

# 47

October 27, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

FROM EARLY NEW LONDON WESTWARD

No. 47

[The article contains a photograph of a crude wooden mill on a river. Title and caption read: THE OLD SAW MILL AT NEW LONDON. The first grist mill is back of the saw mill, and was located where the New London Fire House is now located.]

In the very early pioneer days a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Mons Olson in what is now New London Township in the then Monongalia county, not in a modern dwelling but in a side hill dugout, which was the pioneer style. His weight at birth was 11/2 pounds, length 10 inches. His first bed was a cotton batten. He was small in size but said to be active. Was very small but they gave him a very big name! They called him Victor! Thus he has victoriously fought his way through till this day and numbers this month as his sixtieth month of October. His name and address is Victor Olson, New London, Minn..

A BEAR STORY

And in the very early pioneer days not very far from there was a new settler by the name of Norstedt, father of Peter, August and Albert Norstedt, living near a little lake known then as Norstedt Lake. One fine sunshiny morning Mr. Norstedt spied a little bear cub sound asleep in the sunshine on a sunny sidehill not far from there. In a hurry he grabbed a crutch in the shape of a two-tined hay fork, put that over his neck and pressed down where he had him fully in his charge. He managed to get him into a box and kept him captive for some time! He finally sold him to Mr. J.H. Mountain of Willmar, co-partner of Hanscom and Mountain Meat Market, first meat market in Willmar, located on the Merchants Hotel corner, Pacific ave and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Mountain lived back of the Bethel Lutheran church, in which yard he kept his pet cub. He got very tame, like a dog, but kids playing with him, made him ugly. He finally turned him loose for short spells. He was fond of beer and got in the habit of visiting a certain saloon on Pacific ave where he mustered up on twos, like other customers, looking for his turn to come. I remember Herman Brem, who has the distinction of being the first born baby boy in the early Willmar, interfering with Mr. Bear at his beer gulp which resulted in torn and shredded clothes. The boy looked like a picked crow. Was then just a little shaver. The bear was fond of Mr. Mountain, so was Mr. Mountain of his pet idea! Mr. Mountain and his pet disappeared from Willmar some 45 years ago and the little lake west of New London has been honored with the name, Bear Lake, ever since.

IN EARLY NEW LONDON

In the very early days while yet a little boy, I was going a boy's errand, traveling barefooted from Norway Lake to New London, ten miles and return. Getting to New London, I did my little shopping, a

makeup of quite a little luggage. There was a little saw mill in connection with a grist mill. Not circle saw! The saw was about 8 feet long and was pulled up and down. Besides that there were not over half a dozen houses in New London.

The little sandwich in my pocket was found not to be sufficient. I was still hungry! No restaurants those days. If such a name had been named to us we would think it was a shoemaker shop or harness repairs. There was nothing between the Sam Adams' store, formerly Eckman's and W.W. Penney's merchandise store, now the Monson & Holm corner. I could smell fried onions and steak which did its duty to the nose but nothing for mouth and stomach and I started off hungry. I passed Mons Olson's dugout in a side hill, three and one quarter of a mile west of there was what I considered the biggest house in the country to compare with the other hovels.

#### AT THE OLD CHURCH

First floor was equipped for church services and the upstairs served as the minister's home. Passing the door I spied a young lady and asked for a drink of water. She walked closer up to me and said: "You look tired, my boy! Take a chair and have a rest." To save walking up and down the stairs they had an outside shanty something like a table hanging on the wall by hinges when not in use. When to be used they raised it up, putting a leg under it! I thot that was a handy devise! But happened to think it could not be used at our hovel as there were only clay walls, living in a dugout. I did not get water. I got good sweet buttermilk all I wished to drink and doughnuts and cookies on that table and said, "Help yourself." I thot if it was possible for anyone to substitute for an angel, she was one! They were a young newly married couple, Rev. and Mrs. T.H. Dahl, later the wellknown President of the United Lutheran Church of America! He was Norwegian, but served on a call issued jointly by the Swedish Lutherans and the Norwegians of Monogalia County. That old weather beaten landmark stands there yet on what then was known as the Billy Whitney place and should be taken care of if I had things my way! It would soon be placed on a proper location in Sibley Park as a memorial of the very first religious meeting house in Kandiyohi county.

The Norway Lake New London road did not lay like it does now, graveled and in fine trim and kids and working hands did not sail over it in glass houses.

I walked first to Olander's cabin. Then northwesterly thru grove north of Newlin's house. Then west over prairie and hills into the grove at east end of Lake Andrew by Christian Hanson's log cabin. Then on the south shore of lake where Olof Holum's and G. Sakariason's homes how are. The west to Kvennerud's cabin and on to Andrew Railson's log cabin and Norway Lake P.O., being located about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile east of present location. Then to Thomas Osmundson's log cabin and on to Johannes and Halvor Hovoldson's log cabin and around the Norway Lake slough where it crossed the soldiers' patrol trail, running from the Norway Lake Fort to Eagle Lake, then running on to Six Mile Grove and Fort Abercrombie.

#### TOP BUGGIES AND THE GIRLS

Even Railson was one of the very first settlers and as a rule first in the different enterprises. He brot in the very first open buggy which nearly spread like a smallpox epidemic. Also the first covered top buggy

which created quite a sensation. Farmers stopped their oxen, forgot their worries and spied as long as it was in sight.

Those days this country has a blessing of bachelors, the fair sex being in demand and at a premium. Some hustled to get a wife! One bachelor who had stretched his neck nearly out of joint looking for one, had just about given it up for a bad joke when he conceived the cute idea to get a top buggy like Railson's and found it to be a good investment. Now it was the ladies' turn to stretch their neck and it was not long until he had a wife tucked up by his side in his top buggy and one Miss Gossip exclaimed, "For pity sake, she did not marry the man; she married the buggy!"

You men, old bachelors and widowers, see what you can do about the first installment. Then go and get a glass enclosed sedan and if you haven't a wife in a reasonably short time, there is something wrong about the spark plug.

PIONEER KID.

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## 44

November 19, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

No. 44

Levor Jylledalen was from Kronsherred, where the Railson family are from in Norway. He accompanied Even Railson from Rice County, and lived on what is known as the Stene farm in Lake Andrew, in the early new settlers days.

He made his headquarters with Sven Borgen, a close neighbor, the first winter. Rumors were spread that there were elks and deer to be found in the woods and hills at Lake Johanna, and he had once met and happened to know John Sandvig, the first and probably the only settler in Lake Johanna at the time. So early morning one he equipped himself with rifle, ammunition and luggage of provisions for food and set out for Lake Johanna on skis. He had luck with him, saw a bunch and with his keen eye and good marksmanship dropped one animal somewhere near where the Lake Johanna store now is. (I don't know which, elk or deer.) He most likely left his rifle with the carcass and went to locate the home of John Sandvig. He was however overtaken by one of those snappy storms of those days. He lost the direction. No sun to see by any more. He did not know that the storm came from the northwest. He was out and had to stay out. And if going with the wind he might by luck and chance strike a new settlers home at Norway Lake colony. Don't know if he made it on the same day or spent a night wandering about with no aim. The wind must have changed its course. Going with the wind as he thot towards Norway Lake colony, he chanced by luck to strike a new settler's shack at the Crow Lake colony somewhere west of Belgrade, 18 miles off from his intended destination, hungry, tired and tuckered out,

with badly frozen feet and suffering great pains. In those pioneer days accommodations were poor! Just for their own families. He stayed there a couple of days. But he longed to be back at his quarters at Sven Borgens , and the settler yoked up his oxen and brot him over to Sven Borgen's place (now Gunder Swenson's) where he stayed a few weeks, suffering great pain. All his toes came off. The Swenson's did everything in their power for his comfort. No doctors nearer than St. Cloud. The only thing at hand available as medicine was tar and unsalted butter. When roads and weather moderated somewhat they brot him to St. Cloud by oxen taking 3 days, passing small inland villages, such as Burbank, Paynesville, Rockville, Cold Springs and St. Joe, to St. Cloud there he was left at a hotel and received doctors care and medical aid. He stayed there for some time. He turned a cow, which he had bought from Even Railson, over to the Swenson's as compensation for their care in his peril.

After staying at St. Cloud for some time under doctor's care, Jylledalen went back to Rice county where he had a married sister. The last I heard of him he went to Nebraska, where he was supposed to have died.

Such is the history of another toiling and suffering pioneer from early days. A relic after Levor Jylledalen may be seen and examined today in Stene's grove in the shape of a big oak log apparently the top part of a big oak, shaved in one end and cut by ax in the other. The butt end was likely used for fence post or fence rail. The log is in good condition yet and can be moved anywhere. If that log could talk and tell its story, it would say: "I have been here for over sixty year. The place where the stump or root was, is not visible.

Another pioneer victim who also had his feet frozen was John Gisler! Andrew Hedin has some groceries and merchandise stored for the accommodation of the early settlers at the place which is the home of A.H. Gordhamer. He brot the goods from St.Coud.

John Gisler built a store on what now is the Truls Paaverud place on the state road between Truls Paaverud and Elof Otterness, where he operated store for some time. But he closed his business and sold his business to Christian O. Pladsen of Norway Lake Township and it is today part of the house on C.O. Pladsen's estate north and west from the old Norway Lake Fort location.

What a difference and what a contrast to compare those early pioneer's toil and struggles with the conditions of today.

PIONEER KID.

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December 15, 1926 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

A BURIAL IN A RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION CREW

[four articles appeared on December 15, 1926]

No. 48

It was in the early pioneer days at the time the railroad was being constructed from St. Paul to Willmar, Benson and westward. A section of the road-bed grading was let to a bunch consisting of all Swedes, except one Irishman. There always was more or less "rag chewing" and wrangling with the latter. Especially by one of the Swedes and the Irishman. I was not there. But heard the story. This Swedish settler was an industrious and hard worker. He always wanted to be on the move at something, especially when he had a bracer or two stored away, which was much the fashion in those times. The Irishman finally declared he would hang out until pay day, but then he would leave for Benson where he could be freed from his Swedish tormentors and stay and work together with his own countrymen. Meanwhile the Irishman was taken sick and died. In those days there were in the then wilderness, no coffins, no caskets, no hearses, no churches, no cemeteries, no ministers. It was hard to get a few lumber pieces for a home-made coffin, as no lumber was available nearer than St. Cloud. They, however, got one made and selected a place for burial. One of the Swedes spoke up and said: "We must take into consideration that we have come from a civilized country. Also bear in mind that we have before us the remains of a human being and must perform our duties as civilized people. I suggest some one act as a leader and give him a decent burial as circumstances will warrant!" The before mentioned spokesman, being a little top-heavy, volunteered to substitute for minister! (Pa svenska) with shovel in hand!

The first shovel:

"Fra Irland kom du! De vet vi."

Second shovel:

"Till Benson skulle du ga, De sa du."

Third shovel:

"Nar de andra Irlanderna sta up, gad a med."

In English it reads:

First shovel:

"From Ireland you came, that we know"

Second shovel:

"To Benson you said you should go."

Third shovel:

"When the rest of the Irishmen arise, go then with them."

I admit this leans strongly towards blasphemy, But no use hiding it. It is nothing worse then every-day happenings at the time when King Alcohol and General Booze held full reign. We have seen it worse.

PIONEER KID

## 49

ARCTANDER WON HIS CASE

No. 49

John Bjork was one of the first, if not the very first settler of Dovre Township to run a little horse power threshing machine. He was the first settler in Dovre to operate a steam threshing outfit, hauling engine around with two yoke of oxen and separator by horses. Towards the last he was so badly crippled up with rheumatism he could hardly walk! But when threshing season came around he had to be where he could see the doings and hear the hum of the machine if he had to walk on crutches. His ambition was as forceful as ever till the last.

At one time he bought a wood-sawing outfit run by horse tread power. The horses were led in and tied in something resembling a cattle rack with rear-end nearly to the ground and the front about two feet higher with a revolving devise, when set in gear, the bottom moving. This made the horses begin to step and kept on stepping all day with a fly-wheel outside for belting to the saw pulley, which ran the saw. He bought cord wood by the carloads, sawed and delivered wood in the then little Willmar. One day he was confronted by the proper authority asking if he had a license or permit to do that kind of work in Willmar. He lived out in the country in Dovre. He answered: "Ga ni til Halsingland after eran license!" and proceeded with his work. He finally was arrested on the charge of running a sawing outfit by horses. He engaged Attorney John W. Arctander to handle his case. At the trail it could not be proven that he ran that sawing outfit by horses! He was running it with a pair of mules. As usual Arctander held this out to the jury in glowing terms, and John Bjork won the case.

PIONEER KID

HOW OLLE DAHL LOST HIS PET DEER—A FALSE INDIAN SCARE

## 50

No. 50

In the early pioneer days it was nothing uncommon to see a flock of deer like a flock of sheep.

One time Olle Dahl living on the east end of Crook Lake had captured a young one. Kept him around home until it became as tame as a kitten and followed him about like a dog. This went on for a while until the adopted pet got a visitor of the same tribe, probably from the same mother. Altho very shy, they played together. Mr. Dahl fed his pet regularly. One day he conceived the cute idea to hang a little

bell on his pet. But the other fellow, not approving of such serenade, took to his feet in a northwesterly direction with all the speed there was in him and the one with the bell took after him at the same speed. Dahl was minus his pet and his bell he never saw anymore.

In those early pioneer days, just after the Indian scramble and tragedies, people were easily frightened, especially women and children. I can remember how slow we were about going to sleep. We feared the Indians. Had no guarantee for that we ever would see daylight any more but be a prey for the Indians like so many others. Amund Syverson with his family moved into Norway Lake from Iowa in the spring of 1866. No pasture law. Fields had to be protected by fences, dogs and children. In the spring of 1867, Carl Syverson, 11, brother Albert and little sister, Inger, both younger, were stationed on the Crook Lake pass—a narrow ridge the width of a wagon track between Crook Lake and the Chippewa Slough to watch the cattle and sheep from going across eastward. One day they spied six Indians! They cuddled down on the ground. Carl took his little sister by the arm and speeded off as fast as their pegs would let them. Albert was not in so much of a hurry. He wanted to take a look at the Indians. He had heard so much about them and wanted to see what they looked like. Pretty soon he also got the trot spell! They all came home short of breath, telling of the sight. People at the house however did not pay much attention till they saw the six Indians coming along same way carrying with them two canoes. Then they took it more seriously. Amund Syverson and his oldest son, S.A. Syverson, then 20, took to protection with guns and anything of fighting device available. The family ran over to the Peter Nordin claim, now the home of Carl Danielson where Axel Nordin, the well known Judge A.F. Nordin, was plowing with a yoke of oxen. He was batching at the time. He unhitched his oxen from the plow, hitched them to a wagon and brought them in a hurry over to Sven Borgen's, now Gunder Swenson's. Meanwhile Amund Syverson and son S.A. Syverson, were on duty hiding behind some big stones and the Indians heading for the Swenson Lake. Rush orders were sent to neighbors and a bunch was soon gathered at Gunder Swenson's—Thomas Osmundson, Johannes and Halvor Hovoldsons, Christoffer Engen, Axel and Albert Hedin, with Even Railson as the captain of the mob. At that time Amund Syverson and S. A. were also present. Also six land hunters looking for locations of which Jonas Johnson was one who located on the Mamre prairie. Having the former tragedies so fresh in mind they began to figure on another refuge at the well known Isle of Refuge in Norway Lake. Even Railson headed the bunch and proposed to see the redskins face to face. This they did and the whole thing was settled. It was only six friendly harmless Chippewa Indians on their usual hunting, trapping and fishing expedition. Finding that the whole flurry was about them, they went north of Norway Lake near Games Lake where they camped for a long time, and where, they went to no one knows. But it is believed that they were the last Indians seen around here on their old hunting grounds.

The next year, 1868, Carl Syverson and myself were school chums, both 12. Lars Christofferson had just arrived with his family from Norway and was just establishing for himself and family a home in a dugout on a side hill on what is now part of the Stene farm. I had been assigned the job of hitching up the oxen and drive to the little New London saw mill after a load of slabs and other lumber. Usually the slabs were laid on the stringers and then hay and sod to equip a pioneer hovel. This was the common style. Olaus C. Holter, his nephew, driving a pair of black steers was also going along after a load, L. Christofferson having no team.

Carl Syverson came over in the morning carrying a couple of the old style wooden pails. One of them was filled with eggs packed in oats—egg cases were not known in those days. The other pail contained some nice rolls of butter. He wanted to take the bus to New London. On account of hauling of lumber we had no wagon boxes. The passenger's pails had to be tied on to the hind hounds of the wagon truck. It happened to be one of those very hot days and what was worse, the horse flies (Kleg) were very bad. My oxen were faithful and true to their job even when blood dripped from the bites of those tormenting plague of biters. For some reason I cannot account for, the pesky tormentors were always worse on black stock than on others. O.C. Holter had a great time with his black steers running for the brush at every given opportunity.

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PIONEER KID

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NO. 51

Rev. Lars Olson Rustad was the first one installed as minister for the Hauge's Synode congregation here at Norway Lake. He was a lay preacher from Norway, going thru Norway, Sweden and part of Denmark. Came to America in 1869 direct to Norway Lake where he proceeded with his ideal work for two years and was ordained into the ministry in 1871 and labored here till his death which occurred in the night between the old year and the new year of 1877-1878. He was a true type of the Hans Nilson Hagues faction in Norway, also here. He was a forceful speaker, earnest and sincere in his religion and belief and was looked up to with love and respect. For my part personally, I never knew of any one before him or after him who could substitute for Lars Olson Rustad. He was a real D.L. Moody of Norway Lake in his evangelical preaching and work and a great deal of Sankey and Bliss when it came to singing.

As long as he was driving with a yoke of oxen, a lumber wagon with a piece of board as seat in pioneer style, he did not get beyond the first zone. But after he got himself a span of horses and something half between a lumber wagon and a two seated double buggy, known in those days as Democrat wagon, he enlarged his field of work! One congregation with a colony where Sacred Heart is now located, one at Lake Lillian, one at Howard Lake, one at Eagle Lake, one at Sauk Center. Norway Lake was his headquarters where he had his farm and home. Meetings were conducted in the pioneer's shacks and dugouts or wherever convenient. No churches those days. What remained after him as a direct result from his toil and work, was the establishment of three congregations to the charge: The Hauge church at Norway Lake, the Hauge church at Long Lake and the Hauge church at Green Lake.

There is a peppy little story in connection with this which I will relate.

One day in the fall of 1873 I went to Willmar with a load of grain. Just as I was ready to go home, Rev. Rustad arrived on the train from Howard Lake, where he had had services the previous day, Sunday. When he saw me, he said, "Good! Now I will get a ride home." We were near neighbors. Those days when early, Willmar had seven saloons, three accommodating drug stores, and besides that, the



merchants had a supply of high spirits in their cellars used as an injection into the slow going farmers, if found a little backward and slow in their business activities, which answered the purpose, as calculated, when the farmers got out of there, they felt like buying out the whole stock or the most of it. They felt like jumping clear over the store from one side to the other, and felt like licking the whole town with one hand tied to their back. But all of a sudden they went face first to the ground, either as a result of top heaviness or somebody's well developed fist. When we were ready to go, I drove up to J.P. Moran's store, handed the lines to Rustad to hold while I ran in after a couple of packages. Just then a delegation came out from the cellar. One was Sven L. Moe with a woman hanging to his coat tail and some other suppliants, all trying to talk at the same time. The woman hanging onto Moe's coat tail demanded pay for the whiskey. Moe said he had bought so much at the store he was to have the drinks free. But she insisted on getting her pay. Moe said: "I'll give you pay." He tore her loose from his coat, landed his fist in her neck, so she went face first to the ground. I jumped to the wagon and took the lines and said: "It's for us to get out of here quick. We will be apt to be entangled into trouble." And so I set off at a lively gait. Sven Moe had evidently also started after us, going the same way. He was overtaken by Sheriff Stoner and Deputy Ths. H. Olson (also son-in-law of Stoner), accompanied by Moran who gave Moe a thrashing which laid him up for some time. The deputy brot Moe back to Willmar while Sheriff Stoner pursued us and overtook us where the Solomon Lake church now stands on the Norway Lake road. Driving up to one side of us, he ordered us to stop and read a paper, which included Rustad's name. Rustad wanted to know what this meant. I said: "It's the sheriff. He wants us back to Willmar 7 miles. Rustad said: "You remember that woman who was knocked to the ground as we went." He said: "Ja, men du maa si til'n! De va ikke je som slog kjeringa." I said, "That is not the question. The guilty party is under arrest and you will be called upon as witness to say what you saw." The sheriff then went ahead and we went after him in. But when we got there we were not wanted. They had come to a mutual agreement out of court. Believe some one had testified to the fact that the woman was so drunk she could not stand up on her own feet without hanging to somebody's coat tail, and we were released and went home. Am very much in favor of writing a complete biography of the esteemed, beloved and highly respected Rev. L.O. Rustad.

PIONEER KID.

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January 5, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

No. 52

## THE ORDER IN WHICH SEVEN LUTHERAN CHURCHES WERE BUILT

The First East Norway Lake church, the church by the Norway Lake store, was built 51 years ago this summer or in 1875. Last year on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary it was raised and an up-to-date modern basement put in under it. This spells and reads pride for the place and credit and honor to the followers and descendants of the early sturdy pioneers. Those having horses at the time it was built, hauled the materials from St. Cloud, 60 miles, while those having oxen did the local hauling.

The First West Norway Lake church comes in as No. 2, and was built the following year 1876. The Sunburg church was built the same year by a congregation organized by Rev. Ole Paulson and comes in as No. 3. Hauges church was built in 1880 and comes in as No. 4. The Synod church (Brick) built in 1892, about 17 years later than the first East Norway Lake church, comes in as No. 5. The Monson Lake Synod church built same year and comes in as No. 6. The West Lake church was built in 1904 and comes in as No. 7. Now this is quite a difference and contrast from the time religious services were conducted in shacks, dugouts, small log cabins and the little log cabin for services at the Ole Knutson's grove. Now the first old church shines in a new coat of paint applied to it this summer by Gerhard Swenson and Earl Stark, which gives it a fine appearance. On Sunday night, Nov. 7, in spite of inclemency in the weather, it was practically filled with what we term as the pride of the nation, the coming generation. It was the closing social of the season under the leadership of Rev. H.E. Baalson's young peoples society. A very successful program was rendered by Baalson's choir and local talent and we especially wish to give great well deserved credit to the Colfax Male quartet, composed of Oliver Larson, Melvin Larson, Victor Johnson and Joseph Olson. Mrs. Oliver Larson presided at the organ. The audience was entertained with some lovely singing. We must not forget to mention the two small Colfax girls who gave song and music! Nothing slow about the Colfax people.

Rev. Baalson as usual gave his square-from-the-shoulder talk to the young peoples society. At one certain point of his talk he made me feel like getting on my feet when he touched upon my hobby subject! "Wet or Dry." He pleaded to the young folks to select the royal path and dutiful life and be loyal.

## 53

### A SAD MARKET DAY AT WILLMAR

NO. 53

***[Also published on January 5, 1927]***

I will again go back over the early pioneer trail where I belong! We have brought many of our youth's companions to early drunkard's graves and also many innocent people not because of drunkenness, but for being in bad company.

This will be proven by relating the following tragedy of Midsummer day June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1882

## A TRAGEDY IN 1882

It was at the time I was employed by the railroad company as baggage mast and warehouseman at the Willmar depot. At the time Willmar had seven open saloons and accommodating drug stores and a quantity of high spirit recruit and restorer remedies for slow and dull-minded customers in the cellars under the merchandise store buildings. In those times Willmar had a day established for a Fair day or Market day. That day people generally went to town, some bringing into market stuff to sell; or trade. It was a very good community plan but was badly hampered with and put out of existence by over-indulgence in "booze." Don't believe Willmar had another one after the following heart rendering tragedy:

Midsummer day, Saturday, June 24, 1882, was one of those fair days. Probably the Last! The railroad company was running a gravel train crew of about 60 men, about one-third of them dries and two-thirds wets. It drizzled and rained during the morning, keeping the crew laid up. Meanwhile the customers were making their regular rounds from saloon to saloon. At noon it had cleared up and the boss was trying to round up his men. About two-thirds refused to comply with orders and were discharged. About one-third of them, sober and industrious workers, with their shovels on their shoulders, went to work for the support of their families, while the two-thirds deposited their hard earned money at the saloons. These sober earnest workers took their places, sitting on the side of the flat cars as usual, their feet hanging down and shovels in their hands. Conductor Goran, Engineer Flooddy, and fireman and brakemen were more or less tipsy and were wrangling between themselves, shooting fire back and forth in true boozers style. Finally Conductor Goran told Engineer Flooddy to mind his business and go or he would be reported and lose his job. Then Flooddy opened the throttle for full speed. In order to run the loaded trains west, they ran the locomotive backwards, tender first, going east. When the caboose passed the depot it went so fast I could see papers, grass and light objects just flying behind the caboose, drawn by the suction. I said to myself, "Something will happen." I had not made many turns on the platform of the depot, when the telegraph operator handed me a double quick message reading: "Double hurry Doctor Frost, Sr. Gravel train wrecked near Atwater. About 20 men killed." Dr. Frost was hurried off and the dead and wounded began to come back, not at such a speed as when leaving, and it fell in my lot as an employee to help place the dead bodies side by side in the firemen's and engine room, then by the depot.

PIONEER KID.

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***Where is 54?*** [Story No. 54 appears in next weeks Willmar Tribune.]

January 19, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

BOOZE, SNUFF AND CIGARETTES

No. 55

When we begin to get wet governors, wet legislators and law makers and intimation of a wet president of the United States , then it is time to be on duty. Providence seems to have the hands in the prohibition work! The Supreme Ruler as it looks wanted the saloons out of the country before the millions of automobiles came in. If we should have saloons now like we used to have it would result in the bloodiest tragedies this world of ours ever witnessed. The heads of families, the churches, the ministers, the dries , the legislators and congress must rally to the front to protect and safeguard our nation against such advocating of the wet propaganda. Safeguard our Nation!

The dailies bring us hair-raising news every day of automobile accidents and murders and when they can't clear it when the Nation is a sober Nation what can be expected when more of those at the wheels would drink. This is a subject which pleads to our honest and sincere convictions. Booze and drunkenness are hell.

Next to that comes the health-ruining and death-bringing snuff eating and cigarette smoking habits. One as bad as the other and one as undesirable as the other. Many a young man lies in his grave today who could have been alive, hale and hearty and be a man today if he would have controlled his appetites.

I remember at the time of the Philippine war a young man was desirous of seeing the country and volunteered to go with the rest of the boys. Being examined at St. Paul he was rejected because he could not pass the required examination. Being anxious to know why, the doctor told him. "Your life is undermined by cigarette smoking and my advice to you young man is to cut it out entirely." The young man returned to Willmar and smoked as badly as ever and probably worse. This in spite of that the doctor told him, "Two years more will finish you at this same rate of smoking." Inside of a year he was in his grave—a ruined wreck. While he might have been a man if he so chose.

If you don't mind, go with me for a few minutes pioneering in North Dakota holding down a claim. Leaving home here to the management of the boys, I was appointed assessor for one year to fill the vacancy, the next year being elected by the people. The assessor's district was 12 townships unorganized and under the supervision of the county commissioners. I had in my district fifteen ranches with its cowboys and sheep herders. Coming to a ranch for dinner I said, "You have a fine bunch of sheep," (several thousand). "Yes," he replied, "and the best sheep herder I ever had, a boy of 18, but with a great fault! He will kill himself smoking those pesky cigarettes! I have advised him but he insists. It's his only company. Suppose you see him. It might help." I went up on a high knoll where he was

seated with his Shepherd dogs, two of them and the ground literally moving with sheep. I said, "This must be a lonesome job." "Oh, no," he said, "I have these two dogs and this," pointing to a cigarette, he was just rolling up. He took up from his pocket a dog whistle and showed me how well the dogs, one on each side rounded up the sheep to the corral door for him to open up, which, however, he did not do at that time of day. I said, "Young man you don't look healthy." Think his name was John Ingle. He said, "To tell the truth, I don't feel right. The worst is I can't sleep." He then stuck his cigarette to his mouth. I said, "That is what kills." His face had a miserable yellow tinge, his teeth were yellow, eye brows and eyes yellow, spots in his face and finger nails yellow. I repeated to him, "Cigarette smoking will kill you." He said, "It's my only companion. I don't see any other people all day." I said, "Quit cigarettes or they will quit you! You need not take my word for it. Just go in to Bowman and consult a doctor and he will say the same thing," and then I left him.

The next year when again on my round I found John at the same place and greeted him by saying, "You look better, my boy." "Yes," he said, "I took your advice last year for which I am thankful. The next day I went in to the doctor at Bowman and told him of my trouble and asked for explanation." "Yes," he said, after examining me, "you are just about killing yourself by cigarette smoking. How long have you been at it?" "About five years." "How many do you smoke a day?" I told him about a dozen. He said, "You cannot fool me on that. You have been smoking three times that many." And I think he was right. He said, "There are two things for you to choose between. Keep on smoking and die inside of a year or cut out smoking entirely and live." "That was all he could do. I followed your and his advice and here I am today, a healthy man." Taking out a clove from his pocket he said, "It was a hard job quitting, but when I feel the desire I put one of this in my mouth. Instead of the cigarette the clove is now my personal standby and companion.

Young men, whoever you are, keep shy of booze, snuff-eating and cigarettes! It is neither manly, necessary nor healthy.

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

## 54

No. 54

MIDSUMMER DAY 1882, Continued

Will I ever forget the sad tragedy of Midsummer day, June 24, 1882? No! Never! Corpses were coming back till we had nineteen side by side on the floor. A gruesome sight. Henry Stenson had been placed on a stable door at the place and carried in to the box car. We picked him up the same way and carried him over to Glarum's Hotel senseless. Also Christian Solberg badly hurt and other wounded to their different places. Being a fair day there was a large crowd of spectators. Theodore Thompson, of Green Lake, a

boyhood chum of mine, said the death flyer went so fast they were practically lifted up from the flat car and had a hard time to hold themselves down. On Sunday, the 25<sup>th</sup>, was the most pitiful day I ever experienced. An immense crowd of people! Death, blood sorrow, tears, widowed mothers, fatherless children, weeping parents, sons, daughters, and sweethearts, 19 corpses prepared for their coffins. One John Dahl who had left his young wife and babe in Norway, coming over here to prepare for them a home, had succeeded! Sent ticket for her and child. They had arrived in Willmar and three days after her arrival the earnest, sober and hard working husband and father was placed among the 19 dead and she with her little babe was left in a strange country, a stranger amongst strangers. (Oh—yea, wets.)

A young lady appearing to be yet in her teens, had not been very long in this country, and she still kept her healthy, rosy cheeks. Did not have to use powder. Those rosy cheeks matched so fine with the blue dress which she wore. She hurried along viewing the dead. She finally bent over, fell on her knees and pressed a kiss on a forehead cold in death, and murmured, "Oh! John! Did you leave me? Oh! John! Did you not know my wedding dress was already for our wedding tomorrow! Oh! John! Did you not know our little home stands ready for us! You yourself helped me hang the curtains this forenoon. Oh! John!--- and she had to be removed by force.

No pen can describe the terrible scene in detail. Oh! Yea wets! Ye miserable wets!---On Monday, June 26, was a day I would never like to live over again. The day of the saddest funerals. Imagine 19 teams hitched to 19 wagons with a corpse or coffin on each wagon with a string of sorrowing friends and relatives. What a procession! Being that the train topple out into a slough, Engineer Floody and the fireman were drowned. Believe they were buried in Michigan. Two to Lake Lillian, one or two in the Solomon Lake church cemetery, the rest to the extreme west end of Fairview cemetery by the fence. At the pioneer log cabin at the fairgrounds this fall I had a conversation with one who said he was a survivor of said tragedy. I forget his name. He said he had one on each side of him. They both were killed and said there was a puzzle about it which he never can solve. He said he had his own shovel in his hand, and when picked up on the ground quite a distance off, he had somebody else's shovel. That puzzle he said he can never solve. One of those by his side was a young man from Lake Lillian, who had just quit and was on his way to Atwater to go from there to haying. But he was sent back to Willmar with the rest to be brot to his home a corpse. Oh! Yea wets!

You all know good parents have a hundred and one good advices to give to their children. I shall not mention many. Allow me to touch upon three points of good advice given me. First—Keep away from booze, drink and bad company. Second—Always stick to the religion learned on father's and mother's knees, and, 3<sup>rd</sup>, always vote the Republican ticket. When I had left the parental home and found myself associated with drunkards and boozers, as was the case with me, I fully realized the real value of good parental advice. I was at a point where I could fully appreciate the advice given by Rev. Baalson to the young peoples society on the above named Sunday evening, Nov. 7, at their social in the East Norway Lake church. The subject, "Wet or Dry!" Study it thoroly and make your choice what you think is right and stick to it and be loyal.

When I was confronted with the extremely sad tragedy I found that the two first points were easily overcome. But when it came to the third point: Always vote the Republican ticket! I began to rebel. I put

my foot to the ground and pledged myself at the presence of death, bloodshed, tears, sorrow and woes, never to vote the Republican ticket any more and I never did since that bloody tragedy. I would clear myself from the responsibility of being guilty of having more of that kind repeated and charged up against my vote. I may have been wrong! But I reasoned like this: Republican Distillers. Republican Brewers, Republican traveling salesmen, Republican council granting license to Republican saloon-keepers, Republican marshal. Republican Judge. Republican Boozers. Republican tragedy and Republican funeral and rally of 19 corpses to be placed to their lone chamber and the groans and moans of the living wounded, anyone with gall enough, mean enough and low enough to advocate the wet propaganda is not worthy of citizenship in the United States.

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(Continued)

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January 26, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

A BINDER EXPERT IN DAKOTA

No. 56

There was a time when the Norway Lake country was looked upon as the Indians paradise. No locality was so inviting to the roaming Indians as the Norway Lake country lakes with their inviting beautiful groves. Her they could hunt and fish to their heart's content. No game wardens dogged them. They were the supreme rulers. The woods along the lake shores and streams furnished them with shelter from the winds and fuel for the camp fires. They were free and at liberty, not cornered up like ranchers' cattle. I know Indians did wrong. But I have a hankering inclination to sympathize and side in with them. We must bear in mind they were an uncivilized tribe endowed with bad tendencies and revenge like we are. They were ignorant but they knew they were not treated right. The whites took advantage of them and cheated them out of their honest dues. They could not live on fat promises. If anyone would intrude upon our own premises, drive us off with bull dogs, pitch forks and guns, giving fat promises and not live up to it, the chances are we would be ten times worse than the Indians. That's the size of it. They were driven off their pretty and lovely hunting grounds, cheated of their dues, and consequently the first early settlers had to suffer. I have this from Indians themselves and the following pioneer story I will tell in detail very carefully if the editor will allow and if the readers will take time to read it.

About forty years ago I was employed by the McCormick Harvesting Machine company as traveling expert and salesman before the merger. At that time all the machine companies stood separately by

themselves each having a regiment of agents out on sales, putting up machines and keeping them in running trim. They afterwards all put their heads together and formed the International Harvester Machine company, after which they have things their own way, getting the whole farmers' community by the throat, and farmers must pay three ordinary prices for what farm implements they need.

H.L. Daniels of Minneapolis was the general agent for Minnesota and Dakota territory as far as to the Missouri River (No South or North Dakota then). He sent me to another head guy at Aberdeen, D.T. Presenting my card he said with a smile, "I think I must send you to Russia." By that he meant a Russian colony which had taken complete charge of a large tract of land. He sat down and wrote a message and sent over the wire to Kennedy Brothers, Eureka, "Look for your man on first train." Eureka was the terminal on a new branch running out from Aberdeen. The town had just sprung up that summer in a hurry. Two elevators were nearing completion, two general stores, one hotel and two saloons, but they had overlooked a jail. Kennedy Bros. were ranchers on a large scale. They also owned a hardware store and McCormick machinery agency at Bowdle with a branch establishment at New Eureka about thirty miles distant. I divided my time between the two places for six weeks. Scope of travel I do not know but know I worked in four counties.

As I stepped off at Eureka station from a coach attached to a cattle train, Ed Kennedy spied me, approached me with about a dozen Russians around him saying, "These men all want you at the same time." I said, "Thumbs up, for such a proposition, I can not handle them all at once, but I can handle them one at the time. How many binders have you out?" He said 65 so far. I said, "If you furnish me with a good man and a good team I can average two a day, possibly three, if not too far apart." The Russians were great lovers of beer, but nothing stronger. They invited me to go with them over to the saloon to get whatever I wished for. I said, "Thanks! But my principle is strictly temperance." Mr. Kennedy said, "Thank you! Just what I like to hear. Look at that man over there. (an expert.) He started at that binder yesterday to have it put into the field yesterday and it is not finished yet. He is too top heavy. He puts the wrong end to the ground." An expert's pride was to replace another machine. That is what puts a feather in his crown. I said, "Give me the history of that machine." He said, "That Russian was to have a McCormick, but I had no one to put it up, and went and got that one." I then told Kennedy to bring that man over, which he did. I said to Fred Mixt, a Russian, their head cowboy man, who talked English, also Indian language, "You tell him he got the wrong machine and dealing with the wrong man. Get a binder that will work and a man that will work. I will put a McCormick into a wagon, bring it out there to his place seven miles, and if that binder is not running three hours after I get there he can have the binder for nothing. I have the McCormick company behind me." The binder was loaded and sent off. Being early for dinner I took a lunch and said, "Have your man and team on hand." Fred was there with a team spotted red and white like cows. I got to the place at two and binder was ready for the field at five. Mr. Kennedy came, also the other agent and his expert, just able to balance on the right end, and a large crowd, some walking, some riding, some on horseback. The other expert put a paper up to my nose and said: "There is his order with his name signed to it. He will pay for this binder." I said, "No! He will settle for the one now going into his field." I was on the seat tilting the levers, and he said: "Come down from there and I will settle it with you." I said, "Wait till morning. Then bring your binder over for a fair trial



and I will put up binder for binder. If there is any pep about you, come on!"In the presence of about fifty I started the binder and it was settled for right there.

I never had much time for Russians but must say to their credit they were the most honest, industrious and most hard working I ever had dealings with. But they were extremely poor bringing with them their customs from the old country. One house to the place and in that same house under same roof, kept everything—horses, cattle, sheep, hogs and poultry and the people in one end! Some had a partition between and some had not. For night quarters, I doubled up my coat under my head and stretched out on a long bench. Every house was a sod house. That same evening I started at another place and said to Mr. Kennedy, "I will not come back tonight, but hand out here." When we got to the supper table, a sort of a gravy looked suspicious to me. I said, "Fred, what is that. It looks like gopher bones to me." He said nothing, only laughed, which aroused my suspicions all the more. They poured in boiling coffee by one hand and boiling milk by the other and no sugar, just guess.

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(Continued)

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### ***Where is 57?***

February 23, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

No. 58

AMONG RUSSIANS AND INDIANS

The woman started weeping, kept on weeping, continually thanking me over and over again. It was before the bundle carriers were out and the grain had been left in bad shape. They certainly thought the whole world had turned against them. I said to the lad, "There is no trouble with the binder, the trouble is with you; you have misused my adjusting explanation, and adjusted till the binder will not tie a bundle." I soon had it adjusted, told the boy to take his seat, keep fingers off from the adjusting devices and go right along. The binder started klick-klick, and the weeping mother started laughing. They were all a-smiles and were over their embarrassment.

The six weeks spent with the Russians were the toughest six weeks of my life. It took some time to familiarize myself with Russian names. I had an idea they were an unbearable tribe. But say what you please about the Russians! They were a large colony from poor Russia, utterly and extremely poor,

which was no crime! When it came to honesty they were the most honest set of people I ever had dealings with, liberal and courteous, but could not give what they did not have! Healthy and robust, industrious hard workers. The way they did work, big and small, women and all. And how loyal to each other! If the credit of one was questioned the rest gave him their aid. And the way they could live, they were bound to be crowned with success and prosperity. It is forty years this coming summer since I was there. And if I would go over the ground next spring would not know the country again. The then wild country is dotted with fine groves. The sod houses all belong to the past, and the people are living in modern houses on well equipped farms. The now growing generation is Americanized, fine, loyal citizens, using salt in their butter and cream in their coffee.

One Saturday evening I arranged to have Fred take me over to the Indian camp on the Missouri River. Arriving there and driving along the edge of the river, tents could be seen as far as the eyesight could reach. The Indians were very courteous, especially the young. They could, some of them, talk the English language, and seemed to be nicely progressing towards civilization. But the old ones were very cautious about their talk, displaying a look which betrayed hatred and revenge, until they got started. Then Fred had all he could do to explain. We stayed with them about an hour. They understood clearly where I was from, talking about their old hunting grounds, about all kinds of sufferings and finally about being driven away from their childhood and youth's beautiful abode and lovely hunting grounds—driven at point of guns to places allotted to them whether they liked to or not, like a bunch of cattle in the herds of cowboys.

A big well developed Indian, displaying an air of dignity, appeared. Fred said, "You see that big Indian with a blanket looking different from the rest?" I said, "Yes." "That's their chief, Sitting Bull, I know him personally and if you wish, will give you an introduction to him." I said, "It might be an honor to shake the hand of that renowned chief!" But in so doing I was overcome with feelings I cannot describe, and getting my little hand into his strong big grip, felt as if Sitting Bull had my life in his pocket, and felt like getting away from there the sooner the better. I had heard so many hints that he was training his thousands of warriors every day with what was called war dances which were supposed to furnish a critical situation. The Government got him, I think that same fall, and I believe just in time to avoid another bloody Custer tragedy and wholesale massacre on the borders along the Missouri River upon the frontier settlers. History shows that after they lost their chief, the Indians yielded gradually to the white man's civilization and believe that was the last attempt of Indian uprising.

The following Friday I had a message by telegram reading, "Take first train for Browns Valley, Minn." At the depot when I was leaving, there was a large bunch of Russians to show their courtesy and good will by asking me over to the saloon to have a nice goodbye time. I said, "I appreciate your kindness but I will not lose my head." One said, "Do you smoke?" I said, "I am just at a point where I can smoke a cigar and I can have it alone." I noticed them chipping in and before the train started one stuck a box of cigars under my arm and they all shouted, "Come again, next year!" I left Kennedy Brothers and their Russians in the best of spirit.

Arriving at Browns Valley early on Saturday morning I was happily surprised to meet on the platform a former Lake Andrewite, J. Olson. I greeted him by saying, "Is this your trading point? Where do you

live?" He said, "Seven miles out." I said, "You did well to be in so early in the morning." He said, "I broke down my binder, got the repairs, but it is a complicated job. I must have help and have been promise an expert to come on this train." I asked, "What binder have you?" He said, "McCormick." I said, "I believe I am your man." Which was attested to by the agent just coming along with team and covered buggy (which was something swell those days) to bring me out. I told him if he had no other errand to not mind me. "I will go out with Mr. Olson." He said, "He has only a lumber wagon and plugs." I said, "I have ridden in lumber wagons before and with plugs adorned with horns. If I get there by the time he gets there it is time enough."

Thus I went out with Olson, had him rigged out satisfactorily and made plans for a Sunday stop-over.

Sunday morning I spied a rather shabby rig coming across the prairie and asked what kind of an outfit that was? The one driving the horses was seated on a piece of board across wagon box. All the rest were seated down in bottom of the wagon box.

He said, "They are Indians on their way to church. When they come closer up you will notice a very old Indian, bareheaded, long black hair hanging down his shoulders and with a Roman nose. He goes by the name "Limping Jesus." I said, "How did that name originate?" He said, "After he got converted and adopted the white man's Christianity, his daily topic had been Jesus, talking about Jesus all the time. Being very lame, he was called 'Limping Jesus' which sticks to him."

I had been in Russia and I had been with Sitting Bull's colony, but my inquisitiveness was not yet satisfied. I also wanted to attend an Indian church service. I went there. A little church built by the government. I was received with a wonderful generosity and politeness, more so than be the whites. The whites have one usher but the Indians were all ushers and escorted me to the front seat in the church, asking me if I was a preacher. I said, "No! My kind of business is machinery." They said they thought the Great Father had sent them a missionary. They {conducted} their service something like {Sunday school}. The young Indians were able to speak the English language fine, and {\_\_\_\_\_} and singing. But the old Indians talked their Indian language. The lame Indian got to his feet and offered prayer in the Indian language. The tears running down his chin fully testified to his honesty and sincerity. After meeting they all were talkative, especially the limping Indian. But I could not make out anything. He called his grandson from the wagon, and he did fine. The old Indian soon understood where I was from, put his finger to his chest and said with tears in his eyes, "My birthplace, where I was born and raised, my youth's hunting ground, the loveliest place I know of." He knew all about the New Sweden (West Lake) massacre and other murders. He could picture them all to me. The lakes, the groves, the lay of the land. Tears still in his eyes, he told about how they suffered, froze and starved.

He said, "Five other Indians and myself went a hunting one morning, pointing east when sun was up the length of a man, went to Big Waters." That I understood to mean Green Lake. Then pointing west, he said, "Over many big hills down to Pretty Waters." By that I understood him to mean Lake Florida, hard to find prettier water and prettier shore than 'Pretty Waters (Lake Florida.) He said, "When on Pretty Waters we were caught in a severe snow storm." Pointing south, he said, "We got into the grove, But we wanted to get to our camps in grove by lake," pointing west. Whether he meant Crook Lake grove or the

Swenson Lake grove I could not determine. He said, "We got out of grove into tall rushes and found no grove or tents anymore." Those rushes I understood to be what is now known as Lake Florida slough. He said, "The five Indians froze to death in them rushes and I was crippled up for life," telling me how lame he was, and said, "I am now Limping Jesus." Then he smiled, the only smile I had seen on his face. He said, "In the spring we buried the five Indians on a high hill at west end of 'Pretty Waters' in a sitting position facing east (Lake Florida.)" When Lawrence Larson some time ago was plowing over a high hill at west end of Lake Florida and put his sulky plow down to an extra depth, he unearthed five Indian skulls and skeletons. The I had it positively clear in my mind that they were the remains of the five Indians that "Limping Jesus" had referred to. Those skulls may be seen at the real estate office of Solon L. Benton in the city of Willmar.

This goes to prove that the human race has lived and suffered in this region long before the white people ever made their appearance. How many hundreds or thousands of years we do not know.

PIONEER KID

(Conclusion)

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March 30, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

WHEN I TRIED TO PLAY DOCTOR AND REGRETTED IT

[No 59]

His name was Osmund Tollefson, father of early pioneer Thomas Osmundson, whose name also was Tollif Osmundson, but in the American was fitted in as Thomas. Mrs. Osmund Tollefson was the first person who died at Norway Lake in 1861, a year before the Indian outbreak, and died at the little log cabin of her son, Ths. Osmundson, on the Norway Lake shore, which is known as the Halvorson Beach. As there was no cemetery those early days she was buried in which now is a field, and the spot hard to locate.

In 1870 Osmundson and us exchanged work in harvest. Sam Osmundson and myself were of same age, 14, Gunder Osmundson 2 years younger. It was for us kids to tie up the bundles after the reaper and Grandpa to try his skill at shocking up. One day he was taken sick with what is known as summer complaint, but made us believe it was cholera, similar to the cholera on the ocean. I spoke u and said, "We have medicine at home which will help you without fail." He said, "For God's sake, get it! This will kill me!" Doctors those days did not ride bicycles, motorcycles or enclosed sedans. I pegged off two

miles home as fast as my legs would let me, got the bottle of (Pain Killer,) which came very near resulting in man killer. Returning about 11, I told him when we get to the house, I will mix you a good dose. "Mix nothing," he answered. "Give me the bottle!" I said, "You must not drink it bare, it will kill you." "Here with it," he shouted, "don't you s'pose I can stand some medicine." He opened the bottle, took a gulp and lost his breath. The next thing we had him sprawling and rolling and kicking on the ground and we all thot it was his finishing touch, and I blamed myself for giving him man killer instead of pain killer, a pioneer medicine much in use. He finally got his breath, quieted down in sitting position, wiping tears and trying to make us believe he was dead for a while. But in our estimation it was a lively corpse. Asking for fresh water to quench his burning throat, and getting to the house, he was more pliable and let me mix his dose. He got over the tragedy, also his sickness. But admitted I was a tough doctor and I congratulated myself with my good luck as doctor.

Tosten Tostenson from the same place in the old country had located by the soldiers trail, near the government log bridge on Shakopee Creek, Sec. 1 Mamre, but had come to the conclusion that his body was too precious to be devoured by mosquitos and decided to go back to Iowa. He sold his place to Thomas A. Blom, who again sold it to Knute Nelson, and is now the home of his son, Tom Knutson. The old man followed Mr. and Mrs. Tostenson to Iowa for a visit but never returned. He was taken sick and died there. Elling Ellingson, a cousin of G.O. Kambestad and Osmondson located on north side of bridge, but when he heard the rumor of a new railroad coming in through the vicinity of Foot Lake, he sold out to Peder Vellakson, and it is now the property of his son Gunder Pederson Ellingson then located 4 miles south of the new Foot Lake station (now Willmar) where he continued to live till his death. Mrs. Ellingson died about a year ago, then living in the vicinity of Green Lake. The Ellingson family was well and favorably known far and wide.

This is a chapter of my pioneer doctor history. Osmundson also sold his Norway Lake farm and located east of Willmar.

PIONEER KID

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April 6, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

My good friend and one of the very early pioneers of this county's wilderness, Ole Knutson of Arctander, would relate the very early pioneer's stories in a humorsome as well as a comical way, being a good mixer. Wish I could relate half of them in the same way he could do it. I just have on in my mind. He said in those early days there was not known of more than one main traveled road through this wild wilderness known as the government patrol road over which provisions were conveyed along the line to

western soldiers, running from Fort Ridgeley, Hutchinson, Forest City, Eagle Lake, thru Dovre to Norway Lake, thence Six Mile Grove, Fort Abercrombie and on west. There was also another early pioneer road from St. Cloud via Paynesville also terminating at Norway Lake.

Anything in the agriculture line was out of question. In the first place, no machinery of any kind, and even if there was, it was too far to market any grain, the nearest railroad terminal being St. Cloud, which was 60 miles away and which by oxmotor took the whole week for a skip to town shopping, and the only resource of making a living those days was in trapping, fishing and hunting, which were in abundance.

Before the Indian outbreak we were on very friendly terms with the Indians through whom we were advised of an ideal hunting ground along a stream just a little north of where the little new railroad station Benson now is located. (1870.) One time Even Railson and myself made up to investigate, equipped with the ordinary and necessary hunting outfit including a little tent, we set out for the above named tract following the government trail and found the stream and pitched our tent. The next day we were busy on our job. We just happened to go into different directions when I spied an overgrown large Elk. Owing to the distance I had but a faint hope of hitting him. But I got him to the ground but he was only wounded, and I made a run to the scene. Getting there he got on his feet and a clash followed. I had to put up a fight, hitting him in the head and over the nose till my gun was broken all to pieces. I finally gave him a dazing blow which resulted in landing him on his knees. I then grabbed him by the horns, gave a twist and got him down, ready to get my big knife in position to put the finishing touch to him, when Railson came pacing along at a rapid gait. "Good, good, just in time," I shouted. "I am butchering in Norwegian style." "Hang onto the horns" retorted Railson, "and I will quiet him down," which he did with his well aimed rifle. Now together with some other game they had as big a haul as they cared for. The next question confronting them was how to get it home about 25 miles. It was late in the fall, just having the first snow fall. They did not freight on trucks those days over cemented and graveled roads, and they were not fighting high taxes like wild fire in hip-high grass. With what tools they had available they started to make a sort of a sled. Camped another night, loaded up their truck and got an early start homeward along the government trail. Believe that was the time when Eric G. Kapperud, another hunting nimrod came to their aid. Two pushing with long sticks and one at the drawbar, getting home late, making a long day of it.

At or near that ideal Indian hunting grounds is now the city of Benson where then along that stream, elk and deer were roaming with game of the feathery and furry tribes in abundance, is now well tiled farms. Alongside the government trail over the wild prairie is now dotted with well equipped farms. Houses are of the modern and latest styles. Where they then filled a saucer with lard, making a wick from a rag soaked in the lard, and with one end hanging over the edge, lit by a match or better home "dipped candles," they now illuminate every house on the farm by the press of the finger. Where they then used oxmotors they now use gas motors. Where it took those above named hunters about 16 hours to get home they can now do it in a little better than so many minutes. Which goes to prove the gigantic achievements and great progress since the latter part of the fifties.

Keep tab with the progress of our Old Settlers Pioneer Log Cabin on the fair grounds of Kandiyohi County at Willmar where old settlers brunts stunts and doings will be reviewed in the future. The old settlers

annual meeting promises to be a bid day under the management of a joint committee by the Willmar Commercial Club and the old settlers where we also expect the Minnesota Historical Society of St. Paul with us. Select yourself a committee of one to prove Kandiyohi county is on the map.

PIONEER KID

(Continued)

## 61

April 13, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

FROM SOGN, NORWAY, TO NORWAY LAKE, MINNESOTA

Iver G. Stene was born November 29, 1821, at Stene-Urland-Sogn, Norway, by parents with very limited means, his father being a parochial schoolmaster. He could remember the hardship in 1825 caused by crop failure from an extreme cold season which caused failure all over the land. He saw the time when bark was peeled from tree, seasoned and dried, and then ground together with barley to substitute for food. He related often how he said to his mother, "I am hungry mamma. I shall eat much herring and little bread," being that herring could be had from the sea by just reaching for it. But bread and potatoes were scarce. In relating those hardships he was moved to tears.

He had an uncle, Johannes Stene, who embarked with family on Sluppen, the Restaurationen, the ship that was honored by the great centennial turnout at Minneapolis in 1925. The sailship Sluppen or "Restaurationen" on which he sailed, left Stavanger on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1825, and arrived at New York Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>, 1825. Altho it took two months or more for a letter to reach its destination, letters were going back and forth continually, bringing news from the new country floating in milk and honey where fried doves flew and lit on the tables, with a fork in them.

Iver Stene's oldest sister, Martha, married one Mikkel Knutson. They emigrated to the promised land in 1848 settling at Bonnett Prairie, Columbia County, Wisconsin, Mr. Stene going into sheep and goat business, buying and shipping to Bergen similar to shippers here, by which he made some money, and looked for the time to come when he could bring his parents and two sisters across to the land of promise.

In the spring of 1852 there was a great 17th of May celebration, National Day, similar to Fourth of July here, at Lerdals Ogen, Sogn, Norway. Amongst other great attractions was a greased pole with a purse containing some money to be given as a prize to the one who could fetch it down. There was a lively scramble for the prize which finally was won by Iver Stene. Sliding down to the ground he was

approached by a young lady of 18, who reached out her hand and congratulated him. They were not just stranger to each other. They had met at meetings by the so-called Hans Nelson Hauge's faction, or better known as (Lesare.) Her name was Inga Olsdotter Vold. I shall let her pass by the name of Miss Olson. Readers will check this: I am coming back to her as she was destined to become my mother.

The following spring, 1853, Iver Stene had money enough to bring the family with him, bought tickets for six. His old parents, his two sisters, his sweetheart and himself. But the rose he had loved, fondled and cherished from their childhood, was not to be transplanted in foreign soil with success. Her head leaning in the direction of her native soil, the stem bending towards the ground; faded away and perished in foreign soil far away. There is many a slip between the spoon and the lip. The day for goodbye, our native land, relatives and friends came! The old sailship began moving, a waving of goodbye handkerchiefs and arms, Old Norway was soon looking like a mist and a cloud in the far off distance. He had his treasure and what he owned, in this world, with him. But he never could relate that journey without being deeply moved. They were 14 weeks on the ocean. Just think, 3 months and a half with nothing in sight but heavens and water. Fresh water supply gave out, food supply very low. They still had a good supply but the captain ordered that those who had, to divide with those in want. The worst of all, cholera broke out on the ship and many passengers found their journey's terminal in a watery grave. They were left in the sea. They all began to be familiar with the fact to meet starvation and death on the ocean. Likely cholera would take them all. Finally they reached New York, sick and tired. Then they proceeded until they reached Milwaukee, Wisconsin, their terminal point, and had just unloaded their emigrant goods, when his sweetheart died from cholera. Now it was Iver Stene's sad duty among strangers in a strange land to find a suitable place to bury his youth's treasure. There was one consolation that he was spared of seeing also her sunk into the sea. He found out that son-in-law and brother-in-law, Mikkel Knutson, had been there 3 times looking for them, the last time waiting three days. He finally concluded something had happened, so they never had started. Just now he met Sjur Holmen, a well known pioneer from Cashkonong, Wis., who informed him he knew Mikkel Knutson and promised to bring them to their home on Bonnet Prairie. Arrangements were made, the simple and sad funeral performed. Holmen said, "I can take all your goods, but then all of you must walk 75 miles, or I can take you all in the wagon and leave the goods." They all decided to walk, except the old man, he being too sick. Holmen's motor, a yoke of oxen.

PIONEER KID

(Continued)

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April 20, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID



## IN THE NEW LAND

(Continued from last week)

The old man being very sick, they stopped over at Mr. Holman's cozy home, where part of the load was left, giving them chance to ride. It was a shaky trip for the old man sick as he was. They reached the home of Mikkel Knutson, son-in-law and brother-in-law, in the evening, just so that the old man could greet them and exchange a few words. But he was not to see another dawn of day. Before morning he was cold in death also from cholera. Now it was again Iver Stene's sad duty to prepare for burial! Oh, merciful, God! Why not he also die at Milwaukee, where father and sweetheart could have been placed side by side. If it was like now, it could have been done, but not 75 miles with oxen.

Being a new settled country there was no cemetery. Together with his brother-in-law they selected a suitable place which since then has been a community cemetery till this day at Bonnett Prairie, Columbia County Wis. Iver Stene selected a quarter section a mile from the cemetery where he built himself a lumber shack, a home for his mother and two sisters, Ragnild and Kari. The two girls, however, had to seek employment and work out.

In the spring of 1854 he could not resist a longing back to that sacred place at Milwaukee, 75 miles which he traveled on foot, as he had found out that the pioneer minister, Elling Eielson from the Fox River settlement was to have a gathering there and being that there were no ministerial services at the sad funeral, he wanted the grave in shape and the ministerial performances in accordance with the Christian religion. And there he again happened to meet Mr. Holman who took them out the previous year and by having his company that far, could walk the rest of the road. Mr. Holman said, "You can have my company, but fear you must walk all the way, as I am here to meet newcomers." Now I will leave Holman and Stene here awaiting newcomers, while I take the readers with me over to Norway.

In Lerdal Sogn, Norway, in the spring of 1854, a colony of neighbors had formed a company to emigrate to America, among them being Mr. and Mrs. Lars Thorson, which by the way are my wife's grandparents, and their family, all grown up. Their daughter, Anna, was married to Johannes N. Quam, well known settler of Lake Andrew; also the previously mentioned Miss Olson. Mr. and Mrs. Quam had a baby girl, the first born (my wife's oldest sister)! Just one week before they were to start Mrs. Quam was taken down seriously ill with typhoid fever and was taken worse gradually till the day they were to leave for Bergen, she was unconscious and her life despaired of, not even doctors had any hope. The old folks took the baby with them, expecting her not to live. But a change took place. She got over it and gained rapidly. She learned all the folks had all gone but they did not dare to tell the worst. But on her earnest request to get her baby they had to tell her the truth, which drove her nearly insane. They had to hurry her off to Bergen, they might yet catch the ship, but arrived there a day too late. The ship, the relatives and darling baby, were already tossing on the ocean, and Mr. and Mrs. Quam had to stop over in Bergen till the following spring, 1855, which was the best.

Theirs was also a miserable journey, they also being 13 weeks on the ocean. The above named Miss Olson was the only one escaping the fearful sea-sickness and had to mother two small baby girls the whole way, one being the one above named, my wife's oldest sister. The other one, after she grew up

became the wife of John Paulson, early pioneer merchant of early Willmar, a brother of Rev. Ole Paulson.

Now back to Milwaukee and in company with Mr. Holman and Iver Stene, meet the ship and its passengers. Among those coming ashore was Miss Olson, with her two babies. She spied Iver Stene, walked right up to him and greeted him. Not recognizing her at first, she said, "Don't you remember. I greeted you and congratulated you upon your good luck in taking the prize at the top of that greased pole on Lerdal's Oren, two years ago!" Yes—Yes—

They got a big bulky load. The passengers had to walk. When they got to Sjur Holmen's place, the colony was at their terminal. Miss Olson stuck to Holmen's home as housemaid for about a year. She was an aunt of Rev. O.H. Stenson of Manistee, Michigan, where he served as minister for 30 years; also of his brother, Henry Stenson of Willmar. The unexpected meeting of Iver Stene and Miss Olson there in Milwaukee culminated into a love tangle and they were married the following year, June 5, 1855, by Rev. Elling Eielson, and settled down to housekeeping in their pioneer shack on Bonnett Prairie, Columbia County, Wisconsin. I was born March 1, 1856.

PIONEER KID

(Continued)

## 63

April 27, 1927 Willmar Tribune

OLD NORWAY LAKE REMINISCENCES

INTERESTING REVIEW OF EVENTS OF PIONEER LOCAL HISTORY WRITTEN by Gabriel Stene as

THE PIONEER KID

(Continued from last week)

The first thing for father like all the rest of the new settlers, was to secure a pair of steers. I can remember him having a triangle homemade harrow, point to the front, spreading at the rear about 8 ft., bolted together with a wooden piece, also with one inch square teeth, making it look like the shape of the letter "A." He carried the seed grain, throwing it out by hand, harrowing over by oxen.

All the hay was cut by scythe and grain cut by cradle, which was said to be the most strenuous job the new settlers had. Mother and children were along in the field, mother bunching up and tying it into bundles, children taking care of themselves, in care of the biggest and I had the job myself. Thus the new settlers did not cover much ground a day, but what they did accomplish was clear profit. No high priced machinery, no hired man at 40 cents an hour. If roads were not fit for 50 or 75 mile trip to mill, wheat was ground in coffee mills by cracking it into some sort of graham to substitute for what we now call flour.

In 1855 the following year, Mr. and Mrs. Quam, who had to stop over in Bergen, and a group of others made preparation for America. They also had a tough voyage, about three months on the ocean, which was the case with all in those days with the old sail ships. At the present time the modern steamers plow thru the ocean in about one week and it is considered only a pleasure trip.

They also arrived at Milwaukee, their destination also being Caskamong, where they again met relatives and friends and Mr. and Mrs. Quam their darling baby who, however should not stay with them long and was taken away from them at the age of 7 by diphtheria. A whole colony of them leaving in 1856 for the wild west were ferried over the Mississippi at La Crosse, wending their way into the wilderness clear to Steel County near Owatonna, where there now is a genuine Sogn! All the relatives, the whole country being braided into one relationship. The colony coming into that wilderness from Sogn, Norway, were Johannes Nelson Quam and family, Lars Thorson and family, Tosten Nelson and family, T.T. Nelson, Lars Johannesson, Mons Anderson with families, emigrants on the above mentioned ships, all from Caskamong, Wis.

Well do I remember, although very young, the horrors of the Civil war, the deaths and bloodsheds, young men in the neighborhood reported fallen one after the other. Remember how father was drafted three times, but returned to us on account of defective hearing. I can yet see mother on her knees by her chair, mornings and evenings, praying continually for war relief.

As previously mentioned, they were admirers of Hans Nilson Hauge's faction of Norway and belonged to Elling Eielson's faction here, a follower of Hauge's. Hans Nilson Hauge was for Norway! What Rosenius, Anfeldt, Waldenstrom and others were for Sweden, what Moody, Talmadge, Saukev, Bliss, and others were for the English, evangelic spirited, and promoters of true Christianity. Father was the song leader in the local church as well as larger gathering such as the synodical annual meetings. At a meeting of that kind at Arendal, Fillmore county in 1862, he noticed that the Minnesota soil was far superior to his Wisconsin locality and that a near neighbor of Rev. Arne E. Boyum had his farm for sale and after 8 years' stay in Wisconsin, sold out and moved to Arendal, Fillmore county, onto the above named place. But wherever you go, something is lacking. The water proposition was a marked drawback. No well drilling machinery those days and surface water not sufficient. Remember that father hauled water for the house two miles. Remained there 2 years. Father was also the leader of church songs at that place.

Under those circumstances, and after placing a little daughter and sister away in the cemetery, he sold his farm to Rev. A.E. Boyum, who was blessed with good water. That farm still is a part of Boyum's farm. He then bought a farm adjoining Rev. Osten Hanson Asplund's in Goodhue county. But conditions were the same. Again he had to haul fresh water. Remained there 2 years and while there was also leader of church songs.

Rumors were afloat that out in the wild west was the genuine Land of Waters! In the spring of 1866 he set off traveling on foot from Asplund, Goodhue county, following the government trail clear to Norway Lake in the then Monongalia county, where he found satisfaction, good soil, timber, water, fish and game in abundance. A young man, a distant relative of ours, also set out for the wild west but in a southwesterly direction with some others, landing in Jackson county, where he also found the outlook

very favorable, selecting for himself the spot for a future home but he experienced a sad tragedy which will appear in the next chapter.

PIONEER KID

(Continued)

***[I do not have a copy of the rest of this story] 64 is missing***

## 65

Willmar Tribune

July 20, 1927

GLIMPSES OF PIONEER LIFE

(An address made by Gabriel Stene at the "Old Timers" Picnic in School Dist. 25, at the Crook Lake grove on Sunday, July 10, 1927)

School District No. 25 of Kandiyohi County, originally Monongalia county, was one of the old pioneer landmarks. It was organized in the spring of 1868. At that time this country was a wilderness. There was not a single road laid out in a section line. The roads ran curving and winding about wherever it was found expedient, partly along buffalo and Indian trails. There was no school or schoolhouse but a large bunch of children of school age.

About four rods west of Mankel's residence may be located the spot which shows the place where Pioneer Mankel had a dugout in the hillside—clay floor, clay walls, rails, hay and sod for roof. There was a door to the east and a little window by the door. This dugout was used for a carpenter shop, and here Mr. Mankel had his tools stored away. He was a carpenter by trade. He volunteered to move out and surrender his dugout for school purposes. Miss Rose Burdick opened the first term of school in Dist. No. 25, in said dugout and it continued there until the log schoolhouse, 16x20 feet, then under construction three quarters of a mile west of where the present schoolhouse now stands—could be completed. Logs for this building were donated free by owners of timber and work was done free of charge by citizens of the district. Take a look at the present modern schoolhouses and not the contrast.

One day when standing up in the spelling class and having been given a word to spell, I was overtaken with feelings which I could not understand—a fainting spell. I grabbed hold of Carl Syverson by one hand and Mary Mankel by the other, but went headfirst to the floor. Pioneer Mankel was called and responded. When I had recuperated (they had me out on the ground and applied cold water to my head) Mr. Mankel, who was a man of sound judgment, said: "This hovel is not fit for school purposes. It is too close. We must either stop school or secure better quarters." We were then transferred to the log

cabin of Amund Syverson, where he lived with his family. Here we were accommodated and made the best of the situation as we could.

Finally the little log schoolhouse was completed—rude log walls, home-made door, home-made desks and table made by Pioneer Mankel and unplanned rough boards for the floor.

One fine Monday morning the key was turned over to Miss Burdick, who dedicated the building by the initiation of an enrollment of 42 pupils. These were the happiest bunch of school children west of Minnehaha Falls—Minneapolis was not heard of in those days. The first week slipped by. It was hard to study in a schoolbook, with two or three pupils hanging over one book! The teacher had made out an order for necessary supplies which was approved by the board. This was on Friday night. The question arose, “Where is the supply to be found and how to get them?” The teacher said: “They are to be found at Sam Adams’ Store at New London.” But everybody was using ox-motors in those days. I was only 12 years old but volunteered to travel on foot and get them. I started off bright and early Saturday morning. At New London I found only six slates and some slate pencils. Scratch books and pencils were not in use then as now. Every child had to be supplied with a slate and slate pencil.

Next morning being Sunday three young men at the age of about twenty years, Axel F. Nordin, Simon Syverson and Gunder Swenson, met at the schoolhouse for the purpose of organizing a Sunday school. The school supply question then came up and I gave my report. I told them that Sam Adams had said that such supplies could not be had nearer than St. Cloud or possibly Paynesville. I said that I had promised to get them and would redeem my promise if I had to go to Paynesville.

Peter Nordin, a homesteader on the now Carl Danielson place, spoke up and said: “I just returned from the new Foot Lake station last night. I saw school books at the store there. Feel sure that they may be had there.” “Where is Foot Lake station?” “South of Foot Lake on new railroad being built out from St. Paul.” I asked, “Where is the road leading to it?” He said: “There is no road direct. No bridge across Shakopee Creek south of Crook Lake. But there are two ways of getting there. One way is by Nest Lake, Eagle Lake south. The other is west to the soldiers patrol road, crossing the creek at Gunder Pederson’s place on the Government log bridge.”

At four o’clock Monday morning I made for the Soldiers’ patrol road westward in Arctander. This I followed to Lake Mamre, where that road ran east towards Eagle Lake. There I had to take a faint trail running south towards the new track going west of Solomon Lake and east of what is now Pennock, then east five or six miles to the railroad builders’ camp.

Had a great time crossing the outlet stream near where the cemeteries are now located. There was no bridge. The trail led me to the grove where our Memorial Pioneer log cabin is now located, then through a wheat field in what is now First Ward of Willmar. I found a little store north of the track. South of the track there was nothing but mules, horses, plows, scrapers and busy railroad builders.

What I was looking for I succeeded in finding at the little store. I had two dry slices of bread in my pocket which I devoured with the aid of water from a pail—my first lunch in the now City of Willmar. Then shouldering my luggage, I started back through the wheatfield, followed the edge of the lake but this

time crossed the stream on the railroad trestle. Helmer Martinson, who lived at the west end of Foot Lake advised me to take a trail north practically where the state aid road runs now to again strike the patrol road, saving me the walk west of Solomon Lake. I struck the patrol road where Solomon Lake church now stands. Here I met a homesteader who said that a bridge was just completed across Shakopee Creek near Crook Lake grove on Saturday. One farmer had come across this morning going to the station and had returned. If I could follow this one man's trail thru the grass and find that bridge it would shorten my road many miles. He took me to the top of Dovre hills where I saw the whole Norway Lake panorama. It was getting late. There were tears in my eyes. I had got to a point which tried the nerves. Should I proceed over the Government trail through Dovre, Mamre and Arctander, or should I take chances on following the one man's trail? I chose the latter and followed the trail and found the new bridge, near the point where Mr. and Mrs. Hovey now live. From there I had a good road, following where the materials had been brought for the bridge from the grove. There I found a homesteaders shack, that of Peter A. Odell (Now the Ecklof home) and found that he had been the one who had ventured across the bridge and had made the trip to the station that day. Looking at my luggage and hearing the story of my travels, he said, "You have had your share today. You are welcome to stay with me over night. Jag batchlar men vi ska steka pankaka, koko kaffe, ata grade och socker, och lafva rullan." This sounded good to me, a hungry and tired pioneer kid, but I had no stop-over ticket, and was destined for the schoolhouse and home. Thanking for the good invitation, I pegged on through the grove. It was dusk. Knowing that the Indians had killed Johannes Iverson near that shack, that memory began to work on me. I became so frightened that I imagined every tree by the roadside was an Indian. I ran over this picnic ground like a chased rabbit. Next I came to Ole Dahl's log cabin near the lake shore at the east end of the lake. Mr. Dahl relieved me of the worry I had indulged in about finding my way to the schoolhouse. He said: "I ran a mowder over the prairie to the schoolhouse Saturday. By following that swath you cannot miss it. Now I felt at ease, for from the schoolhouse home I had the trail we had made by snaking eight logs by oxen for the schoolhouse. Thought I would take a little rest before taking the last lap of my journey, I sat down in the doorstep of the schoolhouse. There I went sound asleep in a minute, only to wake up in the darkest night with the worst thundering and lightning I have ever seen and heard. I opened a window and crawled into the house, but did not feel right about staying there. So I jumped out again and started for home, a mile and a quarter distant. It was so dark that I had to stand still at times and make double speed when I got my bearings after every streak of lightning. When halfways home it started to rain, and the rain poured down. At one place I waded in water to my knees. Finally I got home at midnight wet to the skin and hungry and tired as a Government mule. I had walked from four o'clock in the morning till midnight and had covered forty miles to get those supplies for the new school district No. 25. That is 59 years ago this summer. This is my old home school district, where I spent my pioneering childhood and boyhood days, where I first learned to read, write and spell. Amid the struggle for existence, I acquired what limited education I have. What little I know I owe to School District No. 25 of Kandiyohi county, and under no circumstances will I go back on my old school district—my boyhood joy and pioneer pride.

The following is the first enrollment of Dist No. 25: 1868-69: Axel F. Nordin, 20 years; Theodore Bjornstad, 6; Ben Iverson, 13; Peter Iverson, 7; Lena Iverson, 11; Axel Erickson, 10; Johanna Erickson, 7; Adrian Hemming, 8; Leonard Hemming, 6; Erick Hedin, 6; Johanna Hedin, 20; Emma Hedin, 9; Josephine

Hedin, 6; Otto Hedin, 6; Arnt Reese, 8; Julia Reese, 10; Olle E. Reese, 12; C.M. Reese, 20; Carl Syverson, 13; Albert Syverson, 11; Martin Syverson, 1; Inger Syverson, 9; Gabriel Stene, 13; Ole Stene, 11; Frederick Stene, 9; Henry Stene, 7; Inger Maria, 5; Carl E. Warhom, 15; Lars Nelson, 16; Ingebor Nelson (Mrs. J.A. Halvorson) 5; Christian Olson, 8; Beatha Olson, 11; Olia Christofferson, 6; August Christofferson, 6 years; Karin Christofferson (Mrs. N.N.Abrahamson) 10; Sophia Brattlund, 15; Caroline Brattlund, 10; Jennie Mankel, 11; Mary Mankel, 9; Anna Mankel, 7; Amanda Mankel, 5; Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1869. H.W. Mankel, clerk.

In a few years the schoolhouse site was changed. The log schoolhouse was sold and a little frame building was erected on the southwest corner of John Nelson's farm. This was later sold to Herman Larson and the modern schoolhouse of today was erected on the present location. This old times pioneer picnic was a great move. I feel proud of the instigators who brought it to a successful realization. To my mind often comes a wish—come again pioneer days. Come again ye old familiar faces, come again! I don't mean it in the sense that the now growing generation should ride in lumber wagons seated on a piece of board across the wagon box, and drawn by oxen. Neither do I mean that they should live in sod houses, dugouts, shanties and small log cabins. They are perfectly welcome to the great change that has come about. It was the wish of the working, toiling, worrying and sweating forefathers that their children should fare better than they did. But I mean to voice a pointer. Don't overlook, disregard and ignore the struggles of the pioneer parents. Don't let them labor under the feeling that they are worthless and only in the way. That hurts them more than all the previous trials put together.

***[Not credited to Gabriel Stene, perhaps not even his style of storytelling.]***

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAUGE OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

Willmar Tribune

July, 6, 1927

Fifty years ago this month, or in the first week of July in 1877, occurred what was regarded as an almost miraculous deliverance of this county from the ravages of the Rocky Mountain locusts, which had totally destroyed the grain crops and practically every green thing that grew in the fields. Arriving in countless numbers in the summer of 1876, they occasioned a great loss that year and what was worse, deposited their eggs everywhere which hatched out in the spring of 1877 in such quantities as baffles the belief of those who did not witness it. Every settler in the county suffered the loss of crops, many were impoverished and rendered destitute. Arriving in the southwestern counties of the State in 1873, they locusts (or grasshoppers, as they were popularly called) were increasing the area of depredation from year to year, and presented a menace that was most disheartening for the future of the country. But in the first days of July, 1877, when the "hoppers" had become fully matured and tried out their flying

wings, instead of flying about in swarms into the neighboring territory and laying their eggs as they had done for several year, for some reason that no one can explain from a human standpoint, they arose by common instinct high into the air with the roar of that of a severe storm, and disappeared. And to this day, fifty years later, no visitation like it has been experienced. Where they went to, no one ventures to say. Had they alighted in any inhabited portion of the land, their presence would surely have been noted. There are stories extant supposed to have come from sailors in the Great Lakes and on the Atlantic ocean of that time of ships having passed thru great quantities of dead "hoppers" floating on the water, and similar reports on the Mississippi River. What power of nature motivated the instinct of these ravenous insects to self-destruction in the manner indicated is difficult to account for. To the hundreds of early settlers regardless of sectarian differences who participated in the day of prayer for deliverance proclaimed by Governor Pillsbury the departure of the locusts in the wonderful manner which occurred came as an answer from Providence to their prayers, a view which was publicly acknowledged by the Governor.

The devastation of the locusts in 1877 extended over twenty-eight counties in the southwestern part of the State. The loss of crops ran into millions of dollars. Futile attempts to save the crops were made. Legislation was passed offering bounties for dead hoppers, providing for burning straw over infested spots, plowing deep and harrowing in the late fall, etc., all of which proved practically useless in the face of the over-whelming number of locust.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PEST

The insect became about an inch and a quarter long, was slender, color brown, the true wings were broad and thin and when not in use were folded and covered under two smaller wings. Its mouth had a pair of solid jaws with cutting and grinding edges. It has three pair of legs, the last two big and strong to enable it to hop far. Its true home was supposed to be on the Eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains, hence its name. The size of the swarms were appalling. Witnesses to their flight, liken it to a snowstorm, extending to a height where they are perceived only as minute darting scintillations—Vast cloud of animated specks, glittering against the sun--As a dust tornado, riding upon the wind like a hail storm— They circle in myriads about you—drive into open doors and windows—heap about your feet and around the buildings and cover ground two to three inches deep—The noise while devouring the green grain was like the roar of a prairie fire—One old settler of the county declares he can yet show spots on an old building where these insects were caught in the door jam and left their marks.

#### NOT UNKNOWN IN EARLY HISTORY

Jonathan Carver in 1767 spoke of the seven year locusts "that infest their region in great swarms and do a great deal of mischief." In 1818 and 1819 Lord Selkirk's settlement on the Red River was devastated by them. Smaller raids were recorded from time to time. On June 12, 1873, big swarms of locusts were blown over the Southwestern border of Minnesota, and five counties suffered severely. In 1874 they spread out further reaching as far as Polk county on the north and neighboring counties of Renville and western Swift and Chippewa. In 1875 the pest receded from the north, the swarms flying back to



counties they first entered. In 1876, re-inforced by new swarms from the west, the hoppers reached no less than twenty-nine counties.

#### REACH KANDIYOHI COUNTY

In 1876 the grasshoppers made their arrival in Kandiyohi county. Shortly before harvest swarms of fully developed locusts swooped down on the fields. In some places the crop was almost wholly destroyed, and in other places less, the average loss being about two-thirds of the crop. But during their stay countless millions of eggs were laid in the fields. High knolls and dry soil were the places most sought by the female insects in laying their eggs. A hole of about an inch and a quarter oblique to the surface was made into which the tiny kidney shaped eggs were cemented generally into four rows of seven each. The parent hoppers then soon disappeared, leaving the stage set for the following season.

#### WHAT WAS TO BE DONE

The calamity that had come upon the community occupied the attention of everyone. Public meetings were held. Gov. Pillsbury issued a proclamation August 30, outlining many suggestions for fighting the pest—by crushing with rollers, plowing deep, burning prairie grass at proper time, placing loose straw where it could be burned when the small insects would seek cover from the cold, digging ditches with occasional pits, sowing grain in strips with ditches between, driving winged locusts out by stretching ropes dragged over the grain and scaring them with loud noises.

#### COUNTY MEETING AT WILLMAR

On Oct. 9, a county wide meeting was held with A.E. Rice as chairman. A county committee was appointed consisting of J.A. Jacobson, John Olsen, Ole Aslakson, H.S. Sjoberg, Ed McManus, A. Rasmusson and A. Olson. Everybody was determined to make the best of the situation and resolutions were adopted along the line of the governor's proclamation and asking Senator Robbins for action along certain lines. A committee of five was authorized to handle the situation in each township. Everybody was urged to sow grain the following year as usual and in March the county Board acting as a Seed grain board passed 273 applications for seed grain for a total of 4,995 bushels.

On pages 50 to 56 of the History of Kandiyohi County will be found in detail a resume of the various activities and struggles of the people of the county during these "grasshopper times." The hopes of the eggs being destroyed by the frost and by repeated thawing and frost proved not well taken. Swarms of the wingless locusts traveled over the fields eating every green thing. The hopeless battle of destroying them was begun. The hopperdozer made from a long sheet of sheet iron and coated with coal tar was a contrivance recommended by Senator Robbins for catching the young hoppers and was extensively used. The bounty law never was used to any extent in our county. Other counties paid out vast sums without benefit. Blue Earth paid out over \$30,000 in such bounties.

The farmers tried heroically to save some of their fields by constantly working at destroying the pest, only to find that new swarms took their places. They finally gave up on despair. April 26 had been proclaimed by the Governor as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, and was generally observed by

the churches. The importance of all human endeavors to fight this pest had a mighty influence on many of the struggling settler which stayed with them thru-out their lives.

Suddenly during the first days of July the "hoppers" having attained their maturity, they arose into the air attaining very high altitude, and disappeared with the wind. The exact date varies among the survivors of those times, most of them declaring it was the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> of July. Perhaps they left various parts on different days.

The county then faced serious times. The county issued \$18,000 in bonds with which to buy seed grain. Nearly a thousand applicants were supplied. The total number of bushels needed was 43,310.

Many of the able-bodied men folks had to leave the county to seek work in Wisconsin and other states, and were absolutely destitute, having to beg their living on the way. Many of these are among our most prosperous families at this time.

These trying times taught the settlers many lessons in local self-government and selfreliance.

Fortunately the locust pest seemed to disappear with the improvement of the west. There has been no recurrence of the plague in our county since those dark days of fifty years ago, and probably never will again.