigned to the job of looking after the rest of the brood. I know by experience. I had the job myself in Wisconsin.

The first machine I can remember was called a reaper, to do away with the cradle, and it was considered a blessing. The main drive gear was behind the wheels and it was called a rear-cut machine. One man took the driver's seat and another stood on a kind of a platform behind the driver in a half-seated and half-standing position with his back against the back of the driver riding backwards. He had a heavy rake in his hands. When he judged there to be enough grain on the platform for a bundle, he made a dive with his heavy rake and jerked off the grain, leaving it ready to be bound. It was a joy to those who were relieved of the cradling. Then to Norway Lake, Minn., another great change had come. Some genius had invented a new machine called a dropper, made with front cut, something similar to the mower, only with a wider cutting bar and with reel attached and with a sort of a buncher fastened to the cutting bar and controlled by the driver's foot. When he thought he had a bundle, he lifted his foot and down went the bundle placed at the full width of the swath. Another great improvement—for it relieved the man with that heavy rake. But the grain had to be bound and out of the way for the next round. The field was now divided into four stations and the grain bound up as fast as the horses could walk. What an improvement!

Again another remarkable machine was introduced to the farmers. Two different makes at about the same time. They were called a reaper and a mower combined and a self raking reaper which was to throw every bundle to one side out of the way. They were Walter A. Woods' and the Buckeye makes.

Ole Knutson of Arctander acted as local agent, taking orders for the wonderful Buckeye self-raking reaper. A man from the shops in Ohio was to come out and set them all up. This was in the early seventies. A very pleasant neighbor Johannes Norman, came over one evening and told us of his plight. He had bought one of these new reapers, but it laid in the boxes yet. The man from Ohio did not show up. He said, "You better come over and set up my mower as it is time to use it." I said, How can you expect that? I never set up one nor saw one set up. He said—"Ush—You can do it." Being so insistent I said, I will come in the morning. We can take a look at it. We can not do any worse than set it up wrong. In the afternoon his oxen walked proudly along with the new Buckeye mower. In a few days he came over again and was in the same plight. He had a patch of barley ready to cut and the man from Ohio hadn't showed up. He said, "You better finish your job." I said, I can't do it. The mower was the easy part. When you come to pick out hundreds of pieces out of those boxes, it will puzzle even the President of the United States. He looked rather disappointed. But said, "Ush—you can do it." He being

so insistant, I said, I will come in the morning. Can't do worse than wrong." In the afternoon his oxen displayed their pride walking along with the new Buckeye self-rake reaper and it was a pleasure to see the bundles come off automatically to one side. When this became known, I was given the job to continue setting up at \$5.00 apiece. Among others, one for Hemming Hokanson on which is now the Carl Danielson place. The team I was to start that reaper with had a history worth mentioning. They were bought from Mr. Lundborg and were along at the West Lake Indian massacre, where one of them got lame. They were taken to Carver county and back again for re-establishing the home of Lundborg's. I started the reaper on the field below Danielson's house and made two rounds.

#### AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT

Mrs. Hemming was one of those rush-and-go women, while Mr. Hemming was of a slower disposition. She was feeling over-enthusiastic over the new reaper and said, "I will take charge of the reaper and the horses and you folks go on binding." And she said to little Walfred (some over 3 years old) "You go in the house and stay with sister Alma." She started off with the reaper and it was fine. I went home. Little Walfred slipped out of the house and waddled off down to the edge of the field. Knowing mother's principle to be strict, he would not stand in the open but stepped into the grain field and hid while she passed by. He was caught by the reel and slung into the reaper where he had both his feet nearly cut off above the ankle. I had no sooner reached home when Adrian Hemming, the oldest son, came running and told of the accident and asked me to take our team to take them to Willmar, as one of their horses, as already mentioned, had a stiff foot. I took the boy and his father in to the Pioneer Doctor and Civil War surgeon, Dr. E.S. Frost, and left at his home where under his careful attendance and skill he did better than might be expected. Mrs. Hemming charged herself up with the whole blame. If she had stayed in the house it would not have happened. Leonard, the next oldest boy, never got over the shock. It had a serious effect upon his mind which will come in next chapter. Mrs. Hemming took a dislike to the place and would get away from there and forget. They sold the place to Johannes Quam and Johan Nord sold his place to his neighbor, Lars Nelson. The two families then moved to Grant County, Minn.

PIONEER KID.

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April 21, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

MORE PIONEER INCIDENTS

(No. 32)

In the previous chapter I mentioned Leonard Hemming as not getting over the shock of his little brother's accident, and that Hemming Hokanson and Johan Nord's families left for Grant county,

Minnesota, to take up their residences for the future. Already when leaving here, Hemming had a sore on his face which culminated in a cancer from which he died. This was another blow to Leonard's already weakened mind. Some time after that a little brother fell into the river and was drowned, which had its additional sad effect upon Leonard's mind and after that he was unable to control himself right. The mother was advised by neighbors to get him in at the insane hospital at Fergus Falls. But mother –is mother- she wanted her boy at home under her own care as long as possible. He was not unruly, rather quiet, walking around amongst the neighbors who also were accommodating to give aid, could stop over a night, sometimes, two, but as a rule returning home.

One time the mother received a letter from him written at Herman station, in which he said, "Good bye, mother, I go to our folks at Varmland, Sweden." It taking a day or two before she received the letter, nothing could be done, only trust to Providence. The boy was beyond reach. In due time she received a letter from their folks in Sweden telling of Leonard's arrival. But he was in such condition they would take no chances on him. Furthermore, he being a subject of the United States, he should be taken care of. She then sent Emanuel, the next oldest, to go to Sweden to get his brother. But they each other on the way. By the time Emanuel reached their relatives in Sweden, Leonard Hemming was already back to their home in Grant county, Minnesota, and Emanuel had to proceed on his return trip alone. After that Leonard never was at liberty. He was confined at Fergus Falls insane asylum.

The Hemming Hokansons were lovely neighbors. The children were well trained with good discipline. The two oldest, Adrian and Leonard, belonged to the first school bunch of the newly organized District No. 25, log house-sod-roof-rough-lumber-floor, with knot holes where the gophers played hide and go seek and raised the dickens with our dinner pails. They became very tame, would take a crumb of bread and sit straight up devouring it between their paws which created quite a sensation. The teacher could control the rest but Leonard had to have special laugh at the gophers. He must have been about 7 years. This is mentioned because it comes in later. I had the good neighbors much in mind. I went there in fall of 1901 when the old lady told me the whole story. I said, "I will go to Fergus Falls and see Leonard." With tears in her eyes she wished I would, and find out if there was prospect of getting him home. When I got there what a contrast I observed. It was not the promising school boy. I faced a full grown man with full grown beard. My feelings can better be guessed than explained. I said, "is it you, Leonard?" But not a word. I tried him in every conceivable way from different angles while at last he said. "You have no business with me." This touched the very tender cords of my sympathy. I broke down and said to myself, what are we poor mortals when reason and mind fail us? I again picked up courage and asked, "Do you remember Norway Lake-Crook Lake and Swenson Lake close by their house? Do you remember the school house, the children and the gophers?" Then he laughed and gave attention like one awakening from a sleep. He repeated names of lakes, fishing and gophers, and began with Axel Erickson, Johanna Erickson, and I believe every name of the school roll including my name. Then I said, "That's me." He repeated "No" three times and would not believe it. I said, "You did well Leonard to remember all those names and gophers. Would you like to go with me to mother?" "No," he said, "I will never go home. But tell mother to come and stay with me." Then there were tears in his eyes and his mind again went blank and not a sensible word did I get any more. That way I left Leonard in October 1901. About two years ago after being there some 30 years, he was transferred to the Willmar state hospital for the insane and

is an old man of about 65 years. I will go there again and pay him another visit and see if he still remembers the gophers-school children-fishing, lakes and school days- School days!

Happy, happy, school days!

When you and I were young.

Last summer in the latter part of June an automobile was driven up to our house one Sunday afternoon. A well developed man tipping over 200 pounds, stepped out, walked up to me and said, "I suppose you don't know me, but I remember you well. We used to be neighbors. My name is Hokanson. My home is at Elbow Lake, Grant county." I said, "You are not one of the Hokanson's who used to live on what is now the Carl Danielson place?" He said, "Yes, that's my birthplace." I said, "In pioneer days I set up a new reaper at that place where a little boy was badly hurt in the reaper. Whatever became of that boy? He smiled and said, "That's me. I am little Walfred, who had both my feet nearly cut off. I remember it well. I remember when you set it up and took us in to Willmar after I was hurt." I asked if he had been afraid of the horses at that time. "No," he said, "I was afraid of mother and wanted to hide while she passed by." He had been over to see his brother at the hospital. He stayed with us till next day in the afternoon. We went through and reviewed pioneer days, where I belong. I found that the most of the family had passed on, including mother.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

## 33

May 5, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

A TRIP TO GRANITE FALLS

(No.33)

It was in an early season of the early seventies when I had been initiated into the mystery of setting up machinery. I was sent over the wild unsettled prairie to the Minnesota River colony to set up machinery for Robbins & Rice of Willmar. On the whole stretch of about thirty miles of wilderness there was only one house on the road, that of Joseph Emerson just half-ways. It was called the "Half-way House," also Emerson's Hotel. There being no Milwaukee road, Willmar was the trading point of the whole Minnesota River country. There was a little store by the river where Granite Falls now is located. But before you got there, there was not a house to be seen as far as the eye could reach till you got to the river.

After completing my job I made arrangements to cross the prairie in company with the storekeeper and his drayman. The storekeeper was to go to St. Paul to buy a supply of goods for his store and the

daryman was to take a load back to the store. It was known that the storekeeper had some \$700.00 on his person. A young man carrying a double-barreled gun also was to go along. Carrying a gun those days was nothing odd, as hunting was a common side-line to everyday business. At the store in the evening before leaving, I received at the store a note from A.E. Rice that another machine had arrived for me to set up. I told the men who had heavy horses and a lumber wagon to go ahead, and that I would be on my job at three O'clock in the morning and having light horses and buggy, would soon overtake them. But I did not catch up with them till I got to Emerson's Hotel, where I met with a horrible sight. A tragedy had occurred which I never will forget. One woman of the caliber of Guri Endresen, was bravely washing blood and dressing a crushed jawbone.

#### A CRIME ON THE PRAIRIE

While the horses were eating their dinner feed, the young man had suggested to the others to go out on the prairie and look for game. They had no idea that the game he looked for was the \$700.00. They all three were walking abreast, the young man in the center. After getting out on the prairie a good ways, he managed to slip back behind them intending to kill both. He sent a charge thru the head of the storekeeper who died instantly. When the drayman heard the shot and saw the other man falling he jumped to the left and turned his head, the charge lacerating his jawbone. The man ran for the house with the above mentioned result.

Those days they did not have ready made cartridges to slip into a gun like now. They poured in powder, then rammed home a wad, then the shot, and lastly another wad. Then they would get out a box from the pocket containing caps to put on. This being a slow process, the wounded man reached the house bleeding from the crushed jaw-bone. The young man was apprehended and brot to Willmar in a hurry. When I had fed my team I proceeded on my home run. It was not very pleasant nor encouraging for a 16-year old kid all alone on the wild prairie under such circumstances. Willmar did not have a jail like now. They had a little lock-up by the sidewalk on the east edge of the courthouse block which looked something like a boxcar. The officers had the prisoner in a rear room of the Pacific Hotel on Pacific avenue awaiting a train to bring him to St. Paul for safe keeping. There he had his trial, was convicted for first degree murder and was sentenced to state prison at Stillwater for life, where he still is if alive. He escaped capital punishment on account of his young age. The affair cost Kandiyohi county several hundred dollars.

Such were the tragedies in those early pioneer days in the wild unsettled country with chances of putting up with all kinds of ruffians. We can hardly fully realize the advance and developments of this country. What a change during those last 50 years, especially in the wild unsettled country between Willmar and Granite Falls. Where it appeared to us to be water and land, half and half is now all dry land. Where the country then was dotted with muskrat houses as far as your eyesight could reach, it is now dotted with planted groves, well equipped farms with modern houses and barns. Where we used to get mired with horses and empty wagons, they now run with modern farm machinery, including steam threshing outfits. Where the roads lay zig-zagging in all directions where most convenient, they now lay in the section lines nicely graveled and partly cement paved. The young generation of today is rushing along in glass houses at the rate of 40 miles an hour. Where grandma and great grandma used to make a

sort of a light from home made tallow candles, they now press a button, illuminating all the houses on the farm, even the yard and the henhouse, fooling the hens to lay eggs night and day by electric light. Where grain used to be hauled to market with oxmobile, they are now sending it to market in trucks at a lively speed. Where it took the farmers many house of struggle and torture to get to town, the hogs are now comfortably placed in a truck and make the run in a little while. Where grandmother and great grandmother used to carry with them their knitting walking along the road, visiting, making fine sox and mittens, the ladies of today are carrying a vanity bag containing powder and mirror and if the great Creator has overlooked a spot it can be remedied in a little while. Not to overlook the kids. They have no sooner let go of the nipple till they have their sweet countenance saturated with snuff juice and cigarettes, smoke inhaled thru lungs, smoking thru both mouth and nose like the old settlers' mosquito smudges in pioneer days. This is not confined to any certain locality. It is common everywhere.

The sturdy, industrious and hardworking Hollanders and Bohemians are to be complimented upon for the developments and changes between Willmar and Granite Falls. A person going over the ground now in 1926 will hardly believe it is the same country.

PIONEER KID.

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## 34

### THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE

No.34

In 1876, just 50 years ago this summer, I was again sent over the prairies to Granite Falls to set up machinery. The country across was then dotted with settlers' shacks, but few and far apart. My destination was a farmer by the river by the name of Lars Loe. That afternoon was clear with bright sunshine, a day in June. Getting within four miles of my destination, I was puzzled. It all of a sudden looked to me like an eclipse of the sun. Soon grasshoppers began descending like thick snowflakes in a snowstorm. They were some full grown beasts heavy and sharp as iron when they hit the face. Then they dug their feet in for a jump. I have been out in different kinds of storms, but that was the worst storm I ever experienced. Horses would not go against it. I had to turn with the wind. I had a good supply of handkerchiefs with me. I put one over the eyes of each horse and one over my own face, and then proceeded. The horses crushed grasshoppers at every step, and buggy wheel tires were smeared with crushed grasshoppers. It was the most hideous sight a person can imagine. You could see the edges of the fields blighting away for the hungry and greedy eaters. It was evident that the harvest was done and all except one refused to have the machines set up. That one was on what was known as the Paul Thori farm, a little northwest of where Granite Falls now stands. Being a cash deal he said that I might just as well set it up, as he might have some use of the mower, and the hoppers could not devour that. Paul Thori was not there. He had traded the farm off to Even Railson of Norway Lake for the Thomas Osmundson farm on Norway Lake shore, now known as the Halvorson Beach. I now had to return home.

The work of the ravaging hoppers was plainly visible all the way, at Norway Lake as at everywhere else. If harnesses were left outside they would eat them. If a coat, vest or a sack was left outside, they would eat the surface so completely you could pick it apart with your fingers. They soon had completed the harvest even to the grass. They laid a good supply of eggs. Then they all disappeared, flew away. In the following spring of 1877 the farmers in hope and good faith again put in their crops as usual. But the fields from spring on resembled an ant-pile. The eggs were hatched and those greedy eaters, at first the length of an eighth of an inch, kept the fields black and bare so that at harvest time the fields were just as black as at the spring work. No harvesting, no threshing. Difficult even to get hay. But that year the whole regiment as soon as they got wings, disappeared and flew off just like scaring a flock of black birds. No eggs were laid that year so we got rid of them for the future. Never bothered since. The third year, 1878, farmers had to get state aid to procure seed. That year there was an immense lot of straw, but the ground proved to be too rich. The grain lodged and the heads were very light, hardly enough for seed and living. These three years were hard and trying years to everybody, but this differed according to circumstances. Like the old saying, when troubles come they don't always come singly, but sometimes double up. Paul Thori deeded his Granite Falls farm to Even Railson and mortgaged the Osmundson farm for the balance. Thru these struggling years he lost both farms and not only that, but also his wife. I was one of the pall bearers and remember she left behind a 2-year old baby boy by the name of Johan Syvert, who was adopted by a childless couple, Mr. and Mrs. Christian Joggo. This boy kept his father's name, C.P. Thori. If anyone likes to know what became of Johan Syvert then press the key and and J.S. Christianson will O.K. the call.

Great hardships to go through. But they were overcome. The real fighters are out of the game. They nearly all have been placed away underneath the sod. But the following generation proceeds in a way which reflects greatly upon the toil of the early settlers and pioneers and the Norway Lake community keeps pace with any community in Minnesota.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

## 35

May 12, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

SETS UP TWO BINDERS AND SEES EMBRYO U.S. SENATOR

No. 35

Machinery was invented and introduced at a rapid rate. A machine was designed called a "harvester," which elevated the grain up onto a platform where two men were placed riding, making straw bands and binding as fast as the grain was elevated up. The machine was pulled by two horses walking at

ordinary gait. This was a strenuous job. Men with well developed and muscled arms did not mind it but those with weak arms were not in it.

A self-binding machine binding with wire was introduced and did its work wonderfully well, but there was one great disadvantage. The wire in threshing went with the straw which caused loss of both cattle and horses that swallowed pieces of wire in their food. A self-binding machine binding with twine was then introduced for to stay. Not until 1881 were they on the market to any extent. I had the reputation of being an expert in setting them up if I do say it myself.

One day in June, 1881, I proposed to drive out twenty-five miles with horses and buggy to set up two binders and return to Willmar the same evening. A bet of \$10.00 was made that I could not do it. I took him up. The two \$10 bills were left with Jake Jacobson to be given to the winning party next evening. I left Glarum's Hotel at three o'clock in the morning heading for the home of Sove Shipstead, Sec. 4 Town of Burbank. Past the little railroadless inland village of New London at the time when the princes of the feathery tribe were giving their morning declaration, I pegged on as fast as the horses could make it. I reached my destination just as they had finished breakfast. A boy came out to take my team, which was a good beginning. I said, "Give them good care-they made good this morning." I then got my big hammer, pounding away at the boxes. The venerable gentleman, old Shipstead, in his usual smiling mood, came lurking along with arms across the back said, "Er du vond," (Are you angry)? I said, "It may look suspicious, but I have not hurt anybody yet!" He wanted to know how far I had come this morning. I said "Clear from Willmar." "Oh, 25 miles," he said, "You need breakfast then." I said, "My time is very limited. I think I will leave it." After a while his wife brot me good coffee and good lunch. While I was devouring it she looked at the hundreds of pieces scattered around and asked if all that was supposed to go into one machine. I said it is so calculated. She was a pleasant talkative woman and gave me a laugh and said, "I fear you will be in the same fix as our watchmaker in Norway when he had his watch put together. He had three pieces he found no place for." I said, "Such a thing may happen but I must take chances." When she was about half way to the house I called and asked if there was any objection of me asking for an early dinner, say about 11:30. "Not at all," she said, "glad you had cheek to say so." I ordered the old man to have three horses at hand when I had tightened the last bur and buckle, which he did. The binder was tried going into some green tangled oats which made me feel like a mouse in a tar bucket. But we succeeded nicely and settlement was made. The dinner call was made which sounded good. Getting into the house everything looked lovely, snug and tidy. Getting to the table I said, "I believe I will pitch tent and stay with you folks. I take to the place." Presumably on account of a strange voice in the house, there was a commotion in the corner. Getting up from my chair and peeking behind the door there was a cradle, a couple of feet and a couple of arms going to beat the band, and voice and noise correspondingly. Again taking my chair they had a unanimously good laugh at me. I felt like saying something and said: "There's no lack of ambition in that corner." The mother said: "That's nothing, you ought to hear him at daybreak in the morning." I said, "I am very fond of children, but if you say that's nothing, then I would have to lay in an extra supply to my patience chest." I said, "It's a boy, it is?" "Yes." "What do you call him?" "We call him Henrik." Owing to the demonstration just given I could not help but think of something great. I thot of Henrik Vergeland, one of Norway's foremost statesmen and said, "Why not call him Henrik Vergeland." They then displayed countenances betraying great insult. After a

while the mother said with a sigh, "Oh no. I believe we will leave out that middle name. Plain Henrik Shipstead will have to do." I said, "Don't worry over the middle name. This is a free country with equal chances to all who strive for them." I again thought of something great and could not think of anything greater than congress, and said, "We may see him in congress yet!" Another sigh of displeasure and leaning strongly toward insult. "I believe you came here to make fun of us, " was the conclusion. But what has happened? Years have passed. The venerable old couple, loved and respected by all, have for a long time rested in their lonely chambers. They could not know what happened. But Henrik Shipstead is in congress, on his duty—a loyal and faithful servant; a pride to those who sent him there. A credit to himself and an honor to the nation! The eye of the world is set on Henrik Shipstead today. A friend of the farmers and laborers and loyal to our nation. Not even the radical plutocratic press dares to touch the creaming kid of Town of Burbank, Kandiyohi county, Minnesota, and the group who sent him there with such an overwhelming majority have just started. They are on the job with a good supply for Townships, County, State and Nation. I followed him practically from cradle to congress.

Now I proceeded west six miles to Tallak Johnson's in Colfax to set up the other binder which was completed, started and settled for at five p.m. The only thing worrying me now was the twenty-five miles travel with horses and buggy and the \$20.00. But I made it with some time to spare, and got my \$20.00.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

## 36

May 19, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

CROOKED TRAILS AND NO FENCES

No. 36

In the early pioneer days there were all kinds of disadvantages. There were not established roads and no fences to go by. Between settlers those crooked trails were made by buffaloes and Indians. This made it very difficult in darkness, and many an incident about getting lost and going wild could be chronicled.

In 1867 a little caravan of sturdy stay-west pioneers with covered wagons drawn by oxen, started from Burnette county Wisconsin, composed of Christoffer Larson, Anders Christofferson, Christoffer Anderson and a few others, arrived at what now is the Township of Irving and settled down on Section 10. Starting in grain raising was very difficult, partly on account of limited means. But the main drawback was the distance to market. St. Cloud was the nearest market place and terminal of a railroad. As my good old pioneer friend and neighbor, Amund Syverson, who spent his first winter in America in Iowa cutting and splitting fence rails at 50 cents per hundred to keep the wolves from the door, so did these

family fathers after they built shacks for their families, strike out in the vicinity of St. Cloud where there at the terminal of the railroad were large fields and work to be had. The women folks were left at home to supervise the home doings.

One night in the month of August, Mrs. Christoffer Larson left her nursing child with an elderly lady while she skipped off after the cattle. To bring home the stock was at times a very difficult job. There was no pasture laws and the cattle were roaming at large, often at a great distance to the detriment of those rounding them up evenings. Mrs. Larson did not find the cattle. Night and darkness swooped down upon her. She became lost and traveled all night in the Lake Koronis woods. All she could hear was now and then a sound by some wild animal. Towards morning she struck a pile of split fence rails, which was an indication of some settler being near. At daylight she could see a house. Coming near the house she spied a pair of stockings on a clothes line with the owner's initials sewed into them. This was a Norwegian custom, and by that she understood that it was a Norwegian home. She rejoiced as she could not talk or understand English. She found it so, and also found that she was four miles away from her home. She was put on the right trail, but her head being confused, she began to rebel against reason and directions and again got lost, and did not arrive at her home until noon the next day. A son, J.A. Larson, is now living on Section 4, Irving. Such was pioneering.

That a person can start out in darkness from a given point, walk around a long time and return to the starting point repeating it three times sounds improbable. But I have seen it done by Anders Forsberg, father of Judge A.O. Forsberg. It was in threshing time at Even Lundemoe's place in Arctander in 1873. It was a foggy miserably dark evening. Forsberg was told to stay, but was too stubbornly set for home, only about 80 rods away. But he came back and the ovation he received from the jolly threshers was too much for him. He started off the second time with the same result, he came back. This created a regular circus. He would not stand for that and started out again the third time. And again he came back. That time he said he would cut out surveying. He would rather sleep on bare floor with a dog than to try it again. There was not much sleep that night. When he and Even Lundemoe started locking horns there was no lack of entertainment and to complete the program a clown by the name of Lars Lof, sang a song so very appropriate for the occasion. (But the Cat came Back.) Great times, those pioneer days!

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

## 37

June 16, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

OLD SETTLERS' MEMORIAL

No. 37

I left the county fair in a happy mood last fall very much pleased with the action of the Kandiyohi County Fair Association for giving the old settlers and pioneers a day of their own at the fair grounds and wished it would be a permanent feature. Now I feel happy over the fact that there is a move on foot for an Old Settlers' and Pioneers' Building, where the old settlers can rejoice in a home of their own and that the location of such building will be granted by the County Fair Association. I saw the drawings of Eben Lawson of the proposed building and highly recommend it for my part. The proposition will be submitted to the members of the Old Settlers Association for their approval at their next meeting at the fair grounds on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June next and it is to be hoped that all the members will give the project their heartiest support. Believe the association has got some \$1100.00 in the treasury laid aside for a memorial feature of some kind and part of that money could never be put to better advantage than an old settlers' building.

The ranks of the old pioneers have been thinning out gradually. The most of the old pioneers have been escorted to their lone chamber. The second growth, the third, fourth, even the fifth, is in sight under the steady move of the wheel of Time. What disappointments he has encountered in his long journey? What bright hopes blasted? What sorrows felt? What agonies endured? How many loved ones he has followed to the grave—and that elderly woman, too, husband dead, many of the children buried, or far off from home, life's flowers faded, the friends of her youth no more, and she waiting to go soon. Ought we ever to miss an opportunity of showing attention to the aged pioneers proffering a kindness or lighting up a smile by a courteous act or friendly deed? A little thoughtful attention, how happy it makes the old folks. They have outlived most of the friends of their early youth. How lonely their hours often are. Their partners in life have long filled silent graves; often their children have passed before them. They stand solitary, bending on their staff, waiting till the same call shall reach them. How often they must think of absent lamented faces of the love which cherished them and the tears of sympathy which fell with theirs. Why should not the young cling around and comfort them, cheering their gloom with happy smiles. The world in general bows down to age, gives it precedence and listens with deference to its opinions. Can there be a more pleasing sight than a venerable old man surrounded by his children and grandchildren all of whom are vieing with each other in testifying their homage and affection? His children, proud of their honored father, strive who shall treat him with the most attention, while his grandchildren hand on his neck, entertain him with their innocent prattle and convince him that they love their grandfather not less than they love their own father.

Let's all meet at the fair grounds for the old settlers' meeting, bring our badges, good smile and good wishes and vote for our little old settlers' home to be erected on the fair grounds.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

July 14, 1926 Willmar Tribune

## OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

No. 38

Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and family reunion in one combination on July 4, 1926—1876-1926. Way back fifty years ago the early settlers and neighbors of this vicinity from their respective rude new settlers homes in their pioneer vehicles, mostly old wagons, were heading for the old pioneer home of Mr. and Mrs. H.W. Mankel in response to invitation to the wedding of their oldest daughter, Jennie, about 18, to Andrew H. Gordhamer, a little past 20. Ceremony was performed by the pioneer minister, Rev. D.T. Booth of Willmar. It being June 24<sup>th</sup>, Midsummer Day, a Midsummer pole was planted in the front of the house and decorated with wild flowers from bottom to top. A good old settlers time was indulged in during the day and the pioneer kids enjoyed a good time towards evening in getting pioneer and Civil War veteran, now of New London, C. K. Lund, in the lead for merriment, singing (U tock ga pa brandvagt) Drop the handkerchief, etc. Being a fine evening, the enjoyment lasted the most part of the night.

Last Sunday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, there was another gathering similar in proportion but different in many ways. No lumber wagons, no horses or oxen, but automobiles of all different styles—from runabout to the most stylish moving glasshouse. The occasion was the fiftieth anniversary of the same couple, Mr. and Mrs. A.H. Gordhamer. Many of the good old settlers and familiar faces of those days of their wedding 50 years ago were not present, but a group of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren were there, more than I am able to enumerate. A group of strangers to us—so and old pioneer would be tempted to ask; “is this the good old Norway Lake country or what part of the world is it?” But they were all busy entertainers to help promote the entertainment give in honor of parents, grandparents and another day of merriment was spent for the honor of the venerable couple, reminding us of the good old times of fifty years ago.

After an elaborate dinner where about 100 were seated in a tent enjoying a good meal, the toastmaster, I.A. Tjosvold of St. Paul called on Rev. Baalson for a speech who also handed a purse of gold to Mr. and Mrs. Gordhamer, and others who responded for talks were J. H. Gordhamer of St. Paul and H. E. Ekren of Norway Lake, after which everybody left with good feelings over coupling 4<sup>th</sup> of July and golden wedding into one celebration.

Those outside of relatives invited were: Lars Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Halvorson, Mr. and Mrs. G.Stene, S.A. Syverson and daughter Anna of New London, H.E. Ekren, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Hedin and Otto Stene of Litchfield. A lovely day and a lovely time. Kerhoven, Willmar, Litchfield, Minneapolis, St. Paul, New London, Belgrade, Nevis and Warren were represented, and when the Pioneer Kid took leave he told them that to judge from condition they were good for another run of 50 years and wished them good luck and Godspeed for many more years to come.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

# 39

July 28, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

ONE EVENING OF THE MANY

A PIONEER GO-TO-BED STORY FOR CHILDREN

No. 39

In the early pioneer days, the settlers had to protect their little patches of grain by fences, dogs and kids. There were no pasture laws. Cattle were running at large and had the whole country as range and certainly took advantage of it. This was a hardship to the children who had to round them up evening. A cow is a cow! She wades in rich prairie grass to the knees and then runs miles to look for something better. The cattle of three neighbors always bunched together. Sven Borgen had a bunch of fine cattle, but not a bunch of kids. Gunder Swenson was the only one, just past the twenties. But their cattle were put on the free list and were taken care of with the rest as a neighborly accommodation and it worked fine. The other two families had each a bunch of cattle and of kids, whose duty it was to go one from each family in turn to get the cattle. It was in the summer of 1868. We lost track of the tally record and there was a little squabble about who should go. We finally agreed to pull straws to settle it. Mary, 10, drew the longest in that family, and I myself the longest in our family, being 12. It was settled without another word. Mary took along an umbrella, not because of any signs for the use of it, but more as a child's notion. She had a rich crop of long hair hanging loose down over the shoulders, tied up with a red ribbon which made her look like a June bride, only that she was barefooted, and so was I. It was not in style those days to wear shoes and rubbers in the summer nor to wear good shoes and overshoes for winter. Mostly moccasins were used, some making shoes from raw cowhides, leaving the hair on them for an adornment. I have used such myself. Boys running in homemade overalls and blouses and girls dresses from the same fabric.

We started off for our duty barefooted, wading in prairie grass knee high. After a walk of two miles we found the cattle on north shore of Crook Lake, just where Ole Nyman's home is now located. We went over the wild prairie which now is the Mostue farm. Going west, we saw a raging rain storm coming our way from west at a rapid rate. A frightful sight to us. No settlers, no houses, no shelter. Getting to the extreme northwest corner of Section 29, now the home of August Dengerud, there was a great big boulder. That large stone is there yet, but shows some ugly ruptures from dynamite. Getting there the storm was onto us. Cattle had already turned facing east again on account of the storm and hard rain. We cuddled down on the east side of the boulder. Mary said, "A good thing I took the umbrella along, Now we can both of us be protected." But the storm worked on a different theory. Mary had no sooner said those words till the girl and the umbrella went up. Not being prepared for such a flight, she let go of the umbrella which landed behind the cattle and scared the wits out of the whole bunch. Like well trained horses on the race track they now scooted east over the wild prairie as fast as their legs could

bring them. The umbrella just happened to heel them, humping and bumping after them and we after as fast as our pegs could carry us for a whole mile, till we got to where schoolhouse 25 now stands. There we struck a trail called the Burbank trail running from Burbank by the way of Como Beach, Lake Andrew, by Ole Hovoldson's over the prairie into the Crook Lake grove, where there were two settlers before the Indian outbreak, Johannes Iverson, killed by the Indians, and a bachelor, Ole Dahl, who married Iverson's widow after the tragedy and lived in Ole Dahl's log cabin on east end of Crook Lake. The cattle made the curve taking the trail to the grove. But the umbrella did not make the curve but went on east and to judge by its course and speed it must have landed in Lake Florida. Have never seen or heard of it since. We met an oldish man, Nels Bratland, grandfather of Mayor Selvig of Willmar. He had his bunch, three in all, big and small, on the home run. Now we had to heel ours like a pair of shepherd dogs, heading for the grove one mile farther east than where we first found them. Passing Ole Dahl's cabin I said, "Mary, lets follow the cattle and get home. We will not be any wetter than we are." Getting into the grove we were overtaken with a fierce rain storm coming more from southwest accompanied by a heavy hail storm. We cuddled up by the trunk of a basswood which with its large leaves was a good shelter, but did not do us much good as we were wet to the skin. Freezing and shivering, barefooted we had to walk on a lay of large hail stones. I said: "Mary! We can not stay here. We must be moving. You take our bell cow and move along slowly and I will go into the brush and get them out." When the cattle heard the bell, "Tinkle-de-tink-- Tinkle-de-tink," they were all on the move and we soon had them on the home run. In passing Ole Dahl's cabin he gave us a grin and a laugh which did not suit Mary very much, nor me either, for that matter. Mary, who always was chuck full of funny sayings, said, after we got out of hearing distance, "That man should have his head held down in Crook Lake water just five minutes." She thot that would about finish him.

Now the storm was over. It was calming down. There were breaks in the clouds and the sun emerged from its hiding to give us its purple red good night smile near down by the horizon. And we had three miles to drive the cattle, wet through in knee deep wet grass and barefooted. But we finished our job like good children, although it got late.

Such was one evening of the many. Such were the stunts of the pioneer kids. It was not going into the pasture or fields driving the cattle up the lane to a well-equipped barn yard and barn and a modern living house protected with good clothes and shoes. The stables were some straw sheds, some log stables, others dugouts in the hillsides. A cow pen for the cows to be kept over night, well supplied with good mosquito smudges every night all summer.

Now children, go to sleep. I'll give you another one soon. Am just longing to see the pioneer log cabin finished where the pioneers and their descendants can come together under their own roof and relate old pioneer stories some from their own experiences and others from what has been old them by parents, grandparents and great grandparents and have a lovely interesting good old time.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

# 40

August 4, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

THE PIONEER CABIN AND MUSEUM

(No. 40)

I promised to continue the pioneer go-to-bed stories for children, but must leave it until some other time. I have something else on my mind at present I am tickled to the roots of my hair over the old settlers' pioneer cabin that we have now in mind to erect on the fair grounds.

It reminds me of the story told about Theodore Roosevelt and his rough-riders in the Spanish American war. Going at double speed up San Juan Hill to the limit, he was asked by one of his friends and admirers why he speeded in such a hurry up to where fight and blood shed would stare them in the face. Roosevelt answered, "I had to! I was compelled to! Otherwise I would have been run over and trampled down by my own men." What a striking example to us. We must not wait for the other fellow. But speed on and let the head men of the project know that they must hustle to avoid being run over by the pushers. We are on the way up the hill to place the old settlers' cabin at the top with the beautiful scenery of Foot Lake in the background. I don't know much of the doings of the committee in charge. But I do know that they are all live wires and good spark plugs. A floor of 50x30 will give ample room for exhibits of old settlers and pioneers old relics from all over the county. Many of these will be puzzles to some of the now growing generation, not knowing or understanding what this or that is made for. Would not be a bit surprised to see great grandmother's weaving loom stuck away in a corner, and some of their descendants able to demonstrate and pound away at it. Also wool cards and spinning wheels and hundreds of other relics.

One asked me if he would be permitted to hand up on the wall a picture of his pioneer parents. I said the bringing in of all old relics will be highly appreciated. But nothing as precious as the real picture of the real old pioneers. Just bring them in to the old settlers' museum. I can just imagine what a lovely time we shall have when everybody hangs up old Mr. Politics on the wall at home and comes to our old settlers meetings in the old settlers style, good neighborly friendship, reminding each other of the good old pioneer times. Altho the hovels were small with rude walls, and sod roof lying low, it was nevertheless "Home Sweet Home." Good understanding, good neighborly feelings! Why not repeat it in our proposed old settlers pioneer cabin? Get up that hill at a lively speed and say like Roosevelt, "We had to go at high speed to avoid being run over by the pushers."

I look for a big haul from Sunburg. Hon. P.A.Gandrud, the solicitor, will use his natural vim and pep, although he doesn't need the gadstick. It comes so natural to the Sunburgers to rally at the front at any call of attention in the line of progressiveness and promotion of local affairs. The first time I was at the place where Sunburg village now is, it was a wilderness with only one house on the naked hill. The home of the beloved family of Torger Gunnufson, which I used to term as the happy headquarters of pioneer

days. This is the northwest corner of the county. But having been in all corners I speak from experience when I say when all corners of Kandiyohi county meet in the center. You can look for a mark, an old settlers monument which will be an honor to those who have fought through! A credit to the now living and a pride to the coming generations. If the solicitor should happen to overlook you then fall in line voluntarily. The dedication of the house and fitting programs will come in due time. I am a lover of singing and music and we will have it! Once I listened to a singing choir which brot tears to my eyes and fixed in my mind the sweetest song I ever heard. The choir was composed of fullblood Indians. I reasoned with myself while there still were tears in my eyes. Can it be possible that those are descendants from the wild Indian savages who roamed over this country killing to right and left! (One of the numbers which they sang I shall never forget, "Will there be and Stars in My Crown?" What a change, what a contrast, what great achievements. Guns are stored away. Warring hatchet and tomahawk are buried. Indians and whites now go hand in hand, rallying around the banners of freedom. We don't say Indian savages any more! We say Indian brother and Indian sister. We may have an Indian delegation at the dedication of our new pioneer home. Great achievements! Happy members of Uncle Sam's family and "Gubben" puts on a smiling countenance! Oh, Say, roll up your sleeves! Lets go! Have you got your purse?

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

## 41

August 25, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

PIONEER GO-TO-BED STORIES FOR CHILDREN CONTINUED—ANOTHER CATTLE HUNT

(No. 41)

Peter E. Nordin filed on NW1/4 Sec. 30, Lake Andrew, and settled down with his wife and only son Axel—the wellknown Judge A.F. Nordin, on what is now the Carl Danielson place. Amund Syverson with family settled on the SW ¼. I have previously introduced to the readers Kristian Bjornstad, an easy going individual, but who had a Scotch wife, who did the work for both, the one who never laced his shoes but walked them over presenting 4 heels side by side, the two natural and the two shoe heels on the edge. The one who settle on the SW1/4 20 dug himself a hovel in the hillside on what is best known as the Slattum farm, who led the cow in to the house to be milked by the wife from the bed when she was unable to go out. The one who lost one of his oxen and hitched the cow to the remaining one hauling the shocks for stacking on a sleigh, not being the owner of a wagon and then complained of dry sleighing. Bjornstad had with him in company an Irish friend who filed on the NE1/4, Sec. 30, thus joining corners with Bjornstad. The Irish dug himself a hovel near east line, near a slough on Mostue's farm which has been honored with the name Irish slough to this day. In the spring of 1867 he found he had rapped on the wrong number, being associated with only Norwegians and mosquitoes, he wended his

way back to St. Cloud, from whence he came, altho with the intention of returning. But it soon leaked out that he had forfeited his right to his claim by staying away too long. Carl Nordin, a nephew of P.E.Nordin, then jumped his claim, as we termed it! He did not mind the Irish hovel but made one of his own near the western line nearer his uncle. He finished his hut with one door and little window, 8x10, 6 lights, a layer of rails, a layer of hay covered with sod, marked the finishing touch for roof. Bjornstad, who enjoyed a little fun on someone else's expense, began nagging Carl for the Irish, hinting: "Hard to tell what will happen if the Irishman comes back." Seeing that he lent him willing ear he kept at it continually at every given opportunity until Carl began to take it seriously, and really feared the Irishman. Carl was more active than Bjornstad, even practicing the art of baking pancakes. Finding that he had more smoke than pancakes, he took out the little window to exchange some smoke for fresh air. He was just in this act when I came along alone that time with the cattle. Looking around I spied one of our cows on his roof on top of his house which was not much of a trick as the rear of the roof was even with the ground. Being aware of the cow's situation, I hurried to head her off. But in so doing there was a crash, and down went the cow, and out came Carl shooting thru the window, a knife in one hand and a pancake in the other, bareheaded and hair sticking straight up, exhibiting a couple of eyes which would do credit to a Barnum-Ringling circus. Seeing me he shouted at the top of his voice: ("Hva faskikken er de for noet"). He evidently had in his mind it was the Irishman who was coming. I said it's only one of our cows making you a visit. We certainly thought it was the terminal of the cow's journey but seeing she stood on all fours even nibbling at some hay, we got busy getting her out which was not done in a hurry. Stove, bed, table, rails, straw, sod and cow in a mixup. His door was only 2 ft wide. We had to tear out the whole front of his mansion to get the cow out, which was not any worse off for the experience. She walked home with the rest of the cattle only a little limping on the left hind foot.

Carl never rebuilt his shack but left it, saying he would not have any luck with land for jumping it from the Irish. Another Nordin by the name Johan, wife and little John, 2 years. But Johan, like old Job, was up against adversities. He built himself a log cabin on the bare hill, where Jens Skaalrud's house now stands. Had bad luck one time after the other till he finally lost his wife. After her burial he picked up all his duds, little John included. He also attributed the trouble to the Irish. He left the land vacated. Little John grew up to be a handsome young man and married a daughter of Halvor Sollien of Arctander and is said to be a prosperous farmer in Canada. Henrik Nary, a bachelor, then tried his luck. But did not back it very long. He got himself a helpmate in the person of Miss Karin Skaalrud, who also died there at that place, after which he also left for Canada and is also a prosperous well-to-do farmer. Jens Skaalrud, with his family, the fourth owner, has lived by the Irish slough for 28 years but never was haunted by the Irishman as far as I know.

PIONEER KID

## 42

FURTHER ECHOES FROM 1873

(No. 42)

The Kandiyohi County History is one of the most valuable books a citizen of the county can place on his table. I have some experience in writing and have just a faint idea about the gigantic work and strain it must have been to superintend the work and compilation of such a great and valuable volume. Nobody can realize it fully and the real value of it is not realized at present until they are all sold out. Then the time will come when they will be in demand. I believe the best of all is the clear and complete maps of all the townships and homes.

I will now go over the early pioneer road to St. Johns station (now Pennock). Take map of Lake Andrew. Then thru Arctander, then thru part of Mamre, across the government log bridge near Gunder Pederson's, across Shakopee creek, then southeasterly to Dovre. Then follow the Dovre township line south by Jonas Swenson's and Pete Lundin's to west end of Solomon, then in southwestern direction across unsettled prairie to the station. About two weeks after the great storm of 1873, I went over that road: Being that the snow after that fierce storm in which so many lost their lives was packed and frozen like solid ice on the lake, I made up my mind to shorten that long roundabout road by going straight across. The first farmer north four miles was Alfred Erlandson to which place I had a road. From there was no road but I could see the Norway Lake woods plain. Taking a certain mark to aim by, I proceeded going west of a bachelor, John Erickson, east of two bachelor brothers, Jonas and Magnus Johnson, and on northeasterly. It being a snappy cold afternoon I had cuddled down in the front corner of wagon box, keeping my eyes on the goal. All of a sudden I heard by the horses feet I was on something sounding like a bridge. The horses shied and made a jump for life, it being the roof of a house. I got on my feet and stopped the horses. Looking back I spied part of a stove pipe joint and a faint smoke and out came an old man (who reminded me of a wild man) thru a hole in the snow. The situation was too comical for soberness. I could not help but laugh. His hair stuck up, his eyes glared fire. The more I laughed, the worse he got. At last he shouted, "Hva er du for en som kommer token? Om jag hade en bossa skulde jag skuta!" Then I knew him by the voice and by the talk. We had been together at threshing in the fall. I presented my name. His name was Gillberg, best known as "Gillberg Gubben" of Mamre. His son, Gillberg Jr. was once a preacher in the Lundby church. We got over our differences without any one being hurt, he finally sharing in a good laugh. I now proceeded northeasterly till I struck my morning trail. Again crossing Shakopee creek on the log bridge near Gunder Pederson's. Many will remember "Gillberg Gubben" of Mamre yet. While at Shakopee creek I am reminded of storm tragedies. About two weeks previously, Peter Hoglund, living on the creek but in Lake Andrew, was lured by that beautiful but treacherous morning to yoke up his oxen, hitch them to the sleigh and drive over to the Lake Florida timber after a load of wood. His wife also enjoyed the fine morning for a visit. She took along little August, 8, and walked over to Ollie Nygren's, about two miles, for a visit. After staying there about two hours, Mr. Nygren rushed in and asked for help to get the cattle in as a bad storm was coming. They got the cattle all in. Mrs. Hoglund got busy wrapped up little August to start for home. But they had to stay where they were for three days and three nights, worrying all the time for Mr. Hoglund and the oxen. Mr. Hoglund merely by nip and tuck reached home, disappointed over finding the house empty. Now he had to stay alone three days and three nights worrying over his wife and little August. On the fourth morning he took his shovel and started off, putting down the shovel here and there, fully convinced that they had froze to death by the wayside, as she had intimated in the morning of a visit to Nygren's. He kept on walking till he got there and found them both there hale and hearty. There was a happy reunion

and oxen were safe in stable. Little August is now Mr. August Høglund, hardware merchant of Willmar. He is hard of hearing but memory and mouthpiece can explain the tragedy in details better than I can.

Lars Nelson of Lake Andrew also congratulated himself with the fine morning. He went that morning to St. Johns station (Pennock.) He merely by luck and chance fought his way thru getting home and saved his own and the horses' lives.

Nels N. Stenseth, the pioneer settler of SE1/4, Sec. 17, known now as J.S. Christenson's corner, lived then in a log cabin. Turned out two oxen and three cows. Then leaving for a walk to Lars Christofferson's in Arctander, where he stayed three days and three nights, worrying for his home. A few days after the storm I went over there where we exchanged experiences (myself also in the storm.) Wife and five children were at home. She told me how she left the two smallest in the house. Taking the three oldest girls along to try with great difficulty to get cattle in. They did not receive any further attention or care till storm was over. How they all four hung together and finding the house was a mere luck. How they built fire. How the stove pipes turned red from hot blaze. How she threw salt in to the stove, closing up all drafts, which quenched the blaze. After that scare they did not dare to keep fire agoing as there was no damper in the stove pipe, and suffered greatly. To make fire they would run chances of burning to death. With no fire they took chances of freezing to death, to say nothing about hunger. They had pork and meat in an outdoor shed and could not venture getting it, and if they did they did not dare to keep fire up to prepare it. Then they were worrying for husband and father. They stayed mostly in bed. She told me with tears running down her cheeks how Mr. and Mrs. Nels Bratlund, living just across the road, came to their aid early the fourth morning. They knew of their distress, that father was away but had not been able to aid them till then. They took them over to their home into a warm room and gave them a good breakfast. Nothing like good neighbors. Mr. and Mrs. Nels Bratlund, the good Samaritans, were the parents of Mrs. Sophia L. Rice and Mrs. C.C. Selvig, grandparents of Mayor Selvig of Willmar and Col. Cushman Rice.

Another young woman on the northern borders of the county, had the same experience on the same day. Being alone with her little baby on the arrival of the storm, the stove pipe caught fire, the house burned down and all she could save was a quilt to wrap around the baby. She walked barefooted in the snow storm to the neighbor's house. Being that the road lay thru a grove with thick brush on both sides and well acquainted, she managed to locate the neighbor's house, where she lingered a few days, but died from the exposure after pressing the goodbye kiss on the baby's lips, whose life she had saved! Such were pioneer days, and those are the memory entwined in the noble cause of the erection of the Old Settlers' Pioneer Cabin at the Fair Grounds of Kandiyohi county. It is to be hoped that the project will meet with general approval and receive the free gift donations from everybody. It is inspiring to know that the committee in charge are nicely on the move.

Did you make the treasurer, Frank G. Handy, smile? I never knew him any different, especially when he sees money. Try him!

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

# 43

September 8, 1926 Willmar Tribune

## OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

### THRESHING IN EARLY DAYS

No. 43

I can remember when there was only three small horse power threshing machines in the whole community. Even Railson bought the first in St. Paul bringing it to Rice county by horses, finishing threshing there. Then again by horses across to Norway Lake in the then Monongalia county shelling out the grain for farmers miles apart, wheat yielding 30 bushels to the acre.

The next year Iver K. Syse and his brother-in-law, Andrew Monson of West Lake, invested in one, being that acreage of grain had increased, and they had a fair run, but had miles to go between each job.

The same year we heard of ox-threshers over in John P. Rodman's colony of Varmlanningar out in the wilderness of now known as the Township of Mamre. There were no horses in the colony, and Sears, Roebuck & Co. did not have them in stock. But it takes a dark day to see Varmlanningar stuck. They decided to thresh with oxen and ordered a horsepower machine. Those venturing the project were four husky bachelors: H.P. Lofgren, Sonney Nyquist, Pete Dalsten and John Erickson. The machine arrived, most likely bringing it from St. Cloud. They had it leveled and set and prepared for work. Hitched up five yoke of oxen to the horse power to be traveling round and around all day. One of the men took the position up in the center with a long whip twisting his lips and making faces at the oxen. But they must have looked at the wrong number in the catalog as they got a machine which was speeded for horses and not for oxen, hence they were up against the difficulty of low speed and slow motion. But Varmlanningarne were not stuck in their embarrassment. They gathered five pioneer kids with sticks in their hands to follow up with each yoke of oxen pegging and pounding them along. If it had been today Judge August O. Forsberg of Willmar would be pulled by the proper authority when he would have to confess and plead guilty to the charge of pounding beefsteak at undue time, being one of the five pioneer kids selected for the job. That charge today would be cruelty to animals.

The following year they found that they had to speed the power for oxen or exchange horn bovine animals for some of the equine species. They chose the latter, and the kids, A.O. Forsberg included, were out of a job.

They then did some fine threshing, cleaning up the colony's jobs and came across Shakopee creek and also did some fine threshing over in Lake Andrew for the early pioneers, our job included.

Then came Amund Syverson, Johan Gordhamer and John Georgeson with their rig and as the fields increased in acreage, the machines came in to fill the demand.

Even Railson was also the first one to bring in a steam threshing outfit, which created quite a sensation. People went for miles to see the curiosity. The engine was pulled by two yokes of oxen and the separator by two span of horses. Railson had a competent engineer, in Lars Hedlund for a couple of seasons. But in 1881 they could not agree on the wages. Railson chose to run his engine himself rather than to pay the wages asked. Hedlund hired out to Iver K. Syse and B.O. Otterness with their steam rig No. 2. In September, 1881, they were threshing at Martin Engen's place, three quarters of a mile from the Railson rig, which was also in running operation. Iver Syse told me he was startled by feeling a slight jar and a roaring sound. Looking in that direction he saw something like an old coat being thrown up in the air. It was the boiler of Railson's engine. The cylinder had given a report, a report which demanded attention. Telling his little son Olaf to watch the steam gauge and if it went up to let him know, Railson was adjusting cylinder teeth. The boy ran over to tell him that the steam gauge was raising fast. There was a thundering roar and it was done. All there was left of the engine were the wheels. All the rest went up. Anfin Strand of Pennock was killed outright, and others were severely injured. Sometimes we pinch the pennies and let the dollar go.

The next improvement on the engines was self propelling, at first without the steering gear. A team of horses had to be hitched to the engine, not to do any pulling, simply to steer. Oliver Thompson got one of these the same year. One man sat on a seat driving the team. In crossing the bridge at the New London mill, a crack was heard. Oliver put on full steam which gave a sudden jerk. This threw the man to the ground, causing his death. This man was Charles Ogren, a brother of Emil Ogren and an uncle to Postmaster Alvin Ogren at New London.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

***[Where is 44?]*** *I found it, it was out of order because of the death of Ben Iverson, it is located on November 19, 1926*

## 45

September 15, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

BEN EVERSON IS NO MORE

N. 45

Ben Everson passed away at his home in Brooten Sept. 3. He was also known in this locality as Bernard Dahl, on account of his mother's remarriage after the Indian tragedies. I have previously described these in full and there is no need of repeating that part of it, only that Ben was then 6 years old on that 21<sup>st</sup> day of August, 1862. Being accustomed to associating with Indians every day, he harbored no fear. The

Indians that fatal morning invaded their rough but lovely little log cabin, doing no harm to the family but asked for Mr. Iverson. Ben, whose nature was accommodation itself, followed the Indians to where his father was walking in wooden shoes cutting grass for hay with a scythe on the south edge of Crook Lake grove in Lake Andrew. The six Indians all shook hands as usual. The last one stepped back a few steps and shot Iverson (See previously written article.) Mr. and Mrs. Iverson were originally from Hurdal, Norway. I first met Ben at the opening of school in a little rude log schoolhouse under a sod roof which soon was replaced by shingles. The teacher was a little sixteen year old neighbor girls (later Mrs. Sophia L. Rice.) The classmates were: Ben Iverson C.A. Syverson, Axel Erickson, Ole E. Reese, O.H. Negaard and myself. Ben was of a quiet, pleasing disposition, rather short in conversation, apparently weighing his words before their delivery.

He was confirmed at the Big Grove church in Stearns county in 1872, by Rev. L.J. Markhus. He became Uncle Sam's servant, taking the Star mail route from Willmar to Glenwood, a distance of about 50 miles, an extremely long and tough route, facing all kinds of weather and pioneer disadvantages—showstorms, rainstorms, hailstorms and sand storms. But Ben was prompt on his job and gained the reputation of being one of Uncle Sam's best boys. He did not sit in an enclosed glass house, pressing the button for high speed. His pioneer horse motor was an open rickety buggy.

On November 26, 1882, he was united in marriage with Miss Christine Thompson at the Chippewa Falls church, Pope Co., Rev. U.C. Hjernstad officiating. In connection with a farm close by he also ran a hotel at Chippewa Falls (now Terrace) for 7 years, when he disposed of the hotel and devoted all his time to farming and became a prosperous farmer. He raised a respectable family, namely Louella (Mrs. Carls Phillips of Elko, Minn.) Clara Lillian (Mrs. Nels Urness, Alkabo N.D..) Amy Florence (Mrs. Silas Swenson. Brooten.) Three children preceded their father in death. One son Wilhelm Eugene, 21, Alice May, 27, and Bertha Margaret, 23. Some years ago the deceased retired from farming, built himself a cozy home in Brooten, which was the home of only himself and wife at his death. On August 25, in behalf of the Old Settlers' Association, I went to Brooten with intention of getting him over to help us locate the place where his father was killed and buried and to place the stone at his grave prepared by the association. But was sorry to find him sitting in a rocking chair, suffering with a second stroke of paralysis. He was not able to move a finger or hand but had strength enough in right shoulder to raise his arm. He whispered, "I am glad to see you," and then whispered me the desired information. He said that after 3 days they found his father's body dug a hole three feet deep and rolled the remains in and covered dirt over him. 'When I left Ben he again with difficulty raised his arm for the last farewell, whispering thanks and appreciation for my calling.

On Sept. 3, I received a message from his folks, "Ben dead. Funeral Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>. Come." Funeral services were conducted from Rev. Sund's church, Brooten, in Norwegian by Rev. Sund, and in English by Rev. Watts, Presbyterian. A cortege of 20 well-filled automobiles vended their way to the Terrace church cemetery, again meeting a large gathering. This speaks for itself as to the esteem in which my early pioneer friend, school chum and classmate was held. He leaves behind him his widow, and three daughters and many nieces and nephews, including his brother's John Everson's children of Atwater. The only one now left of his parental family is his brother, Peter, who was not able to be present at the funeral. Such ended the life of another 100 per cent true old early pioneer.

The pallbearers were August Odell, Fred Swenson, Fred Ritter, H. Ratten, Christ Hegg and Gabriel Stene. He was placed in a fine modern vault and I said to myself, What a contrast, what a difference in the burials of father and son.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)

## 46

September 22, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

THE PIONEER HOME

No. 46

[The article is contains a photograph of at least 7 people and a small log cabin in the background.]

The accompanying picture is one home of the close relatives of Pioneer Kid, Ole Monson, on south shore of Camp Lake, Swift county. It represents one of the real pioneer homes. The early settler's abode, plain and common in structure, but great in adventure. Limited means, but great achievement. Small rooms, but big hearts. How many a good lunch and meal I have enjoyed on their crude, but tidy, neat and clean tables. How many a good rest and sleep after following two yoke of oxen all day long, swinging a long whip in turning the virgin sod for the preparing of the tilling of the soil! The pioneer houses were low and rude with moss grown logs and low sod roofs. But the ambition was high. The sod roofs were low and covered with weeds and grass. But there was always satisfaction, no grumbling, neighbors few and far apart, but friendship was never limited, reaching as far as the eyesight could reach and territories not measured out by zones. Hatred, quarrels and troubles were seldom known. They were a uniform set equally proportioned, not one any bigger than the other, no one looking up and no one looking down. They were not as fast going in high speed as nowadays. There were no churches in a radius of fifty miles or more. But they tucked their families down in the old wagon box, hitched up their oxen and drove contented and pleased to some neighbor shack for Sunday services to review the religion learned at father's and mother's knees way back in their parental homes in the land they had left behind them. They were determined to preserve and protect the dear mother language. Their abodes, their sod houses, dugouts, shanties, and log cabins were not of the modern style. But they were "Home, Sweet, Homes" nevertheless, and they enjoyed neighborly love, peace and harmony and protection of home.

Home! What a hallowed name How full of enchantment and how dear to the heart Home is the magic circle within which the weary spirit finds refuge; it is the sacred asylum to which the cold worn heart retreats to find rest from the toils and the trouble of life. Ask the lone wanderer as he plods his tedious way, bent with the weight of age, and white from the frost of years. Ask him what home is. He will tell you it is a green spot in memory; an oasis in the desert; a center about which the recollections of his

grief-oppressed heart cling with all the tenacity of youths' first love. This will be recalled at the finishing of our Pioneer log cabin on the Fair grounds with the beautiful scenery of Foot Lake in the back ground. Our home was once a glorious, a happy reality, but now it rests only as an image of the mind. Home! That name touches every fiber of the soul and strikes every chord of the human heart with its angelic fingers, nothing but death can break its spell. What tender associations are linked with those early pioneer homes. What pleasing images and deep emotions it awakens. It calls up the fondest memories of life and opens our heart the purest, deepest and richest gush of consecrated thoughts and feelings. Home How often we hear parents speak of their home—of the home of their childhood. Their mind seems to delight in dwelling on the recollections of joyous days spent beneath the parental roof. When their young and happy hearts were as light and free as the birds who made the woods resound with the melody of their cheerful voices. What a blessing it is when weary with care and burdened with sorrow to have a home to which we can go and there in the midst of friends we love, forget our troubles and dwell in peace and quietness. Let it be a pioneer hovel, a sod house, a dugout. How many a happy hour, months and years have been spent inside those humble doors, when we recall those happy days of youth and take a review of the past and the present we often feel like saying; "Come back ye pioneer days, oh, come back!" We had no collisions those days, no accidents leaving corpses by the roadside every day, no sheriff's speedometer to trace our trail.

In this Pioneer home! By its generous inhabitants, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Monson, I was told in the spring of 1875, the widow's son Gullick Olson had his last meal on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1873. Then started off with his load of wood, drawn by a yoke of oxen. He was caught in that severe storm, was separated from his oxen who froze to death and walking with the storm without knowing where and most likely in the dark of night. He had walked up a high hill with the storm getting over the top on the east side and had evidently got down in the lodged deep snow on east side where he, exhausted and tuckered out, had gone to the final sleep. His body lay in the snow about 10 weeks till the snow melted in the spring. Dog's hair frozen to snow also proved that his faithful dog also had been with him but finally left and got to the mill. That hill may be seen from the front of the Swift Falls store and has been known as "Enkebakken" till this day (The widow's Hill) on account of that sad tragedy in 1873.

PIONEER KID.

(Continued)