

Autobiography of Erick J. Berdahl

The following autobiography by Erick J. Berdahl, written about 1928¹, is copied from his manuscript without change or correction. The headings are retained as he has them in his manuscript. Because a few corrections or explanations should be made, notes are appended for that purpose. [DH: see footnotes labeled JOB:]

James O. Berdahl²,
Sioux Falls, S. D. (1942)

These Reminiscences of the Origin of the Name Berdahl and Sketches of the life history of one of the Berdahl families are dedicated to our children and Grandchildren,

by Erick and Hanna Berdahl.

Our best information of the Oregon and settlement of the Farm Berdahl in Sogn.

It was about the year 1750 that our Great Grand Father came from Hamre in Sjostrand and started the name Berdahl. His name was Ole Erickson-Hove³ married to Trina Anfinsdatter Hove Nov 23d 1780. And it is said that the name Berdahl Originated from the fact the Valley (which in Norsk is Dahl) was well covered with different kind of Berries which in Norsk is Ber, hence the name Berdahl.

It appears from the records that two Boys was born to them, Anfin and Erick, the later being our Grand Father, who was born Nov 1st 1783 and was Married May 1st 1817 to Christi Johannesdatter Njøs. Now not very much information can be given concerning our Grand parrents because we were careless about dotting down the Meny incidents in their lives told by Father until most of it has Slipped Our memory. We remember him telling us that both him and his Brother Anfin was Soldiers in the war of 1814 with Sweden, and how they had to live on Bark Meal and Fish and hardly enough of that to be able to exist.

He was not tall in Stature but very heavy built he was widely known for his unusual Strength, it was told of him that he once found a Heifer that had got pinned between some rocks and by getting his back under it he raised her of the rocks and rescued her. He was always known to be a Very peaceful and quiet disposition.

Four Children was born to them and there names was Thrina, Ole, Anna and Father Johanes who was born Oct 12th 1822 on the Berdahl farm and worked with his Father while the real ownership according to the heirship laws of Norway was Vested in the Older Brother Anfin, but not being Married he leased it to Grandfather.

Not much can be said about Fathers Boyhood he grew up on the Farm, and under very strict guidance by the parrents.

There were several more inhabitance Joined together at the Same place by that time so that

¹ JOB: (an addended notation): The year should be 1925 or 1926 instead of 1928.

² DH: James O. Berdahl is the son of Andrew Berdahl and the nephew of Erick J. Berdahl.

³ JOB: This should be Ole Erickson-Hamre instead of Ole Erickson-Hove. This probably is an inadvertent error on the part of the author.

church and school were established. But the educational part in those days were Very meager, except the religious part which was the Main part of their studies, and which blessings they carried with them through life.

Neither Father nor Mother had ben learned to write. In those days it was not deamed necessary for the lower classes to know anything about writing that belonged only to those higher up.

Father grew up to be a Strong and robust Man And at the age of 21 had to go in the Soldiers training which every able boddied young man had to go through at that time as that was the law of the land.

I can remember him telling of one of his first experiences as a Soldier, Shortly after he had been Mustered in.

Father as a Soldier.

A woman who in some Mysterious Way had caused the death of an Old Man to got his money had ben found guilty and according to law then was Sentenced to be Beheaded, the day set and the Soldiers Ordered to form a ring around the place where the Block was placed and where the act was to take place. The large crowd of curious people Swerved around them so they were crowded rather close to the Scene.

The woman was finally led in the ring, placed on the Block face down. And while she was saying the Lords prayers the ax came down with a thump and Father unfortunately was right in front, the Blood Spattered on his Shoes when the head rolled up close to his feet. And he said his knees commenced to get week and Shaky and if it had not ben for an Older and more tried Soldier on his side that helped to brace him up he was afraid he might have gone down on his knees. That certainly was a hard trial to go through for a young Soldier.

Fathers Parents both died when he was about 22 years, being about the year 1844. the Mother had been sickly for Some time before she passed away when the Father was still in robust health, but while She was laying a corpse he got suddenly Sick and died so they were both burried at the same time and in the Same grave their age was then 60 years.

Father got Married

That Sudden departure of both Father and Mother Made it very Sad and Meny Material changes in life had to be Made.

Ole Fathers Brother who was the Oldest boy had the right of inheritance but as his Uncle Anfin was still living and held the Ownership of the Farm it would eventually go to Ole at his death, so he Started to take charge of the Farm and got Married his oldest son being our cousin Anfin which was well known here.

Father while not Serving as a Soldier was working as a laborer up to the year 1846 and either at the close of that year or at the beginning of 1847 he was married to Kristi Henjum a Daughter of Anders and Martha Henjum who became a blessed Mother of 9 children 7 Boys and 2 Girls of which this writer was the second Boy.

After his Marriage their was no place for him in Berdahl so he took his young wife and what little belongings they had and settled in a place called Jordahl in Fjaerland Sogn where he rented a place that had a Small log hut that they could crawl into it was built close to the Seashore on a little elevation. the place was Very rough and Stony so that everything brought their by Boat or

raised on the place had to be carried on the back Such as provisions for the house as well as hay which had to be carried across the Fjord in the Boat and carried on the back to the Hayloft, or if wet placing it on polls to dry out.

At one time during a rainy Season Father told of carrying the wet Hay from the Boat until he was thoroughly Soaked through with the chilly water and that Night got sick with Fever and Ague which repetidly came back to him at different periods during his lifetime.

They Managed however to Make out a Scant living on that place until the Spring of 1856. And during these 8 years in Jordahl 4 children were born to them. Andrew the first born Dec 10 1848 Erick the author of this scetch Aug 8th 1850 Anfin the third in the family Dec 12 1852 and Christi the Baby at that time May 15 1855.

I was in my Sixth year then and it Seams that I still carry a few Memories from that place especially an accident that happened to me a year or so before. It was in the fall of the year Our parents was across the fjord getting hay and an Old Laidy was to look after us little folks but Andrew and Myself had Slipped away from the House climbed over on a Rock about 8 feet high on the lower Side where stood a Large apple tree took a Stone and threw at the tree to get the apples down but overbalanced with the stone and fell over Rock and cut a deep scar on my nose visible to this day.

Getting ready for the trip to America 2d Chapter.

There were a few from that part of Norway that had left for America at that time And they sent back good tidings about the New Country they had come to. And during the early Spring of 1856 there were quite a little Colony going, and Father became very enthusiastic about being One of the number but where was the Money to come from. As he was about stripped and it would take a nice little Sum to bring his Family across the Ocean and up into Iowa where the colony was heading for.

He made his desire known to those that had planned to go. And One of the party acted the, good Samaritan (I have forgotten the Name) and told Father that if he desired to go he thought he could spare him enough Money to get through on, as he had learned to know him as an honest man and thought that when he came to this Country he could earn enough to repay him in course of time if he had his health. What a great reward for honesty.⁴

That settled the question. Now it was only left to pack up their little belongings with enough to eat to last during the tripp. Mothers heart became sad to think that she had to leave her aged Mother who was still living. Also one Brother and two sisters for all time to come Her Father had gone to his reward some time before. But she consoled herself with the thought that it must be Gods will that we Should go when the means of going came to us in such an unexpected way.

Going across the Ocean

One of those going namely Sjur Tveit had a Brother living in Winneshiek Co. Iowa and Father decided to go with him as they were well acquainted. And I believe they claimed some relationship. Fathers two Sisters Thrina and Anna also came with us. I do not remember the date we started on that long Journey, but it seems Vividly in My Mind that Father and Mother both

⁴ JOB: The man was Paer Rødbotten. How he may have spelled his name in English, I am not sure; but father often spoke of him as "Paer Raeboti" (ae, the Norwegian letter consisting of a union of "a" and "e", and pronounced like "a" in "care".)

shed tears as we left and naturally we cried with them that of course must have been when they left.

We went to Bergen first and Stopped a couple of days with Mothers Uncle who was running a Blacksmith Shop there.

We finally got our places assigned in the Ship that was to take us to the new world The Ships Name was Columbus It was getting Old and Somewhat out of date as a passenger Ship, and a Slow travler so that it took us Nine weeks to get across the Osion. And it must have been a tedious ride. Meny of the Older once also got Very Sea Sick but us kids kept well that way but the. Measles got Started among us and we all had to take our turn and partake in that, but we all got over it before we came to shore I cannot recall much of anything that transpired while or the Ocian. there was Once while Mother had left the combs in the Washdish and another Lady took the dish and threw the watter overboard and in the Ocian went the combs, that I remember.

The First resting place in America.

From Quebec until we got to Winneshiek County Iowa took us another three weeks went part of the way on canal boats drawn by Mules. And some distance on the train and by Steamboat on the Mississipy River to Landsing Iowa. Then by Oxen and heavy Truck wagon for 30 miles until we reached the destination. What a trip it must have ben with four Children to take care of on all kinds of transportation and not understand a word of the language spoken.

Now Ole Tveit who we came to could not Very well find place for both his Brothers and our Family so one Mrs Anna Fretheim kindly gave us our first quarters in America. Now then came the tug of war. Stripped of Money and the Brad basket empty.

But father seldom got discouraged and at once went looking around for work and Grubbing was the most important work among the pioneers them days because they all settled along streams where they would have watter and Timber.

Now I am not so sure what his Job was before Haying and Harvest started, but most likely it was grubbing or fencing although it was a hard case in this country at that time to get a Job and get any Money out of it, but they could exchange labor for wheat Potatoes Beef or pork, and that would help to fill the Bread basket.

Fathers first harvest.

Haying and Harvest soon on, when more help was needed because there were no Mowers or Harvesters of any kind except the cythe and Grain Cradle which works the same as a cythe only it had a frame over the blade to catch the straw so it could be laid in rows ready to rake in bundles and bound.

Now it took some practice to handle these tools as they were entirely different from those used in Norway, but Father was Strong and courageous and he soon could follow up with any of them.

The hardest thing to learn he thought was to handle the pitchfork in throwing bundles on the Stack at Stacking time. At first when he would fail to get the Bundles to the Stacker he would through the fork and pitch the bundles by hand with better results then with the fork, but after a while him and the fork came out alright.

A good cradler them days would get \$1.25 per day and the one that would follow him up binding it would get \$1.00 per day. So that the prospect of making any more then a living for himself and

family was not Very bright at first. I remember of him telling that the first winter he was in Bigcano Timber and Splitting rails at the pittiful sum of 25 cts a day, and a days work Ment 100 rails to be chopped down and split.

My first trial in School.

The first Winter of 1857 we got our Winter quarters with one Anders Aase who lived about 3/4 of a mile from a Log School House that was then built in the Settlement and my best recollection is that I went with Brother Andrew part of the time to School that winter but not understanding a word of English and added to that being of a Very bashful disposition I would get entirely upset when the Teacher would talk to me, and not knowing what he was saying it would generally wind up in a crying spell. So my first winters Schooling was about lost. Andrew on the other had in the first place had the advantage of one and one half years older was by nature much more courageous and also had the natural gift of learing wonderful fast. So I would really get more help from him to get Started then I was able to get from the Teacher.

The second winter my recollection is that we were to far away to reach the school House. But in the winters of 59 & 60 Father had made arrangement with one Ole Stoen who lived closer to Locust Lane which was about 3 miles west from the School House to get the use of his Claim Log House on his land so we could have a little Hut of our own and would not have to keep moving every now and then.

A Very painful Accident.

And if I remember correctly he was also working a small part of his farm on Shares as he had then got in possession of a Joke of Steers and the owner of one cow and some chickens So he had already got a little property to start with.

I can remember one incident during the summer of 1858 which laid me up for a long time. Father and Mother was over on the Meadow after a Load of Hay and I got permission to go with them. And just before they finnished loading Father told me to take the cythe (laying it carefully on my shoulders) and carry it over where ho was to start cutting again. it went allright over there but in place of looking where I laid it down I was watching the rig so they would not get away and I would loose that Splendid ride and in so doing My foot caught the blade of the cythe and made a big gash over my big toe cutting the cord so the toe turned downwards and the Joint was made visible and was a great Nuisance after it got healed up again waking barefootted not being able to hold it on the level with the foot.

In the Winter of 1859 & 60 we Should prepare for School again the term them days was 4 months Dec Jan Feb & Mch. Now we had 3 miles to School and no other way of getting their except on foot and that was over a prairie country so we had some hardships at times to make the trips. When it became Stormy at times Father would always be on the lookout for us and meet us on the way coming home.

Second and Third Winter in School

This being the only School House in the Settlement for Miles around we had as Meny as 69 Schollers in attendance and we was seated the same as we are in Church now except that each seat had a Desk on the back side with a place for Books and for writing and a large part of the Schollars were full grown men and women who had Just come over from Norway and was trying to learn the language of the country they had adopted. The Teacher was from Norwegian

parentage which was of great help in cases of emergency but we were not allowed to talk Norwegian within his hearing but as soon as we got out of the School House you would never hear a word of English because every schollar was genuine Norsk. And Very few if any was able to handle the Language so they could be understood And when we came home it would naturally have to be the same, and added to that we had to Study our Norwegian Sunday School lessons which we had every Sunday when vie did not have service and those lessons had to be learned perfectly if punishment was to be avoided.

Now during those two winters at the Log School House there were a Number of those old time Spelling Schools with Speeches and Songs then Father would always walk with us to make sure we would not get lost in the large crowds that would gather at those times. And as it was closing up to that terrible war of the rebellion great excitement would generally follow at the close of those meetings by discussions pro and con.

A Narrow escape from Drowning.

At one of those meetings towards spring I had a narrow escape from drowning. In the big crowd I was not able to find Father and Andrew, and finally came to the conclusion that they had gone, and in my excitement started out on the home trail. A short distance from the School House was a small stream but fine weather had melted the snow so the water had about covered the log Bridge over the Stream. the night was very dark and in place of striking the Bridge I plunged in on the Side lost my cap and got a thorough Soaking but in some providential way got to Shore on the same side I started on and did not dare attempt crossing again. I made for the School House where all the excitement was over except with Father and Andrew hunting every crook and corner for me. I was given a good reprimend and taken to the big wood stove on the middle of the floor for a drying process before Starting for Home.

Some hard hits at School

I had now got over most of my childish embarresment. And the teacher had assignee me a Short peace to Speack at one of those Spelling Schools. And I had it so well learned by heart that it should be no question but I could speack it, but when I got up to face that large crowd it became more serious. got about half way and got stuck the teacher not having a Book could not Start me again and after a few seconds of fierce agony the Teacher said if I could not remember the rest I better make my bow and sit down that certainly was a wonderful releif and it was quite a while before I dared to make another attempt.

Our Teacher Ole Nelson was Very Strict and at times rather hasty and would use the rod or a Book in his hands or a chipp in their mouth on the least disorder. Being so meny crowded together in one Seat it was difficult to comply with his rules. Mr Iver E. Ellefson of Highland Twp who has gone to his reward some years ago was my School mate those days and we Sat together I had got a new Book which he did not have and he studied together with me he was a very comical little lad and unfortunately he made me laugh out loud enough so the teacher herd me and at once ordered me out on the floor and finding a good size chipp was compelled to hold that in my mouth giving the School a Second or so to Laugh Sobered me up for a long time.

Getting ready to Move to Minnesota

It was somewhat difficult even in those early days for a poor man to gain a foothold so he could have a place of his own. We had no Homestead Law at that time. The Government was Selling

the land at \$1.25 cts pr acre and around our present location what Land was not taken by actual Settlers were bought up by eastern Speculators and held for higher prices.

The Family were now increased by a little sister Born in 1858 named Martha⁵ and Aunt Anna was now married to Lars Exe and also lived with us in the winter 1859-60 so our little Log Hut was well packed so that both Father and Mr. Exe Started to figure the necessity of making Some move.

By some means Father had found out about an acquaintance living north of Spring Grove in Black Hammer Township Houston County Minn. and made his way up to him to get his advice about that part of the country. his name was Ole W. Olson⁶ and he advised him to come up there and settle on a School Section where it would be lawful to Start in and open up a Farm and would have no rent to pay and would be given the first opportunity to buy it when it was placed on the Market.

That proposition appealed to both Father and Uncle Lars Exe, so in the spring of 1860 the move was made to Black Hammer Minn

Settling down on the School Section

And he was fortunate also there to find people that was willing to give a poor man a helping hand. One of the closest neighbors to the School Section was Jens O. Otterness (the Father of Mrs. Andrew and Mrs. Herman Berdahl) while they had quite a family allowed us to remain with them until he was able to build something for himself. And to expedite matters Otterness sold his first Claim Building which was taken down and rebuilt on the School Section and was made ready to move into in the early fall of 1860.

But during our stay with the Otterness Family Brother Ole was Born Aug 4th 1860 so now they had a Family of 6 and none of us Old enough to do much help.

The School Land that we now had taken possession of was all covered with Oak and Hazel brush so that the first tools we had to Start with was the ax Spade and Grub ax to clear of a piece of ground to get started to turn over for a crop the following year. Now besides Father and Uncle Exe Others had moved in around us so we had neighbors on all sides and to put more force on getting the land opened up for production a number joined together and bought a 30 inch Breaking plow with a Sharp Standing coulter then hitched on 6 yoke of Oxen and with that force we could uproot any tree that the Oxen were able to bend under the yoke.

It took two drivers to properly handle the six pair of Oxen and that Job was given to me and Andrew which really made us believe that we were somebody and we took pride in our positions. And when ever we spied a good sized tree or grubroot ahead of us the orders was to crack the whip and get them up to a good Speed by the time the plowshare was to hit the Roots and of they would come and down would come the tree or the big grubroot as the case might be.

But the serious part of that work was to gather up the Oxen in the mornings as we had no pastures to put them in but simply unyoked them and let them go to pick their living over night and when morning came we could prepare for a genuine good wetting before we got them gathered from the heavy dew on the brush and grass as a rule every morning.

⁵ JOB: Birth date should be September 22, 1857

⁶ JOB: According to father [Andrew Berdahl], this was Ole Wendell Olson. He later moved to Grant county, Minnesota, settling where the town of Wendell now is located, that town being named for him.

This part of the County had now ben Settled for about 12 years and a school House was built about two miles from our home where we attended a 4 months term during winter and as there was to or three Scotch families belonging to that district we had to get started to use the English language outside of school during the noon hour and while together with them on the way home so that we soon got so we could converse together which also helped us in School Room.

A Second Case of Narrow escape from drowning

One of the first years (I do not recall Just when) Brother Andrew had hired out with one Bill Sherbin down on the Creek about 3 or 4 miles away to help him drive the Oxen while Breaking. Word was also sent to me if I could come down for a few days while Sherbin Family was of on a Visit. Andrew had practiced now so he could hold the Plow and I could drive. This was on the Bottum so we had no Grubs in the way.

I responded to the Call and all went fine. But it being a Very warm day Andrew suggested that we go in Swimming he had already practiced up a little so he could keep the head above water for a short distance, but this was my first time to Venture into water deeper than wading.

We looked up a fine place with Nice sandy bottum and thought we had found an Ideal Swiming place. And where we started at, it was about hip deep but as we were wading along the center of the Stream it got a little deeper and I commenced to feel a little sheaky but Andrew thought we should try a little further and took another step forward and disappeared in the water being right behind him I believe I made a grab for him and went in after him.

That was the last I remember until Andrew had got to the bank and had caught me by the hair to get me ashore.

Now how it happened that I had ben able to follow him and get to shore where he did was surely an act of Providence and that we happened to get to that side of the River was our only Salvation as the other side had a Steep Bank and deep water up to it. So it was a miraculous escape.

We were both well filled with water but I think I must have received the largest share as I had to lay streached on the grass for quite a while to dispose of the surplus that I had taken in.

Now as soon as we were able to move around again we went to get the Oxen who had now had a good long time to feed on but when we got to them one had got from under his yoke the Bow pin had got out and the pin and Bow gone, but after hunting and chasing around for quite a while we found the Bow made a pin and finally got started again.

But we learned a lesson that day that staid by us to not run chances of getting into water over our heads until we had learned to swim, which of later years we becam fullfledged swimmers.

Election of Pres. Lincoln in 1860.

A great political adgication had ben going on during the fall of 1860 and when the reports were heralded over the country that Abraham Lincoln had ben elected President there was great menifestations of Joy over the Victory won from the Southern States.

But on Dec. 20th South Carolina withdrew from the Union and soon after 4 More States followed and war seemed about unavoidable, or the union would be divided, but it kept sliding along until on April 12th 61 when the first gun was fired on Fort Sumter and when that news reached the North the People was roused with wild enthusiasm in support of the Government in Maintaining the Union.

For the first time in the Nations history the newly elected President had entered the Capital at night and in secret in fear of the Assassins plot.

And for the first time he had to be inaugurated under a Military Guard. And one of President Lincolns first duties was to send out a call for 75000 Volunteers for a 90 days service hoping by that time to be able to settle the difficulties between the North and the South but it took over 4 years more and 2865028 Men were mustered into Service and the number of deaths in Battles in the Hospitals and in prison cells were 303,504.

And the Starting of the War of the Rebellion.

Military Officers were soon sent out Over the country to enlist the young men through out the North. And we soon had One in Blackhammer Twp. The School House we attended was the Only One in the Twp. and it was fairly well in the center, and all Meetings was held at that place, it was also used as a church while Rev C F Clausen from Spring Grove would give us a Sermon every Third Sunday.

I can clearly remember the first inlistment Meeting we had at that place (as we were aloud to go with Father) After the House were well filled with interested people a man of fine stature and in full uniform arose and started to address the audience. The substance of his speach is mostly lost to me now, but a few sentences has always remained fresh in my mind.

He said the South are calling us Mudsills but we are going down there to show them who is going to be the Mudsills and I am here as a representative of our Noble President Abraham Lincoln to enlist your service to help maintain the union he said that both his Grandfather and his Father had laid down their lives for upholding this union and if need be I am willing to sacrafice my life to assist in preserving the same. And I can well remember the first to stepp forward and sign up his name was Olai Olson.

One of Our Close Neighbor Boys Killed in Battle.

Now Just how many recrutes that was perswaded to go at that time I am not so sure of but this Hans Olie was a neighbor Boy a Very courageous young man.

His Regiment was first taken Out against the Indians And on his way South he came home on a furlow. And was Very much pleased that he would now have a chance to go South to show them that we were pretty lively Mudsills. But in the 2d or 3d battle that his Regiment was engaged in he was reported killed in battle and was the firs one around our neighborhood that had to lay down his life in that terrible conflict.

The first three years the North would get the number of men they needed by Volenteer enlistment. but the Fourth year a draft Order was issued by the Government and the age limit was from 21 to 45 years. Father was then in his 42d year and was liable so far as age was concerned.

But all persons having any defects that might disqualify them from Military service was Ordered from that district to go to Rochester Minn and be examined by a Government Physician and if he found that the defect would warrent it they would be taken of the draft roll Books and disqualified which placed him among that number.

The Draft period of 64 and 65.

Now when the draft started it commenced to look rather serious in our neighborhood as most of our young men were gone and that compulsory draft document would start to call out men with large families and in most cases in Small circumstances. Now it was allowed at that time that a drafted man could hire a Substitute in his place but they were getting scarce and only a few well to do people could be able to pay for one as it would take from 1000 to 2000 dollars to get one.

We had three drafts in our township and they were all exciting times because the way our Soldiers were Slaughtered there was very little hopes when they left to ever se them any more alive.

The last draft is the most Vivid in my mind. At the time of departure (and they were quite a few at that time) they was to meet at the School House to say good by to their families and friends. the pittiful picture of that day is as plain to me now as if it had hapened yesterday the sobing of the children, Mothers, the relatives in biding as they beleived the last good by to their dear once was So heart rendering that it can never be forgotten by any one who was present at that farewell meeting at the Black Hammer School House.

Drilling at Home to be ready.

It was also Ordered by the Government that all ablebodied men should organize themselves into a Militia and form a Company in each Township by electing a Captain, Seargent and Other officers, and set aside Saturday afternoon for drilling And a disabled Officer or Veteran Soldier was sent out over the country to give lessons at first, and those that had guns would have them along and others would make wooden guns that would answer the purpose for practice to learn to handle them, and go through the performance of first Attention, Present Arms, Order Arms, Shoulder Arms, Forward March, and right about face, Charge Bayonette and Charge Catridge and fire, and Meny other Manovers but I merely mention these so you may know that I also took part in these practices and we young chaps certainly injoyed it immencely and Most of the older once had ben Soldiers in Norway and while it was a little different here they soon caught on and was given great credit by the Officers for learning so fast and handling themselves with such splendid Military tacts.

Now these practices only went on in the summer time and was done for the purpose of having the men trained in case of emergency.

War was over and Soldiers Came home in 1866.

The dreadful Period of war was finally ended and great enthusiasm and happiness prevailed when the soldiers came home and if I remember correctly all the drafted men from our Twp came home.

The effects of war was seriously felt in Meny ways. Necessaries of life Jumped up to fabulous prices. But as Farmers was raising mostly wheat which brought something like 3.00 pr Bushel which helped out. The scarcity of men made working wages Very high also, but people did not Jump into such enormous debts then as was the case in the Worlds war, and got on an equal footing sooner then is the case now.

Our money during the later part of that war was all paper money except Pennies, both Silver and Gold had gone into hiding, and in place we had a paper for all small change 5 cts 10 cts 25 cents

50 cts & 1.00 so that when you would have 5.00 in change you had to have a big purse to hold it. But as years rolled on silver and Gold came out of hiding again and the paper change was called in and they have not made their appearance as money since that time.

My First and Last parochial School.

In the 4 years from 1856 to 1860 that we lived in Iowa we had no access to attend any Parochial School except Sunday School. But our Blessed parrents especially Mother never forgot to remind us of our lessons while at Sunday School and wheather at School or not we would have to recite a Short lesson to them about every evening and many a day and evening I would be called to sit beside her while she was at the Spinning wheel with my Book reading or reciting my lessons to her. I was very slow in learning at first but when I first got it into my head it would stay there.

Mother had a wonderful patience with us but Father would sometimes loose his, and if we failed to recite our lessons properly before him he would give us a good spanking as a reminder.

It was in 1861 or 2 that we had a term of Norsk Parochial School in Our School House they had got a hold of a Very Old man as Teacher from the Old time School in Norway, and he was getting a little hard of hearing and he used the Old Norway rule that while studying our lessons we should all read aloud, and while some possibly were reading on the lesson meny others would be Just blabering so as to keep up the noise and he would not know the difference. He was a Very pious Old Man and Certainly gave us some good advices to carry through life.

Moved from the School Land.

If my memory serves me right it was in 1864 that Father bought 80 acres of Prairie Land about 3 miles South from the School land where we had made our home. The Grubbing and clearing became tiresome and thought that better progress could be made in the Prairie Soil.

He Broke about 35 acres that summer and during the winter we got out enough Posts and Rails to fence it. and that summer we had about that meny acres to harvest and it had to be done with the Cradle. Father got me one that year so I had my first experience in that work.

A dugout was built in the new place and we moved there in the spring of 1865. Brother Herman had now ben added to the family he was born Jan 16th 1863 so we were now 7 children in the family and to add to the number in the Dugout John Loftesness⁷ and family came to us from Wisconsin and was with us during the winter 4 children Carrie Hans Andrew and Herman.

Brother Andrew read for Confirmation in 1863 and Father made arrangements with Rev. C. F. Clausen who was our pastor that I could go with him during that year not to be confirmed as I was to young and in that way I had 2 years training which Made up for not having Parochial School I was confirmed the next year in a class of 60 members.

The Indian Scare of 1864 and race for Safety.

In 1864 in July, Aug or Sept a report came to us that the Indians was on the war path and had formed in 2 or 3 large Batallions and one of them was comming right on us they were at a Village called Riceford, which was burning about 6 miles west of us. And that we must use all speed to get away before they got to us. And all go to Caledonia the County Seat where we would get together for protection.

⁷ JOB: Mrs. Loftesness and Mrs. Johannes Berdahl were sisters.

Father and Uncle Lars Exe was down on the Bottum cutting hay and Mother said that me and Andrew must run down there and immediately get them home. And I can assure you that we done some raceing to get their, was so out of breath that it was difficult to tell them our errand. The cythe was soon thrown aside and home was made in a short order. the Oxen soon hiched to the wagon a few Bed clothes and a basket of food thrown in and of we went pounding the poor Oxen on their backs to get away in a hurry.

The day was Very Smokey and that was supposed to be from the burning Villages and Farm Homes. When we came to Sheldon they tried to plead with us not to go any farther that it was not posible for the Indians to get through all the large settlements west of us and get close to us, before we got any knowledge of it, but of no avail the rumors of those burning Villages was so strongly set in the minds that they must go where their be hope for protection.

In the meantime some more coolheaded men with Horses had taken a ride westward to see how things did look. they found Riceford allright and places claimed to be burned by the Indians was not touched so they was able to overtake this large caravan that was heading for Calladonia and got them to stop and turn homeward but the Oxen was pretty well plaid out by this time so it took quite a while to get home.

It was claimed by some that this Scare was started by a gang of horse thieves and that meny horses were stolen during this wild rampage.

The fact though remains that in western Minnesota in Jackson and Murry Counties the Indians was on the Warpath burning and killing the Pioneers all over in the western country so it might have spread and got to us in that way, but however it came about it was a genuine Scare that never will be forgotten by those who were in it, and it swept all over eastern Minnesota and Iowa.

Started to prepare for another move.

Father had now two Boys confirmed and Brother Anfin was getting to be of some help on the farm so he commenced to figure that the 80 acres would be to small a farm to stay on. And figured on burying a larger farm, but land in that locality was getting to high priced so he made a trip west to the next County Fillmore and there he found a quarter that could be bought for 900.00 and became enthused about moving if he could dispose of the 80, and the improvements on the School land. And during the fall of 1865 he sold the improvements on the School land for 100.00 and sold the 80 acres for 600.00 which he had paid 300.00 for 2 years before. And then Bought the quarter near String Town⁸ for 900.00. And now when spring came we were ready for another move.

Now while we lived in this that place Brother John was added to the family so now we were 6 Boys and 2 girls a total of 8 to look after. John was born Jan 7th, 1865.

Brother Andrew had got a Job clerking at a Store in Brownsville, Minn during that fall and winter, but was home with us during the summer after mooveing to our New Home in Fillmore County.

⁸ JOB: Stringtown or String Town is a nickname for Amherst postoffice, a small inland village. All the buildings are in a string (along the east side of the highway) hence the name "Stringtown."

And Now became residents of Fillmore Co.

So in the Spring of 1866 the move was made to our new home in Fillmore Co. there was a Small Log house built but with our family it got pretty well filled, but where there is a will there is a way. Us Boys had got to the age now that we seriously miss our company of playmates that we had been separated from as every one in our new place was Strangers. Our nearest Neighbors were the Power Family and the Knut Christopherson family parents of Prof and congressman Christopherson now of Sioux Falls. But we were fortunate in striking a Good Christian Neighborhood so we soon learned to know them and enjoyed ourselves among them.

There was quite a number of acres broke on the place, but part of it was full of Stumps. So our first work was to get them out of the way because he figured that we had to have a Reaper now to take the place of the Cradle as a few of them was out now among the leading farmers.

The John P. Many Dropper, and the McCormic Reaper was now invented and I can remember that we went several miles to see that wonderful machine that was taking the place of the Cradle before it got into general use.

Our first pair of Horses.

Another of our close neighbors Sven Byrtness had a pair of horses and also a McCormic Reaper but it was too heavy for two horses so he told father it he would get a pair they could join together and do the harvest at both places. And having got very tired of Swinging the Cradle he went down to Iowa at our first stopping place and got a young team which I well remember cost him \$400.00 and one of them made 3 trips to Dakota the other died on our second trip going home.

So our first Harvest in Fillmore was done by McCormic Reaper but the Hay had still to be cut with the Scythe as no mowers were yet invented except the John F. Many Dropper was so arranged that the Dropper attachment could be taken off and could be used for mowing if the grass was high enough so the reaper could catch it.

Threshing Machines them days was Very few and far between and Horses were Very few in the country so now that Father had a team he was persuaded to Join in with Jens Gjesme and Hans Heydelie from Black Hammer in the purchase of a New Threshing outfit. Mr. Gjesme had some knowledge of running one. So they purchased a Chicago Pitts machine with 8 horse Power the Power them days was not mounted so in moving it had to be hoisted under a wagon with a rack specially made for that purpose.

My first experience as a Thresher.

It was understood that the Threshing was to be done on Black Hammer where we moved from and when the season commenced Andrew was to take the team down there and be one of the Threshers. And I became really sick at heart because I had to Stay at home and not get a chance to go and be looked up to as a Thresher.

So when most of the fall work was done Father noticing how anxious I was to go said that I might go a while and see if there was any work for me that I could do. If not to come right back, and he did not have to say that more than once for as fast as my legs could carry me I made my way through timber and brush straight across the country and soon found out where the machine was humming. And it so happened that one of them had to be away on account of increase in the Family so I was taken on trial right away.

Now a Thresher them days was looked up to as something above the common class and it surely was a Feather in my hat when I got on the Power to drive but I had not ben there Very long until I commenced to get dizzy because the platform we stood on went areund with the Bull wheel and that caused a peculiar feeling at first but after a little practice it soon became allright.

My first experience as Thresher (continued)

But another Obstacle in driving was that Horses were so scarce that we had to use one pair of Oxen at times, and to start with they would usually be Very awkward But when they did start they would make their Sweep bend like a bow and would do good work for a while but they had to be watched closely because after going awhile they would get dizzy and when you noticed they would commence to stagger then must stop at once and change for another pair. A reserve pair was always on hand where Oxen was used.

Now how long I was along that fall I dont remember but I had already got it in My head that I was quite a thresher so after I got home a neighbor was threshing and a couple of us went over to see them work and there was something I thought was not working right and I told my companion and he went over and told the Boss and he looked at it then asked him how long I had ben a Thresher and he told him only this fall and the Old Gentleman Said I thought so and turned away and in later years I did find that I knew Very little about it.

That machine was run two Seasons down there. And then moved up to Fillmore Co and Anton Christenson & Joe Power and myself as Boss run it in the neighborhood until we sold out and moved to Dakota (Except the fall of 1869 then I was with a machine in Iowa)

Attending School again during Winters.

During my younger days their was no graduation from the common Schools. You could go as long as you wanted to and go regular or irregular or not go at all as we had no compulsory Education laws at that time so Father made it a rule with us Boys to go every other day as one would have to be at home to help do chores and get up wood and hay and what ever else might be on the docket. And in that way the education became Very limited even though a child had a chance to go an unlimited amount of terms the winter School term did not exceed 4 months.

So my studies did not go beyond the 4 Rs Reading Writing Spelling and Arrithmetic. And my Stronghold as a Schollar was Spelling and learning long peaces to Speack at our many Spelling Schools that was the go them days. We would go from one District to another to try our Skill in spelling down to se who would come out Victorious. And after Spelling would be a tryout who would be the best Speaker and those Meetings would always have a packed house, and I was considered then as one most likely to be able to carry our School to Victory in those engagements.

I can remember in one of those contests where Our teacher helped me to Save the day for our School. One Schollar in the District and myself was left standing and She lost the word Diocese and I was not sure wheather her mistake was on the first or last syllable and as I was running it over in my mind, I saw the teacher standing in the packed crowd pointing his finger to his eye then I knew the first syllable was Di and than Spelled it Diocese and won out.

Spelling School Excitement

Now that Spelling excitement was possibly carried to far but I do beleive that if our Schools now a days would get together and try their Strength in Spelling rather then foot ball or Basket ball it would do the Student more good during their lifetime.

During the winter we would arrange to get together at private Homes about one Evening each week and practice Spelling and Speaking and of course had a fine social time in winding up.

In the summer of 1869 Father thought they could got along without me at home and Mr. Jergen Sande from Iowa, Father of Ole Sande, Visited us and wanted to hire me for 6 months at 20.00 pr month which was agreed to and that brought me back close to where we first landed in this country this was my first long trip away from home and how I longed for home at times. My work after Spring work was done was Grubbing and hawling Grain to Lansing a distance of 30 miles and after Harvest I became a Thresher again as ho had an interest in a machine.

Now what I wanted to tell in this connection was that during the winter I went back on a Visit and Mr Sandes son John was

At Spelling School in my first School House

Teaching in the same School House that I took my first lessons at School when I made such a bad failure of speacking and was so Scart of the teacher.

While I was Visiting their he had a Spelling School and natureally I was invited to take it in. Nhow they had only had the National Speller for a short time while we had used it a couple of years so when it came to Spelling down It did not take a great while until I had the whole School downed and of course after all the rest was down the teacher struck for the most difficult words he could find to down me in a hurry but all those hard words I had them all by heart. So he finally gave me a word I did not remember of having seen in the Book and missed it and went down and he said afterwards that the word was French and was not in the Book.

Then came the Speacking and as I had done so well in Spelling they thought I also would be able to give them a Speech and I gave them John Adams supposed speech and was greatly applauded.

Now I do not write this for Showing of, but to show what study and practice will do. 12 years before that I was the poorest Schoolar and at this time I was pronounced the best. So you young people keep studying and practicing and you will Master it at last and be well repaid for so doing.

Working on the Rail Road near Lanesboro with Team.

After the year 1869 I was kept busy at home we had then cleared up and turned the best part of the quarter into field. Brother Andrew was away most of the time either teaching School or clerking in some store.

Father had now bought another pair of horses and had a Woods Selfraking Reaper so we had a full rig of our own. I believe it was in the fall of 70 that I got the big team of Horses to do some work on the Railroad track between Lanesboro and Spring Valley using them single carrying dirt from the hill to the grade on carts and leading one while the other was getting loaded so that made it pretty tiresome work to follow day by day. So I did not follow it up so very long, but one day one of the horses came near going over the grade. We backed the cart close to the edge of the

dump and had a rail block to back against, and as the wheels struck the block the edge gave away and back cart and all commenced sliding down but the powerful Horse saved himself by being able to break the hamestrap, but the cart and Harness went over and over for about 30 feet to the bottom of the grade A pretty close call for the Horse.

Now I must go back to the late fall of 69 and tell you about my experience Rail Roding and working as a Deck hand on the Steam Boat on the Mississippi river on the Diamond Joe line.

Working on Rail Road in Wisconsin.

Shortly after I came back from Iowa a person came around from Rushford and wanted to hire a crew to go to Trumbeau Valley Wis to work on the Rail Road at 2.00 per day and free transportation. So about half a Dozen of the neighboring Boys got together and agreed to go and when we got to Rushford we got to be about a Dozen. When we got to the station nearest to our work we were dumped of at a one horse place where we got lunch. Not having any beads we were taken to a room about 16 x 24 where we had to camp on the floor until morning.

After getting our lunch we were taken with Teams and wagons to the Rail Road camp where we was to work. The Valley was Very Marchy and ditches were dug on each side of the track which was full of water and planks was laid across over where we had to take the dirt in a wheelbarrow and 8 men was placed on each plank track.

Now to avoid any criticism from the Boss we had to watch one another so that all wheelbarrows were filled at the same time or the ones lagging would catch it. But we had one of our men who was bound to show of by filling his load first and naturally he was placed at the head for us to follow and a race commenced and the one next to him followed so close that he lost his balance and both him and his load dumped in to the ditch so in that way we got rid of him.

From Rail Road to Steam Boat Work

One morning the Boss called up and wanted to know if any of us knew anything about holding a Scraper. I told him I did and was Very glad to get away from the wheelbarrow. After a while he came around and thought I was not filling the Scraper enough and said let me Show you how to fill the Scraper And while he made that attempt one of the guy chains broke and sent him head over heels into the gutter he got up shook himself and went of not saying a word and I had my own way of handling it after that.

But we soon got tired of continuing Our Grub was Blackstrap molasses Bread and. Cabbage with Tea without cream or sugar And we heard that they were paying Very good wages for Deck hands on the Steamboats so we struck for La Crosse and hired out on a Diamond Joe Steamboat going between La Crosse and St Paul.

Now we thought we were used pretty rough on the Rail Road but we found that when we got on the Steamboat that we jumped from the Frying pan to the fire. Not knowing anything about the work or the custom we had to go through a lot of misery on our two trips between those cities.

We were 8 of us that went in on the Boat and about the same number of the real Irish Toughs were there before. And they tried to make life as miserable as they could because they claimed we had hired out to cheap and interfered with their wages and they determined to soon get rid of us someway.

On the Mississippi River.

It went Very well while loading fruit and boxes of goods at La Crosse but at the next stop their was a Very steep decline from where we was to roll down to the boat a large number of lime barrels, and we had failed to get Leathers to adjust to the palm of the hand to prevent slivers from being pierced in to our hands which they had And as the whole crew lined up with each Barrel going down the enbankment one of our Men run a large Sliver in his hand and had to let the Barel go and brought disaster to the whole line, And I can assure you that our friendship with the old Deck hands was all done for.

Another bad feature was that only two or three of our crew could handle the language as the others were new commers but they were large and robust men and the old Deck hands did not dare to tackle us by force.

When Dinner time came then we were up against it again as we was supposed to have our own tin cup plate, knife and fork, and Spoon. The Cook dished out in large doses of Meat, Potatoes Bread, Butter & Coffee and placed it on the floor of the Boat and there we stood looking on entirely helpless.

Our 2d trip to St. Paul discharged Sunday in St Paul.

And they would riot even let us take their utensils after they were through so we had to scratch up the scraps with our hard fingers in getting our first meals but fortunately for us the Boat had to get some repair s at Red Wing and we were allowed to go and get what we needed to get our share of the grub when the Old fellows did.

But every little while some of the new commers would get into trouble with the Old gang and I would generally be called upon as Interpreter to get the difficulty settled and they got me nick named the King of the Norwegians.

On a Sunday morning after we had the Boat loaded on our second trip at St. Paul myself and a Boy from Houston whose name I have forgotten was called to the office of the Boat and told we was not needed any longer and was paid a ten dollar bill for our work and while we remonstrated and wanted to go back to La Crosse with the rest of the Boys it was refused and we were ushered out with even having a chance to say goodbye to the Boys before they were steaming down Stream. And two pretty hard looking Specimen were left on the shore at St. Paul in our old rags all greased and our hair all tangled up and clodded together after sleeping on Molasses Barrels and other sticky stuf.

We tried to wash and clean up a little by the river but without soap little could be accomplished. And we had to start up town and try and find some place where we could clean up and get something to eat. And we hit upon a Swede Restaurant and Hotel where we registered and were accepted such as we appeared and after telling our Story they sympathised with us.

Now it was getting Very late in the season-and the river was Very low so that Very few Boats were going fearing a freeze up, and it would cost 9.00 to get to La Crosse as pasanger and that ten dollar bill was all we had so after getting a good Dinner (which we left unpaid expecting to pay later but never got back and is the only meal I know of not paid yet) we started for the river again in the hopes of finding the Boys again at the Hotel where we had left our better clothes and what little money we had earned.

It was getting towards evening and we had about given up hopes of any Boat coming when a

Steam whistle was heard down Stream and of for the landing place we struck and at once approached the Captain for a Job but no they had men enough for this was their last trip but they would take us down to La Crosse for 19.00 dollars. Now that would leave us one dollar for food and with the low water it might take a couple of days.

Now I never beleived in streaching the truth but in that case I felt Justified to do so in order to appeal to the Captain for Sympathy so we told him we were Deck hands on Diamond Joe, and while we was making a little purchase uptown the Boat left us and we will help unload and reload the boat with Out pay if you will take us along. he looked us over again and likely thought that we appeared like deckhands and said alright Boys go to work and to our surprise when we got in the Boat the 9 Deck hands were all Niggers and a dread took hold of us thinking that we had Jumped from the Frying pan to the fire that when those white people were so bad, what can we expect from these hard looking Nigrose and us two against nine.

We did not have very much to unload but the reloading part lasted a good Share of the night and it consisted mostly of soft hides with the salt Brine running along our backs as we were carrying them in to the boat.

Now when Lunch time came we were confronted with the same trouble of not having any tools except our fingers to take any of the Grub set out for the Deckhands as our utensils left on the boat we had to leave and to make sure that we would not get ourselves into any trouble with that dark looking crew we stood and looked on at first until one of them an old Grey haired negro looked up to us said I see you have no tools to eat with Now Just catch what you can with your fingers and I will hurry and get through so you can get my plate knife fork and Spoon and another followed his example and we became chums all at once and we was treated like gentlemen all the way so far as the Negroes was concerned.

Fortunately we did not get any freight until we got to Winona but there we were caught with 1000 sacks of wheat and from the warehouse to the Boat was quite a decline and it became a pretty hard tryal on our backs and legs before we got through. Our backs was rather young to stand up against that long pressure. I was 19 years and my partner was 18. We had two men at each end throughing them on and taking them of. At the last round my partner got so weak that when they threw the sack on his Shoulders he would sag to his knees under the weight.

Nothing more was taken in on the trip except wood for the steamer A Barge would be pulled up and fastened to the Boat and while we were going we would have to be unloading it into the Boat.

Back to La Crosse and home.

Late in the evening we were approaching North La Crosse where the Boat was to be unloaded and beleiving that we had paid enough for our ride we had planned to try and get away from that frightful Job of unloading and as we struck the landing we were the first once to push out the stage and help tie up the boat and then backed up behind a building and started for South La Crosse and a race for our lives was made fearing that we might got caught and forced to go back and help unload the Boat, but we cleared all obstacles and finally got to the Hotel where we had left our little belongings pretty well tuckered out, and to our surprise found the rest of our crew at the Hotel. It was certainly a happy reunion which we had to celebrate the best part of the night.

They were discharged after they had unloaded the boat at La Crosse the day before but they got 2.00 less pay then we did at St. Paul, their was none of them able to say anything and they had to

accept what was offered. Now we still had our 10 dollars intact while they had 2.00 less.

Those captains on the Boat must have ben slave holders. If we did not run when we passed them it was a cussing or a kick in the but that followed.

The next day we struck for home not Very much richer but as young men considerable wiser.

Meeting the Girl that Became my life partner.

In the Spring of 1871 quite a few People both married and single came over from Osterdalen Norway and stepped at Lars Brandvolds place who lived 3/4 of a mile from our home and among that number was the Girl that later became my wife and are Still with me as we are approaching oar 53d wedding anaversary. And have seen the ups and downs of life together.

This Lars Brandvold was one time her Stepfather but her Mother died when She was 8 years old and Lars was remarried. Her Brother Knut Brandvold came to this same Place in 1867. A Very handsome and fine spirited young man and part of two winters we were at school together in our district and we became bosom friends, but he-left, for Goodhue Co in the Spring of 1870 .and the Sister failed to meet him there as expected. her half Brother Albert Was quite young at that time and she naturally had a longing for her Brother Knut whom she had Said goodbye to in Norway 4 years ago.

Now as soon as I heard that they had arrived I became anxious to go over and se that sister of Knut as I felt sure that if she looked anything like him she would be a Very pretty blonde, and the minute I saw her I could se the picture of My bosom friend and so far as I was concerned (I might Just as well admit it) It was love at first sight. But as for her I hardly thing she was quite so hasty. And you could not blame her for it was posibly the first time she had heard a Sogning talk. And as her Brother Knut said at Daughter Carries weding that when he first heard the Sogning talk he could hardly understand them. And he was surprised at his sister Hannah how rapidly She must have learned to understand the Sogn dialect.

Well now let that be as it may the fact of the matter is that from that first day be became friends and continued so until at last it was a promise for life.

In the winter of 1872 Father let me have the Big team to go in to the Pinery and haul Logs to the river. A Neighboring Boy Sivert Topness also got his Fathers team and after new years we struck out for Winona, crossed the River on the Ice went through Trempalo Valley to Black River and landed at Nealsville Wis, got a Job about 20 miles from the city in a camp whore we were 40 men and 12 teams for hauling and not a woman I presume with in the radious of 20 miles the cooking was all done by men.

The Winter of 1872 in Wisconsin Pinery.

And oh dear what fearful rotten life; we lived during that winter. Dirty Songs and profane in the extreme was the Order of the day, but the Boss gave Strict Orders that no licquor or Card playing was allowed in the camp.

So evenings was spent in telling dirty Stories and songs, and while us two Boys were considered fairly quiet and good when we left home Mother reproached me several times for using words and actions not becomming in a Christian home. the constant hearing of that profanity and rough language had naturally dragged us into it without really noticeing it ourselves. So young man beware of what Company you keep because rough Companionship will have a tendency to make

you the same.

Now the first thing that took our Eye when we got to camp was the enormous size of the Sleighs vie was to use. they looked as if our Horses would have load enough pulling the Sleigh say nothing about a load. the Bob we brought along was a big heavy one but it looked like a cutter compared with that Jiant. The Runners was 6 ft. Beam was 6 X 8 inches and the top Bunk 8 X 8 inches and 8 feet long It was a fearful ship to hitch up to.

Wisconsin Pinery continued.

We had 3 miles to haul the logs and one mile from where we got the logs to the Camp and 3 trips a day was the Orders. two yoke of Oxen was used to pull the logs on the Skidway from where they were rolled on the Sleighs Now in order to be able to make the 3 trips before to late at night we had to get up at 4 oclock in the morning to get our horses ready to start out no later then 6 oclock, and it was a fearful scramble to se who could get out first so he would not have to wait to long to get loaded for the first trip as the last one would not get back to camp before 9 oclock in the evening.

The road was level and kept in fine shape by two men who was constantly at work repairing the same.

The Camp was broken up rather Suddenly after we had ben there about 2 months as the Boss went away to get the pay roll for us he failed to get it and disappeared and the prospect of getting any thing for our work looked Very doubtful so we all made for Nealsville and filed a lean on the pile of logs we had piled up on Black River and a settlement was made by getting one half cash and the balance by July 1st. We had earned \$110.00 each and got the money as agreed But the City was a fearful Sene of drunkards during our stay there.

At Home again.

As soon as we got the Money Matters Straightened up we started on our home streatch getting to the Misisstipi River by Winona the mild weather had caused water on top of the Ice and we was warned that it might be risky to attempt to cross it with a team but we new of no other way of getting across as no bridges were built at that time and likely would have to wait a long time before ferries could be used. And we were homesick to think of waiting for the Ice to go out. So we male up our minds we had to try it, and to use all care posible we both walked and kept our teams at a distance apart so as not to get to much presure in one place. And Providence and good luck brought us safely to the Winona shore and a heavy burden of fear was taken of our shoulders. The balance of our Journey home was easy and while we were glad to get home the home people were equally glad to find us safely with them again. We had become Very robust during our stay in the woods I had gained 15 pounds during the winter and weighed 190 lbs Our Grub consisted of Pork and Beans hot biskets potatoes and Syrup. It was stuff that stuck to the ribs, and especially was that the case with a preparation they called Dung Slide Very fine stuff and Very rich.

Meeting My best Girl again.

I had ben in communication with my best girl during my stay in the woods so that I knew where she could be found. She first started to work in Lanesboro but struck a bad place and had to quit And later hired out to an American family near Lenora Minn. A Farmer by the name of Goudy where she gradually learned the Language and became great friends. And they regretted Very

much to let her go when she finally had to come home and get ready to be married in the Spring of 1873.

Her duties was the ordinary House work on a Farm but when Harvest time came she herd they were paying 3.00 a day for those that was able to bind stations that is 4 persons to bind as fast as the reaper was cutting. Now that required both skill and practice and not knowing anything about the work it became. pretty severe task at first so she really got herself overheated and feels the effect of that in warm weather up to this day, but she was bound to go through with it, and did make her 3.00 per day that harvest which was pretty well done for a Girl newly over to this country.

Getting ready for a Move Westward.

During our stay in Fillmore County the seventh Brother Christopher had come to us he was born Aug. 19, 1867. So we were now 9 in the family 7 Boys and 2 Girls and the 160 acres looked to Small to Father to have us all stay on. And knowing that some of the Older Once would be likely to leave home soon he did not like to have us separate and knowing that in Some western country there would be an abundance of land for all of us.

So in the Spring of 1871 in company with a couple of neighbors they started westward not having any destination in View but only to look over the country. And they got as far west as the Sioux River some where near where Brandon is now. And their they found both land and Timber that suited them fine and turned around and came back home Very enthusiastic, about that western country that they had visited and the western fever was Started,

Our first trip to Sioux Falls in 1872.

And in the spring of 1872 as soon as all Our Spring work was done up a Company of 5 of us with 2 pair of Horses and covered rigs started for the west those going was Father Brother Andrew Myself Lasso Bothun and Lars Brandvold. We followed the trail that Father had gone the year before to the Sioux River but Somebody had got their a head of us. And had the timber all taken so we were to late to get any of that tract that Father had looked over the year before . And after a Short drive landed in Sioux Falls there was not much of it at that time. The Log Barracks built by the Soldiers was there and Van Eps had his first store built One Hotel with a few small frame buildings along Phillips Ave and C. K. Howard had started to build his first Store, but the fine Water falls of the River looked good to us knowing that when the country got settled they would be utalized for milling purposes.

One of the first men we met on the Street was Mr. Solie and on making inquiries we found that the Norwegian Settlements were principally on the North of Sioux Falls while the Americans had started to settle west along the Skunk Creek, but refered us to Cyrus Waltz who was a Surveyor and made his business of locating people that was locking for land.

We soon found him and he told us he would go out with us at \$5.00 per day. Now in asking how close to the city we could find Vacant land he said 3 miles South East we could find nice level prairie land and thinking it would be fine to be that close to what we thought might make a city some day we agreed to go and look that over first.

Looking around for a location.

Now we came from a place where Hay and water was scarce and our main object was, if we could not find timber to make sure of at least get to a place where the prospect for water and hayland was Visable and it looked to high and dry where we had got to.

So Mr. Waltz said I can find you just what you are looking for by going on the Slipup creek, but as we had learned that by going north we could get a little closer to timber and the Norwegian Settlement along the Sioux River we decided to take that direction.

So after camping near the city over night he took us up along the Slipup creek and when we got to the present location where the land appeared more level we pitched our tent as it appeared to be about what we were looking for so Brother Andrew started with a Square quarter now further up the Valley it became wider and not to get to much of the Bottum land Father started with a long Quarter and Lasse Bothun next then myself and Joining me on the North Lars Brandvold.

By only having our land 80 rods wide we would get closer together as we figured that it might take a long time before we would get any other neighbors.

Located on Slipup Creek Sec 23 & 24 T 103 R 49

After getting the description of each claim (which became quite complicated on account of getting it a mile long and to get a 40 of that Slipup Bottum we had to cross the Range line and get some in Sec 19 & 30 R 48) We started back to Sioux Falls in the evening paid our surveyor his 10.00 and camped over night after a hard days march.

The next morning early we Started for Vermillion to the Land Office to make our filing. I think that took us about 3 days As we stopped of at Lodi where Ole Necheim who later became our neighbor was living at that time. he was newly Married then.

We had our Breaking Plow and fixtures with us so as soon as we got back Andrew and myself started the breaking plow. We Started on Fathers quarter west of where the House is now located. We went north crossing his, Bothuns, Mine and on Brandvolds north to the Slough north of house making quite a long stretch Broke something like 15 or 20 acres that being the first furrows that was turned in the Slipup Valley.

Now while we were Breaking our three companions did not have so much to do and as our grub pile was getting rather low they set out west one day to se how far they would have to go to find our nearest neighbor and after going 3 miles they found the first Hut, that was at G. O. Brendes place.

Got back Home for Haying and Harvest

They were fortunate in getting some food stuff and among other eatables they got a large round Cheese which tasted Very good to us Breakiers who had worked up a Very good appetite.

Now as we had our haying and Harvesting to do at home we made all the haste we could to get ready for a homeward start. When our companions were at Brendes they were told that Rev. Christenson of Vermillion would have services at John Thompsons on Sunday we were all desirous of hearing the Word of God preached out here in the wild west and went there on Sunday morning and there was quite a large attendance. the people had come a long ways to hear the Word of Salvation preached again.

In starting home we went east from here crossing Split Rock below the Palisade and across to Luverne. And our nearest neighbors in that direction was about 10 miles this side of that Village which had Just started by the erection of One store.

After we got home there was not much of a Vacation. Haying and harvest was soon on so that after greeting our most particular friends we had to get right into the harness again. We had however many Visits and inquiries about our Views of the western country.

My first experience in Politics.

Now while I had been brought up in this country since I was 6 years old I had to take out my intention paper before I could vote because Father had neglected to take out his second paper before I was eighteen years.

So on Nov 6th 1871 having then passed my 21st year since Aug 8th I got my permission to vote. And my close neighbor and School Mate Jo Power who was a year or so older had already become quite a politician and got me Started to help to work for a change in some of our Township Officials that seemed to have combined together not for the best interest of the Township, and our efforts resulted in their defeat on election day Very much to their surprise, as it had all been worked on the quiet.

In the fall I had the honor of representing our Township as one of the Delegates to the County convention which was the first one I had ever attended and it looked to me at that time to be a great affair.

Now in order to hold our land that we had filed on legally, we had to go back in the fall to Sleep on it and Otherwise make some showing that it was our home. But before we could go, we must cast our vote for President Grant who was up for his 2nd term. the Election was on Nov. 6th 1872.

Second trip to Dakota

So on Nov 7th 1872 Father, Andrew, the writer, and C.O. Henjum Started for our 2d trip. Lasse Bothun had moved out earlier in the fall and we was to take out his Drill and other Spring tools so together with our food and feed for the Horses and our Bed clothes we were well packed up.

The weather and roads were fine until we reached Fairmont Minn. that evening it looked a little stormy and we got our Horses in a little Barn, but we camped in the covered Wagon on account of room we had to leave our Boots under the wagon, but when we got up the Next morning everything was covered up with Snow and a fierce Storm raging and after getting our Boots out of the Snow we had to make for the Hotel which fortunately was close by carrying them in our hands to get them thawed out before we got them on.

The storm lasted 2 days so on the third day we started for Jackson although Very disagreeable we were able to make Jackson that evening but the wind started up again the next morning and kept us there for another two days, and easing of again the third day we set out for Worthington but that made a hard days Journey on both Men and beasts as the Snow drifts were deep in places and most of the time one would have to walk ahead and watch the trail so that we would not lose it.

Late in the evening we got to Worthington there was only one Hotel and that was full to overflowing as the first train from St. Paul had Just reached the place and they were Stalled with

the whole crew of the high Officials of the Road making their first trip.

After making some inquiries we learned that one by the name of Distad was running a Lumber yard there and finding him he was kind enough to let us in to his Lumber office where we got in our Bedding and with a good fire we had comfortable quarters and had to stay over the next day and night as it kept on Storming The snow was getting so deep that we had to unload our Spring tools, and after staying two nights the storm had eased up some but to be safe we had to go by way of Sioux Falls, so we did not get through until the second day.

Ole Nesheim and Family had also moved over there and was Staying with the Bothun family in a little sod House they had built in the fall and our stay with them made it pretty close quarters.

In our Short Stay we got together a little willows and got some Hay for covering and called it our claim Shanty but the weather got to cold to allow us to sleep in it but we showed at least our good intent to live up to the Homestead law, and then started to prepare for getting Home.

On Our Second trip Home.

To haul the wagon through that deep snow was a slow process and hard on Horses. On the second evening we got to what was called halfway House between Worthington and Jackson and one of our Horses got sick and died that night. That placed us in a rather hard position not having money enough between us to buy a Horse we were really up against it. The man we stopped with told us that about two miles from there was two Brothers that had a pair of ponies and we might get one of them to help us along down to a Settlement near Blueearth where we had come of our acquaintances from Houston Co where we might be able to get ourselves fixed out. Brother Andrew went over and they figured to take the ponies back east for the winter and was willing to help us along and after getting to Blue Earth we sold the wagon got a sort of a cutter for the one Horse, Father and Andrew took the train, and the writer and C. O. Henjum had a cutter ride from there and came Home something like the middle of December. That made a pretty costly trip with many hardships and experiences of frontier life and home felt good to us. And the home people were glad to have us with them again safe and sound.

Father sold the Farm in Fillmore Co.

During the winter Father found a buyer for the Farm at a price of 2400.00 and preparations for the move again in the spring had to commence during the winter getting Boughs and covers for 3 wagons and to make more room extensions on top of wagon box was made and feed Boxes on rear end of Box with many minor improvements so our time was pretty well taken up. And so far as the writer was concerned it was agreed between him and his best Girl that we should get married before we would start on our western Journey and make that our honey moon trip. So in order to bring that about some preparations in that line had to be made.

Now while we had no place for any large wedding crowd we had to have our relatives and near neighbor friends, and a wedding among our people then days without a good supply of home made Beer would not do And it all helped to add to in keeping us very busy during the winter And in the early part of the spring.

Besides we had many goodby Visits that we felt like making among our relatives and friends both far and near before leaving so that we were kept pretty busy getting ready for our move to Dakota in the spring of 1873.

Our Wedding day Apr 2d 1873

Now in order to have our wedding before we started to tear up things in the house we had to have it early in the Spring and so not to stand a chance to get April fooled we put it off to the 2d day of April.

The day was mild and the roads were very slushy. It was agreed that our Pastor Rev C Magelson was to meet us at the Church where the knot was to be tied. The distance to our church was about 4 miles and Joseph Power who had a Light wagon was engaged as our driver. And our neighbor Knut Christopherson, Father of Professor and Congressman Christopherson was the Captain of the Caravan. He was on Horseback and saw to it that everything came along in proper order.

It was no small ordeal to go through them days as the Pastor would give a very lengthy sermon and the Shoemaker that was to make my fine wedding Boots never got them ready until the evening before so I did not have a chance to break them in and as the heels were higher than usual I had all I could do to keep my balance.⁹

In the evening after we had got home a large number of the neighboring boys gathered to give us a reminder of the day and to quiet them down a Pail of home made Beer was sent out and some of them dipped in to deep so they had to take a rest on the road going home.

Hannah Maria Brandvold Now Mrs E J Berdahl

Now when I have given you a Sketch of my Journey through life up to this most eventful stage of getting a partner for life it would be proper and just now to also give a sketch of my life's partner from her youth. Not having personal knowledge of her Norway home it will be as related by herself and friends.

Hannah Maria Brandvold was born at Brandvold Lille Elvedalen in Osterdalen Norway on July 5, 1848. Her parents' name was Halvor and Kari. Her Father died before she was born, and her Mother and son Knut was left to mourn the loss of their protector and father, and with the expectancy of an increase which came about as above on July 5, 1840.

In about the year 1851 the Mother remarried to Lars Brandvold so she got a step Father when she was about 3 years old. And a Boy was Born in the Family on Feb 29th 1852 whose name was Albert who later in life became our Brother-in-law by the Marriage of Sister Christi¹⁰ in the year 1874, there was another Boy born to them who died shortly after birth.

When Hannah was 8 years old the Mother was taken away by death and the home was broken up, and the Step Father with his son Albert after the House and contents was sold left for America and Hannah was taken to Bardalen Northland to live with an Aunt who lived in that country of the Midnight Sun,

It can be more easily predicted than written what a sad condition a child of 9 years must have got into without the soothing presence of neither Father or Mother. And while she was taken to Bardalen relations they were entire strangers to her at the time.

But the home that she was taken to was a good Christian home where she was reared and nurtured in the Word of God. They had a large family so her help was not needed and as soon as

⁹ JOB: The shoemaker was Olaus Jenson – mentioned again [elsewhere herein] as member of the party moving to Dakota.

¹⁰ JOB: Later Mrs. Ellef E. Ellefsen

she was old enough to herd cattle they found such places for her so she could make her own living and as years rolled by to make a little more then Board and Clothing.

Her Brother Knut found a home with their Uncle who lived near their birth place. He was known as a Very naturally gifted boy and Should have had a chance at School but the means was lacking. It was said of him that after hearing a sermon he would after he came home climb a stump and relate a good part of the Sermon, but in place of the chance of going to school he started to learn the Shoemaker trade and became an expert at that work and was bussily engaged going from house to house making Shoes until he left for this country in 1867.

Now while the Brother and Sister was hundreds of miles apart they knew of each others whereabouts through correspondence And she could not help but have a longing to get back to her birthplace and especially to se her Brother and at the age of 18 years she decided to make a Visit back home. And after getting their she liked the surroundings so well that she did not go back to Northland, but staid there until She concluded to come to America in the Spring of 1871.

On account of her Brother Knut approaching the age of being called on for Military duty back home he Very hastily got ready to Sail to this country and the Sister had not got the fever strong enough to go yet. this was in 1867 so they were seperated again until 4 years later when she finally concluded to make the Voyage in hopes of getting together again in this country.

So she came as before stated to her Step Father in Fillmore County the same as her Brother had done 4 years before, but when she came he had left for Goodhue County where they had an Uncle and Aunt and with the later was on his way to Otter Tail County and filed on a Homestead, and they never met until in 1879 6 years after we had settled in Dakota when we placed a cover on a light wagon with a spry young pair of Horses hitched to it, and struck across the unsettled country for Otter Tail Co where she had her first Visit with her Brother in this country.

Starting on the Move for Dakota.

It was on May 18th 1873 that a Start was made on the trip westward and the Company consisted of 8 wagons. We had 2 pair of Horses and one yoke of Oxen The Power Family had 2 pair of Horses and Albert Brandvold one pair Uncle Loftesness one pair of Oxen Olaus Jenson and John Power had each one pair of Oxen and when we got up towards Austin we were Joined by Herman Wangsness and Tor Hermanson with one rig each drawn by Oxen so in the 10 rigs we had 4 pair of Horses and Six pair of Oxen with a drove of about 85 cattle 8 colts and 30 sheep and Boxes of chickens tied to the wagon boxes, and every rig was heavily loaded and our progress was Very Slow on account of the unusual soft roads that spring and no grades or bridges to assist us over the streams in that low and Marshy country.

So when we got to Ogden a Station west of Austin we had to unload something like 2 tons from our wagons and Ship it on the train to Winnebago City which was the station farthest west at that time and when we got that far west we had to unload 3 wagons on to the others and the writer Jo Power and Albert Brandvold went to Winnebago City for the Stuf while the others kept moveing along.

On the Move for Dakota.

When we got back to Fairmount with the loads from the train one of Alberts Horses got so disabled that his load had to be taken by us two, and he got some fills attachment to his wagon so he could pull it with one Horse as the other one had all it could do to follow without being in the

Harness, so we did not catch up with our croud again until after they had left Jackson as we had gone through quite an experience and delay on that Journey.

It was a bad Spring to move in on account of heavy down pores of Rains the Streams was over its banks and crossing the Minnesota River we had to take cattle and all across on a Ferry boat. One Heifer Jumped over board and to prevent her from turning back the writer and Jo Power also made a dash to head her the same way the Ferry was going but the current was Very Swift and it became quite a task to swim across because we Jumped with our Boots on and our foot got rather heavy to handle but we succeeded in landing with the heifer after quite a struggle.

There were days when we would not be able to make more than 6 or 8 miles on account of getting mired and stuck. at such places the Horses were no good. But the faithful Oxen would have to be hitched on and doubled up with as meny pairs as the occasion would need to get each load across those marshy places and they were meny and not far between.

When we got to what was called the Little Sioux the water was over the banks covering the whole Valley and no hope of crossing with our loads as the water was to deep. so a Boat was procured near by and all our stuff had to be unloaded and placed in the Boat and with about 3 of us youngsters on each side of the boat holding it from tipping as we had it heavily loaded in order not to have to make to meny trips. Most of the way we could reach bottum but the center would be over our heads where our knowledge of Swimming came in Very handy. After tying down our wagon boxes they were Freightd across as were also the cattle who all got a thorough wash.

That crossing took us from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M. but luckily the weather was fine and we all got nicely dried out again before night and felt no bad effects from it.

We carried a big tent which was soon placed in posission at meal times and on Sundays we would always camp over and in that way would spend meny enjoyable moments together recounting some of our experiences that we had gone through.

Landed finally in the Slipup Valley.

It was on the 18th. day of June after 4 weeks of meny struggles that we got the sight of the Slipup Valley conning from Luverne crossing the Splitrock creek below the Palisades Picked our tent about where Brother Oles buildings are erected where we had a good View over the Valley but it looked pretty shabby being nice and green ,or: the sides but the Bottum stood rank with tall gry weeds from the year before and we got repremanded by some of our Company for picking the roughest place on the whole trip, but we new that the weeds could be done away with and fine blewgrass would take its place which was prooven later. Father had gone west ahead of us and had a Dugout Built by the time we got there, and I can well remember how sad and downhearted old Mrs. Power got when she reallized that we had a place to crawl into and they had nothing but the covered wagon and did not know where they would find a place yet to start their home.

The land along the Valley was mostly taken so the next draw where there was show for water and meadow was along Mud creek. And John Power started furthest South then Mrs. Power on the now Pedro Hatlestad place Jo and Sam Power Joining her on the east then John Loftesness Joining on the North then Thor Hermanson (Now Carl Hermanson place) and Joining him was Herman Wangsness (Now Thomas Wangsness place). Now that took up that Valley so Olaus Jenson Albert Brandvold and Brother Anfin went still a little North East to the next low place

which is now owned by Jerry Plahn Mrs. Larson and Mr. Walti.

One Wm. Tobin got in our company and he took his land now owned by Melvin Hatlestad and he left for Lake Co. when the Power Family went some 45 years ago.

Now those in our company had all found their locations even our Deaf and Dumb Auntie Sonneva got her quarter which later became Brother Oles Home.

One of the first work now to be done was to get a yard fenced to keep our cattle from straying of at night. Father had got a hold of some Oak posts over from Vermillion and after they were set I undertook to chop of a knot on one of them it was very dry and hard and I landed it a good sollid blow and behold the ax slipped out of my hands and gave me a bad cut on my foot Just above the ankle Scraping the bone and made a Very painful sore so they had to get Dr. Roberts (who had then settled at the Hans Rode place now) to come over and dress it to stop it from bleeding.

My Mrs. Carrying Sod for the first House.

That kept me away from work for some time and the only way it was possible to move around at first was using a truth hopping around on one foot.

We had got some sods broken intended for our Sod House, while we were still staying at Fathers place, and being anxious to have it built as we were very crowded with them being that we also had Ingeborg Brandvold with us And we was to build a Sod House on the line so that she could live on her land and us two on ours in the same House So my new Lifes partner would get a rig to get to the building place and she would carry the sod to me while I would be on my knees laying them so we both had a share in the building of our first Dakota Sod House and after the first rush was over the Company would join together and finish up the buildings from one place to the other.

Lasse Bothun had done the Spring work on what he had Broken the year before and sown it into wheat and a nice little crop was realized as the Grasshoppers did not come thick enough to do much damage. And one by the name of Foster from west of Sioux Falls had a Small threshing rig and had ben working North of Sioux Falls came over and Threshed our setting of which was 4 owners. This was the first machine to make its appearance in the Slipup Valley.

Used Coffee Mills to grind our Flour.

A good Share of the Hay cutting the first summer had to be done by the cythe but if my memory serves me right Father got a combined Buckey¹¹ Reaper and Mower that was also used that year.

Before real cold weather set in we had all of us got our Homes fixt up for both men and beasts, had got some wood from the Sioux River and had a stack of slew Hay close by to twist hay from in case of emergency to keep us from freezing.

We had also some of our wheat ground into Flour, but as our storeing places was Very limited and having now a small Flouring mill built in Sioux Falls we did not consider it necessary to have any large amount on hand.

But the unforeseen happened that during the early part of winter the mill frose up solid and never moved a wheel until the spring thaw loosened it. And we would borrow flour from one another as long as their was any among the little Settlement in the hopes that the mill would start again.

¹¹ JOB: Bukey – If memory serves me correctly, the name should be “Buckeye.” Probably intended by the author.

When it commenced to look most critical our genial Storekeeper in Sioux Falls C. K. Howard hit upon the plan of sending for some large Coffee Mills and says you have the wheat, take these mills and do your own grinding and keep from starving. So said so done we would turn it through the mill twice then sift it and it made fine bread of course a little course in quality.

Our first Baby Christine born.

The anticipation of my wife to become a Mother in the winter in this wilderness caused all but a pleasant feeling but the same blessed providence that with his guiding hand had brought us here also gave us his protecting care during those dark hours of struggle, and all went well and a well matured and healthy baby Girl was born to us on the 13th of Dec 1873, being the second Child Born in the Slipup Valley (Bessy daughter of Mr. & Mrs Lasse Bothun was the first).

On the 17th of Dec. Rev. O O Sando had service in the Valley and came to our sod Hut and Christine was babtised on that day being then 4 days old.

It might be worthy of note that on the 18th. day of December 1873 the young people of the little settlement came together and organized a Debating Society useing Brother Andrews Sod House as the Meeting place as that was vacant during the winter We got it seated with some planks and blocks had a stove there and a couple of lamps and had some pretty hot debates there during the first winter. We started with a membership of 15 they were E. J Berdahl Joseph Power Allen Hamre Sam Power Albert Brandvold Anfin Berdahl J. E Johnson C. H. Wangsness Ole Nesheim Lasse Bothun Lars Griner Ole Berdahl Ole K Hamre John Power and C O Henjum (Later was Added) Axle Soderberg John Sundback Hester and J G Rathburn Ellef Ellefson John Hamre Andrew Grinde and Andrew J Berdahl.

First School Teacher in Edison Twp Winter of 1873 & 74

We had also quite a few children in our Settlement that were of School age So after having Brothers House seated some one got the idea started that we ought to try and have a couple months school during the winter as some of the single young men not having any work to do would also like to go and would chip in a little toward getting a school started.

We had no teachers among the crowd and It was suggested that I should make the attempt and it was two months of the most interesting time I have spent in my life as we had quite a number of full grown pupils such as the Hamre Boys Albert Brandvold Carl Hegge C O Henjum with others whom I am not able to recall now as my school register has not been preserved. I believe my number of Schollars were 18 for I know I remember it kept me pretty busy Evenings to study up for the next day so that I would not get stuck with some of the problems I was trying to teach others. My wages amounted to about 2.00 per week so it was not the salary that was the drawing card but we all felt better to get together in the same way that we done in the old Stringtown School House down in Fillmore County. Brother Andrew was the next Teacher for several years.

My first experience as a Thresher in Dakota

A young man by the name of Cosness one of our acquaintances from Fillmore Co had moved up to Brookings Co in 1874 and had settled at Lake Cambell near the Trygstad Family who had resided there for about 3 years. And they were Very much in need of a Threshing outfit but did not know of any one who had any knowledge of operating one.

Now this young man had my address and knew that I had run a machine and in the early summer

I got a letter from the Trygstads asking if I would hire out to run their machine if they got one, that they would pay me 1.50 pr day for my Service and they had the Horses themselves that they would have to go to Sioux Falls to get the machine and that they intended to start in Minnehaha Co as soon as grain was in shape to thresh.

I Jumped at that offer and told them that when they would let me know when and where they were ready to start I would be there.

So I got notice that on Aug 18th 1874 they would be ready to Start at Andrew Hogstads a little north west of now O S Thompsons place and I was there at the appointed time and met my Bosses for the first time and got to work and continued North on both sides of the river and what was in Slipup Vicinity and cleaned up all in this Co North and all that was raised that year in Moody Co and all that was raised in Brookings Co with the exception of the last setting about 5 miles South from where Brookings is located now on account of a fierce snow storm the 10th day of Dec that completely covered us up during that time I had to my credit 90 days of actual work with the machine and when I got home it was nearing unto Christmas.

I followed that work with the Trygstads for 3 years in succession, going up and down the Sioux Valley but the Grasshoppers those years raided this country so what we got out of it was Very small.

In the fall of 1875 we took the contract of Threshing for the Indians at Flandreau and was to get 8.00 pr setting large or small grain or no Grain and that made us a little money as they were only little bits of stack, but we found another difficulty to overcome as it was getting late and everything froze and when they had ben on their hunting trips the stacks had ben torn out by their young Stock and before we got there they had gathered it all together again Dung and all, and the Feeder especially was running chances of his life by the froson balls whizing back from the cyllander. We had made arrangement to get our board with one Joe Eno so at times we had meny miles to go to get our meals and Lodging. All the hands were Indians and it was amusing to notice the Old squas getting up on the Truck wagon to watch the straw going through the cyllander and comming out over the Strawcarrier

As a Thresher (continued)

After working with the Trygstad Bros for 3 seasons running their Case Eclipse Ole J. Nesheim and myself Joined partnership and bought an Apron Case outfit and had more then we could do in Sverdrup and Edison Twps So in the fall of 1878 I purchased one of the first 50 Case Agitators that was sent out that year. And Brother Andrew took my place with Nesheim and I started my run over along the Sioux Valley which I continually held for 10 years until I sold the Horse Power Rigg and Joined in with Brother Ole in a Steam Rigg with which we continued up in the 90s when we finally cut it down to our own Jobs until I turned the land over to the Boys and the machine went with it.

I have 29 Seasons of Actual Threshing to my credit and the first once in Dakota was both long and connected with meny hardships as the country then had no laid out Roads or any Bridges built and as we had our work along the Sioux River principally and had to cross it several times it was no Easy tasks to undertake especially when it got covered with ice which had to be first got out of the way before we could get over.

The First Wedding in Edison Twp.

In the early Spring of 1874 the first Wedding took place in the New Settlement. 1st in Edison Twp. The contracting parties was Albert Brandvold a half Brother of my wife and the Bride was Sister Christie they were united in Marriage by Rev H Z Hvid on one of his first trips to the settlement after the organization of Norway congregation in the Spring of 1874.

This union was destined to be off very Short duration, as the husband died on Jan. 16th 1873 after a very Short illness. and what made it still more Sad was that a baby born to them a few hours before his death followed him to the eternal rest a few days later.

On July 3d, 1876 She was again united in Marriage to Ellef E. Ellef son who had taken a homestead in ,the eastern part of Edison Twp. three years before where they made their home for about 41 years and then mooved to Garretson where the husband died Apr. 30th 1921 and. she died Feb 24 1924.

In those early days it was no easy matter to get the service of a Pastor when he was needed and having ben elected to the office of Justice of the peace I had the honor to perform the last Marriage of Sister Christie that being my Second couple. later I Married Brother Anfin and two or three American couples during the pioneer days of our country.

My first Official posissions.

In the County election of 1874 I was elected Road Overseer of our District No 2 Comprising Sverdrup Edison and Palisade Twp I succeeded John Anderson, who was the first chosen.

There was not much to do as we had no means to work with so our main work was to clean out the large boulders in the crossings of Big Sioux and Splitrock Rivers, and plow furrows along Sections lines as .a guide for travlers.

Brother Andrew was elected Sheriff and assessor that year (The two offices were together at that time) and I was also engaged for a while in assessing up along the Skunk Valley where a few settlers had started in. It was improvements and personal property only them days, that was liable for assessment. And very small portions of that could be found because of the ravages of the Grasshoppers those first three years. Very little improvements or headway of any kind could be made.

The buildings was either Sod Houses or Dugouts which could not be assessed and the Furniture inside was mostly all homemade articles so that about all to pay assessment on was the few acres of breaking and what little stock each one had.

Our First Baby Boy Born.

On the 31st. day of Jan 1876 our family was increased with a baby Boy which was named Albert Oliver. he was Strong and healthy child, but at the age of 3 yrs 16 days he was stricken down with that dreaded Croup decease and passed away Feb 16, 1879 that brought our first great grief and sorrow in having to say our last goodbye here on earth to a beloved Son.

The life was snuffed out so suddenly that we could hardly realize that the Boy was dead. O how we mourned that loss.

Starting the Pennington Post Office¹²

The question of getting any Mail in our new home became the next important question, for at that time our nearest P. O. was Republican P. O. at John Nelsons over by the Sioux River 7 miles to the Southwest from us and it made it quite a trip every week to walk over there to get the mail. So Brother Andrew took the lead in starting a petition to the P. O. Department at Washington for the creation of a P. O. at his place in the year of 1876 with a mail route from Sioux Falls bringing mail once a week.

It was named Pennington in honor of our Governor at that time and in the hopes that he would use his influence on the Department to bring it about.

In the fall of 1877 Brother Andrew had gone in partnership with J. O. Langness in a General Store business at Baltic, and had resigned as Post Master¹³ and the office was moved to my place and on Nov 23, 1877 I was appointed Post Master and Mrs Berdahl Assistant Post Master and mail was received twice a week.

The mail route for awhile extended to Flandreau. And a Post Office was established at G. O. Brenda under the name of Sverdrup one at Highland at the Simonson store and one at Blinsmon in Moody County. But when the store at Highland was discontinued the route was cut in two again running from here to Sioux Falls and from Blinsmon to Flandreau.

Andrew Henjum (who staid with us for a number of years as our hired man) was designated as mail carrier but the work of carrying the mail was changed about and in the busy summer and fall months when I was of Threshing it was mostly left to Mrs. Berdahl to make those trips which she became an expert at and as a rule could bring the mail on more exact time than the rest of us. At times after our Daughter Christina got old enough She would be the carrier. We kept the P. O. until 1897 when our beloved daughter Christine died which gave us such a shock of grief and sorrow that we had to take a stroll away from home and resigned from the Postoffice.

It was then moved to Ivor Berg who had it until the Rural Mail Routes was established.

The First Rail Road to Sioux Falls.

As before mentioned our nearest Rail Road Station when we first settled here was Worthington Minn. 60 miles to the east of us, and what little we had to sell had to be taken there. And while the motive power was mostly Oxen it took something like 3 days and two nights to make the trip.

But after a few years a Road was built to Luverne Minn 22 miles to the east which made a wonderful improvement on the distance, but it took in such a large territory that it was times you would have to stay from 6 to 12 hours at the Warehouse before you would get a chance to unload. The facilities of handling grain then was a slow process to what it is now. All was handled in Sacks and wheeled into the bins.

Now great agitation was started in this County to get that Road extended to Sioux Falls as it was rightly claimed that we were aiding in building up a city outside our own state. And a bond issue was proposed but that was voted down so Sioux Falls voted a bond of 20 000 and promised right of way from the State line and that was accepted by the Co. and on Aug 1st 1878 the first

¹² JOB: Pennington P.O. was established in 1874. The certificate of appointment of Andrew J. Berdahl bears date July 18, 1874.

¹³ JOB: Should be Beaver Creek, Minn., where he clerked in a store for about two years. He did not enter into partnership with Langness at Baltic until in 1887.

Passenger Train came to the city. Most of the Farmers in the County donated 10.00 towards helping the city to pay of some of the expanses they had incurred.

Our 2d Girl Kari Olina Born Dec 10th 1877 and our first Log house built

On Dec. 10th 1877 Kari Olina our 2nd Girl was born and matured to be a strong and healthy child, but at the age of nearly 6 years old She was taken with that dreadful Diptheria Croup decease and deed Dec 6th 1883 As the last resort in trying to save her life two doctors we had attending her adviced us that one out of every 4 had ben saved by incerting a tube in the throat to breathe through while the throat could be cleaned of the thick slime that kept chocking her which we consented to and after the tube was incerted she become much released for about 24 hours but there was so much of that thick slime below the tube that it finally closed it.up and breathing had to cease. And we were left to mourn another dear loss.

The Grasshoppers left us in wonderful swarms in the summer of 1877 before doing any serious damage to the crops and the prospects began to brighten up a little and we commenced to look forward for a little better Dwelling place then the Sod House and I managed to get a hold of some Cottonwood logs over by the river which had been Sawed by hand which made us a log house 16 X 18 X 12 and that is part of the Dwelling we are Still living in only the logs being covered up on both sides so they are not visible.

Our 3d Girl Anna Torina Born Our first experience in our Log House.

On Feb 16th 1880 the 3d Girl came to us Only to Stay with us for a short duration. She was named Anna Torina after my two aunts. She had ben getting along Very nicely for her age up to 3 years old About that time she caught the Measles and Other complycations set in and on March 4th 1683 that arch enemy Death again made his appearance and left us to again mourn the loss of one of our dear ones. but in the midst, of our grief we new that our dear ones that were taken away by death at that age were safely landed in the heavens above with their Lord and Savior .

Our first experience with our new log House

Being very anxious to get out of the leaky roof of our Sod House we mooved into the new one really before it was finished the windows was only temporarily in place fastened with a few nails and a strong wind and rain storm came over us one night and we woke up by both north windows blew way in on the floor and the whole building was rocking like a cradle. We got the windows back into place and hung to them with all our might to keep them in place in our night clothes all wringing wet. In a sudden lull one of the windows went out and in my anxiety I started to get it but the wind was so strong that it slid both me and the window around on the clay soil around the house so I had to crawl on my hands and knees to get back, and became a pretty dirty speciment. but the storm went over and all was well but while it lasted we really wished we had ben back to the old sod house again even if the Roof had let in a little water. this was in the summer of 1877.

Election of Township Organization

This election on the organization of our County into civil Townships was held on the 28th day of June, 1880 and carried by 582 Votes to 88 against.

So Shortly after a Township meeting was hold to agree upon a Name and election of Officers.

Brother Andrew Who then lived over the line was made first Twp clerk and I got my place as Justice and the name Sverdrup was adopted being in honor of Johan Sverdrup being at that time one of the leading members in the Norway Storting.

Brother Andrew held the possision for 4 years when he moved over into Edison again and resigned as clerk.

Shortly after I was elected a member of the board and also holding the office of Justice for about 23 years before I was laid aside.

It required a great deal of work and patience on the part of the Town Board during the first period as they had the supervision of laying out all of the public roads which in meny cases brought hard feelings to one side or the other. And especially did we find meny difficulties when roads had to be moved again onto the new established section lines. But we were fortunate to get it all done peaceably and out of the hands of courts.

Our 4th Girl Alma Constance Born.

On Dec 19th 1881 the Stork again Visited our Home giving us another well developed baby Girl, but the Lord in his wisdom selected to take her also in the early stage of her life to his Heavenly home. her system commenced to weaken at the age of ten years and with all our efforts posible she kept getting weaker so the Doctor adviced us to keep her out of school so she could have a complete rest, being so over anxious to go to school I have still a letter She wrote me while a House member at Pierre in 1893 if I would not allow her to start at school again when I got home the first part of March the Doctor thought we had a hopeless case and in spite of all we could do for her she bade us goodbye and breathed her last on the 25th day of March 1893 being then in her 13th year.

She had become Very much endeared to us in the length of time she had ben with us so her loss was a severe blow to us parents and also her chum sister Christina and the only glimps of light was our assurance that she was Saved and would forever be with the Brother and Sisters gone before her in the heavenly bliss above.

The Memmorable Snow fall in Oct 1880

The wonderful Storm that struck this country starting Oct 2th 1880 with a heavy drizzling rain and wound up in one of the heaviest Snow storms this country has ever witnessed.

Their being a large amount of Threshing left but it had to be abandoned for more than a weeks time as most of the settings were completely covered up and in Groves and some Revines the snow remained until late the next spring.

The roads and even the high prairie became so soft that it was about impossible to get through with a heavy load.

In the latter part of November it started in snowing again so that we had several feet of Snow to wade in all winter and our only way to get to Sioux Falls was to dig a Road west to the Rail Road grading which was made that summer and follow that to the city and that was lined from morning to night with Teams from both sides of the grade for miles around.

It did not start to go of until the later part of April and it became a fearful flood took Bridges and buildings in lower places and caused a lot of damage. The only way to cross the Sioux Bottum was by boat as the whole bottum had the appearance of a gigantic river.

Our 2d Boy Born

On the 6th day of November 1683 was Election day. but in place of going to Vote I was called on to get some assistance in the arrival of another Newcommer. And that day John Edward was born and continue to be with us up to this writing although not where I had hoped he should have made his home adjoining us. he is however in our vicinity so we can meet now and then.

When he was about Six months old his Mother became Very Sick with what was called information of the bowels, and he could not take nourishment from the Mother so he had a hard time the first year of his existence. And our oldest girl Christina camel down with inflamitory Rheumatism so she had to be lifted around in a blanket. So in the year of 1884 we had to maintain a Hospital the best part of the summer.

But the neighbors were kind to us and gave us assistance when ever needed being; somewhat behind with my Harvest I came out one morning and heard the buzzing of Harvesters in my grainfield and found that Neighbors had Joined to help me out.

What a blessing it is in any community to have kind and helpful neighbors. Both Mother and Christina after a long siege finally got over their sickness and we were all happy and thankful.

John Edward was married to Nancy Ovedia Dahl June 11th 1912.

The future began to look brighter.

In 1877 we purchased the Brandvold Quarter at the sum of 550.00 Now while that was a Small sum compaired with the present prices it made it quite a problem the first years to be able to make any payments on the principal as we had to buy a certain amount of machinery to use on the farm.

So one Pat McKittrick came in from Iowa and desired Very much to become neighbors to Thomas McBride (as their wives were related) and feeling that I was land poor at that time I sold him my three west Forties (the south Forty I had filed on as Timberclaim) and got 350.00 in cash for that holding so that made a nice payment on the Brandvold quarter. He also purchased two Forties on the South side of my land from L. Bothun giving him a farm of five Forties. And I had now six Forties left nicely squared up.

And from now on it began to brighten. I soon got out of debt and commenced to make the necessary improvements on the farm with fences and out buildings. Our crops averaged fairly good and the Rail Road was built between Sioux Falls and Dell Rapids so we had a market place at Baltic and in 1885 we started a CoOperative Warehouse Co in Baltic which has the distinction of being the first Organization of its kind in the west.

Our 5th Baby Girl Carrie Hellena Born Apr 26, 1887.

On the above date we wellcomed the arrival of our fifth Baby Girl. While she did not appear as robust as some of the others that was taken away from us later by death, it has ben our good fortune in have her in our midst up to the present writing.

She was affected with some serious Lung trouble during her younger days so the Doctor at one time did not give us much hope of her recovery, but he prescribed for her as the only possible remedy to use wine and Codliver Oil and after taking a large quantity of that prescription she gradually gained both in health and weight until she got entirely over it.

After graduating from the common school she went to Augustana College at Canton where she finished her Education and after Teaching a few terms of common school she got married to John J. Brown and became a Farmers wife and has at this writing 5 children living and one at the Grave yard.

Now as She is our only Daughter living we hope and pray that she may be spared to assist us in our reclining years and be with us when our Lord and Savior calls us to his Heavenly Home.

Was Elected a Member of the Legislature in 1892.

In the early nineties Politicks became very lively in our State The populist party had ben organized which a large Majority of the Farmers had joined whose object was to break the domineering rule of the Republican party which had banded themselves together with Rail Roads and money powers of our Country and was able in that way to have full controll of the Legislative work in our State against the best interest of the producers.

I Joined the party at an early date and done what little I could for its advancement, but with Sioux Falls a Republican stronghold it was a hard siege in our county to get a majority for our Populist ticket.

The Campaign in the fall of 1892 we had three full tickets in the field the Republican Populist and Democrat parties Our party by that time had ben growing rapidly and to make it more effective we got the Fremad¹⁴ started in full fledged order for our Populist principle which were in short Land, Transportation and Finance.

But while the outcome was very close the writer was the only one that came out victorious with a majority of 73 votes in my favor . A lone Populist among 6 Republicans in our county to go to Pierre but when we got their 14 more on our side had ben elected as House members. The resubmission of the Liquor question was the paramount issue and I took my stand alone from my county against it. And with my vote it was lost. And that stopped my continuing as a Legislator from Minnehaha County.

Anna Mathilda Our 6th and last Girl born

On Jan 21st 1892 Anna Mathilda our sixth and last Girl was born a healthy and well matured child. But Providence had destined her also only with a short stay at the Parental home, for on Feb. 5th 1896 at the age of 4 years and 14 days She was called away by Death to her Heavenly Home to Join the Brother and Sisters gone before.

The Cause of her death was Lung. Feaver.

Henry Alfred Our 3d and last Boy Born

On March 1st 1894 Henry Alfred Made his appearance and was upwards of 2 years old when Anna Mathilda was taken away from us and we were then left with 4 children having laid aside 5 at the Grave yard. And as Christina got Married to Erick Langness on June 6th 1895 we had only 3 left at home. And our only consolation in our bereivement was the blessed assurance according to Gods Own promise that they were Safe with the Savior in his Heavenly Home where with His Grace and blessing we shall meet them again.

But we had one of the most severe and saddest grievances in store for us the next year in being

¹⁴ JOB: "Fremad", meaning "forward", was a Norwegian-language weekly newspaper published in Sioux Falls.

called to the sick bedside of our Daughter Christina who had suddenly ben taken sick with a very Strong fever which the Doctors were not able to determine from what cause.

Death of Our Oldest Daughter Christina.

But after consultation of 4 Doctors they came to the conclusion that as she was in the Family way that it came from the ofspring decaying and poisoning the System and that an operation would be necessary to give her any relief.

So that was done but to no releif She lingered along for a few days but the fever kept up to 105 and the end came Sept 4th 1897 after having ben Married some over 2 years.

This Sad and untimely departure of our beloved Daughter was a severe blow not only to us but to the bereived Husband his parents and sisters with whom they had lived together with since their Marraige and had got Very much attached to one another.

She was taken over to the Norway Cemetery and burried besides her Brother and Sisters who had ben laid to rest before her. A Very large Funeral posession followed her to her last resting place as a mark of the love and respect that she enjoyed by all that knew her. Blessed be her Memory.

As soon as we were able to get over the first shock Myself and Mrs. with Henry started of for a Visit and recreation up to Dalton Minn to Visit with her Brother K H Brandvold and other relatives and friends in Northern Minn N Dak and got back Home Just before winter set in to take up our duties on the Farm again.

Rented the Farm in 1899.

In the year 1899 we rented the farm to Geo Oldervig who was married to sister Christies daughter for a term of 3 years. As Johney was still at school and I was taken up with many other duties outside of the farm doing some auctionoering, besides Insurance and administration work.

In January 1901 the Very genial and close friend of Mine Mr Ole J Aasen with whom I had ben together with as members of the Township Board for meny years and was at this time Treas of our Ins Co came over to Visit us and having some buisness transactions to do over at Garretson wanted me to go with him and I took my team and Buggy to go their, And everything went well while there we met several friends and as the usual custom them days of saloons when meeting friends we Should invite them in to have some refreshment while we were Visiting with them. We finished up our business and Just as we were ready to go home Mr Aasen dropped on the Side walk, and believing that he had got dizzy from the few drinks taken so not to raise any suspision we hastily picked him up got him in the buggy and started for home as this was in Jan and quite chilly he had his fur cap and high coat collar well tucked over his face and in asking him how he was getting along he gave no answer.

My Sad Experienc in Ole Aasens Death¹⁵

But thinking he had fell asleep I simply drove on until I got East of Nesheims where I had to drive in on Berges field where it was a little rough and to my surprise he Slid out taking the robe with him. Mr. Berge seeing us immediately came to my assistance. And to our great sorrow Mr Aasen was a corpse cold in death not because he slid out there but when he fell on the sidewalk at Garretson caused by a stroke so stated by doctors after a Post Morton examination.

¹⁵ DH: This title seems misplaced, probably intended to be placed one paragraph earlier.

But what an awful position to get into Now had it not been for that Saloon curse of believing that he was dizzy from liquor we would naturally have given him a closer examination and at least saved me from some embarrassment.

We got the Doctor and sent word to his people and his son John came over and during the night we took the corpse home where he was prepared for the funeral.

Now while there was no guilt laid to me during the coroners inquest in any way I could not help but feel guilty of not giving him a closer examination when we picked him up and placed him in the Buggy and it weighed heavy on me for a long time and the Saloons became a hatred to me from that day to this.

Elected Treas of Our Ins Co to fill Mr Aasens Place.

Soon after Mr. Aasens funeral was held The Board of Directors of our Ins Co was called together (of which I was a member) for the purpose of appointing a Treas to take charge of the Office and continue where he so suddenly had to lay it by for good. And the appointment fell in my lot, which I accepted willingly in the hopes that I in that capacity might be able to give the bereaved Family some aid in getting the finances cleared up, which was all found to be in Very good order, altho a large number of Small notes was held by the Co at that time.

I was given full charge of the office on March 11th 1901 and the balance on hand that was turned over at that time was 6,366.69 of which 2050.57 was cash in Bank and 4,310.12 in notes. And at this writing 26 years later I am still holding that same office and still struggling to make collections on notes that has been loaned out from year to year. It has caused me many a grievance and some individual losses during these years but so far no loss to the Co on Farmers notes. And I have had as high as 17000.00 out on interest at one time. I believe that is a record hard to compare with by any of our Institutions doing a loaning business for 26 years.

Bought 40 acres from Mary Finnegan.

On the 9th of April 1902 I added to My land holding of 320 acres the much desired SE $\frac{1}{4}$ - of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec 24 So as to get my land Joined together with Fathers Homestead, Now Brother Hermans Home for which I paid 1500.00 which made me a holding of 360 acres. Now 80 acres of this did not Join my Home place so a few years later I made a trade with Mrs. Mary Finnegan by paying 200.00 to boot for her 80 acres that Joined my other land, figuring that it would make 2 nice Farms for my two boys when they became old enough to decide if they wanted to make Farming their life work.

After having rented the Farm to Oldervig and Andrew Henjum for a few years My son John desired to start working it in the Spring of 1908 and worked it on one half interest Shares which continued for 2 years And in the Spring of 1910 he desired very much to pay me cash rent and buy the Stock and Machinery also 6 horses (had given him one team) so he had 8 in number Agreed to pay 900.00 Rent for the 360 acres and gave a chattel mortgage for 2500.00 to secure the payment of the Stock and machinery including 1/3 interest in Threshing rig and note for 700.00 Due This rent agreement was continued up to 1915 when we Deeded over to him 180 acres dividing the Home place between John and Henry.

Bought the Herman Hermansons Farm

Shortly after the marriage of our Daughter Carrie on Sept 7th 1911 I purchased the above named Farm for 9000.00 As we felt that only having 3 of our 9 Children living we desired Very much to have them in our neighborhood during the few years God had yet allotted to our lives. And they Started to make their home at that place payed enough rent to make up taxes and interest until in 1915 when we deeded it over to them. So that left us then with 180 acres in the Home place for which we have made out a Deed to Henry but are not placed on file yet but is expressly understood and agreed to become his property.

Now this brings up our lives history of Some of trials and tribulations as well as the meny blessings that Our Hevenly Father has bestod upon us up to the time that the Children can well remember, and can continue their experiences, as well as our lot in our declining years. May God grant that they may be blessed with health and vigor to be with us during the few years we may be destined to be among them for Christs sake.

All my Sins and Mistakes in my life has been wilfully omitted in this sketch as I have the assurance from a graceful God that they are forgiven and redeamed by a mercyfull Savior Who died for them on the cross that I might be saved.

*

Note from Dixie Hansen [DH]: The manuscript above was scanned and digitized by me in 2011 from a photocopy of a photocopy of a mimeographed typescript prepared by James O. Berdahl in 1942 and found on file at the Minnesota Historical Society. Following James O. Berdahl's lead, I have attempted to retain Erick Berdahl's original spelling and section headings. However, I was hampered in that effort because I have never actually seen Erick's original manuscript, because the copy of the typed manuscript that I scanned had already been through at least 3-generations of reproduction, and because I have likely introduced editing and proofreading errors due to my own shortcomings. Where errors in the digital conversion and subsequent proofing are noted, please alert me at dx@dxhansen.com. If at some future date I am able to get my hands on the original or a 1st generation copy of Erick's manuscript, I will take the opportunity to proof this version against it and make corrections. The Berdahl family owes a great debt to James O. Berdahl for his careful and detailed work in creating the typed transcription of this autobiography in 1942. His first-hand knowledge of many of the people, places and events mentioned in his Uncle Erick's memoir were valuable in lending accuracy to the transcription process.