MEMOIRS

of

EMILY VEBLEN OLSEN

These memoirs of Emily Veblen (Mrs. Sigurd Olsen) were written in Minneapolis in 1940.

This gives an account of some of the early years after Thomas and Kari Veblen emigrated to the United States from Norway in 1847.

MEMOIRS OF MRS. SIGURD OLSEN (EMILY VEBLEN)

This writing is for my children, grandchildren, and other interested relatives and friends, and is not intended for the public. It may therefore relate incidents and happenings which they may like to hear about, but which will not interest outsiders.

My parents, Thomas Anderson Veblen and his wife, Kari Bunde Veblen, had come to America in 1847, and after living for seven years in Ozaukee and Sheboygan Counties, Wisconsin, they sold their farm there and moved forty miles north to Manitowoc County, where my father had previously bought land for farming. This land was covered with a virgin forest of heavy timber, and one can easily see that to convert it into a farm and a home was no easy matter. This move was made in 1854. They then had three children, Andrew, Betsey, and Orson, who was the baby, somewhat over a year old. According to my mother's oft-told account of the moving, this baby was, on this trip, the much-noticed and much-admired member of the family, with his lively ways and his beautiful, light, curly hair, which stood out like a halo around his head. All who knew Orson later in his life could testify to the fact that he always continued to be a good entertainer, He lived up to the reputation he started at this early age. He was seventy-five when he died in 1928.

The family arrived at their new home late in the fall, and as there was no house built yet, they made their home this first year in an unoccupied house on the neighboring farm to the east, which belonged to Boye Boa, who later became our neighbor. This ,house had been built some time before by a man named Bates, and hence was known as the "Bates house." It was but a poor excuse for a house, being so badly built and so open to the weather that my mother had a hard time keeping the children warm that winter. I was born in the "Bates House" the following summer, August 20, 1855. When the next winter set in the family were established in the new house on their own land, about a quarter of a mile farther west. This was built by my father during the summer of '55. was still in use, and was occupied by a family

who were running the place as a dairy farm when I visited it in 1924. It was a good-sized, white-painted farm home, as I remember it from my earliest memory up to my tenth year, when we moved to Minnesota. The house fronted south on the public road which ran east and west. The picture of it, taken in 1925, shows it very much as it was in the early days, with only a few slight changes. Notice, for instance, in the picture, the posts on the porch and the way they are ornamented. The posts used to be plain. The house did not look to be well kept when I saw it last. It made my heart ache to see the old home not a little neglected and having the general air of everything about the place being quite commercialized In the old days there was in front a good- sized lawn between the house and the gate leading into the road. To the east was the garden and orchard. At a distance of many rods from the house, and to the north-east of it, was the barn, which I remember as being very large. The arrangement of the farm buildings shows how well my father planned the home. When I saw the place in 1924, a new barn had been built close behind the dwelling house. It was large and conveniently-equipped for dairy ,purposes. But the barnyard and all that goes with a stable for cattle, pervaded the place. In the old days the forest had been cleared away to make fields, but in whatever direction you looked there was always the background of woods beyond the clearings. Hidden in the woods, there was the river (mysterious to us children) which ran in a half circle, from three-quarters to half a mile away from our house, to the west and north. The trees in these woods were no ordinary ones. When we children were in the woods to pick flowers in the spring, or berries later, and we looked upward to the tops of the trees they seemed so tall they touched the sky. I never forgot the wonderful flowers --- hepaticas and other spring flowers --- we found there. Hepaticas have been my favorites ever since, but I did not then know their name. The blackberries we picked and ate from the bushes at the edge of the wood were delicious .

“The farm in Wisconsin was fenced in with zig-zag rail fences so that between our house and the road on which the house fronted was this fence up to where the lawn in front of the house commenced, and where a less heavy and more suitable fence was placed, with a gate directly in front of the house, We found the three-cornered spaces along the rail fence very useful to play house in. They were nicely carpeted with velvety lawn grass, which added to their attractiveness. Each little girl set up her house-keeping in a fence-corner, and visiting went on back and forth. In connection with this rail fence I remember a happening which is one of my earliest memories, as I was then only about three years old. Orson was two years older than I, and so he was my appointed guardian when we were playing here and there around the place. One day we were

walking by the fence along the road, when we made up our minds to climb over the fence to the other side and thus got into the yard. Orson went ahead and was already down on the other side when I reached the top of the fence, which was very high. The top rail happened to be loose, and we both --- rail and I --- landed on the ground, with the heavy rail on top of me. I was unconscious for a minute or two, but Orson soon managed to lift the rail off, and taking me by the hand, quickly led me to the house to tell the awful tale of, our adventure.

Our neighbor, Boye Boe, married and built a beautiful white house where the "Bates house" had stood. He was a blacksmith and plied his trade in addition to being a farmer. He built his smithy across the road from his house and close to it on the south side. The dwelling house was on the north side like ours. Later on, when we went to school, we passed by the open door of the smithy and looked in, "and saw the sparks that flew from his anvil," many a time, "like chaff from a threshing floor" as Longfellow says. The Boe children were about in the ages of myself, Thorstein and Mary. They were two girls and a boy --- Ingebor, Louise, and Anton. When Thorstein was old enough to go to school, he, I, and maybe some more of us, were joined, on our way to school, by the Boe children. Thorstein, as usual, was inclined to be doing something, which in this case took the form of teasing the Boe girls. And I, who was not at all in favor of teasing, became the chief sufferer. The girls would say to me, "Why does he always tease us so?" They should have taken it as a compliment to themselves instead of the opposite, as they undoubtedly would have done at a somewhat later age and date.

It so happened that my father had bought two 80-acre pieces of land, one where our home was, and one a little farther west. But between these two pieces of land, an Irishman named McLaughlin had a small farm. These people also had children, some of whom were in the right age to be playmates for us, James, or Jim, -was Orson's age, Henrietta about mine, and Willie about Thorstein's. They came to play at our place a great deal, especially in summer, when we were outside. Although the parents were somewhat on the shiftless order and never "gathered much wool," the children were agreeable, and used a good language. Being together with them so much, we learned English from them almost as early as we learned Norwegian in the home. Thus we grew up bi-lingually, as it were, As soon as we began school, the learning of English went on, as that language was talked there altogether. It was a remarkable fact that this Irish family used a much more correct English than many real "Americans" in the country.

As they were our nearest neighbors, we naturally saw a great deal of them, especially the children. Mr. McLaughlin was very hot-tempered when roused, while his wife was just as good-natured as he was the opposite. I remember a number of funny things which happened in connection with his hot temper. One Sunday afternoon we children were visiting at the McLaughlin home. We girls were amusing ourselves in the house, while the boys; my brothers and Jim McLaughlin, went over to the river a short distance to the west, to swim. Now it happened that Mr. McLaughlin had strictly forbidden Jim to go into the water, fearing he might drown. Pretty soon the father came in and asked his wife where Jim was. She said, "I don't know." He said, "Well, he has gone in swimming, but I will go and get him. His face got red with anger, and armed with a big whip he ran toward the river. The next thing that happened was that Jim came running into the house all out of breath. He had out-run his father who was in hot pursuit. Mrs. McLaughlin got busy and helped Jim go to bed in the adjoining bedroom. The father came switch in hand, ran into the bedroom, and there found Jim tucked under the bed clothes, with eyes shut, feigning sleep. "Oh, he is asleep," he said. His fit of anger was over, and he was glad of an excuse for letting the culprit go unpunished. And we all breathed more easily after being frightened almost to death at the awful prospect of Jim's flogging. I remember, too, that it happened this Sunday while my sisters and I were sitting in the McLaughlin living room, that Mrs. McLaughlin treated us to large lamps of home-made maple sugar, It was delicious. The maple trees grow in the woods near by. The size of the chunks she gave us revealed the generous heart of the lady. The picture of her which I have kept in my memory is that of a rather oldish woman with a. pleasant face and dressed in a calico dress and a sun-bonnet.

Speaking of pictures retained in my mind from about this time, I must mention that of my mother. She had a light-colored print dress, white ground with tiny rosebuds scattered over it, which was one of her "best dresses." When she had this dress on I thought her the handsomest lady I had ever seen. She was very fair, with color in her cheeks, very blue eyes, and wavy, golden-brown hair. It is too bad there is no photograph of her from that time. Photography had not come into general use then. Not even tin-types.

One summer afternoon toward evening there was great excitement in our family and the McLaughlin family. That day, as usual, Willie McLaughlin was playing with our children around our place, when suddenly it was discovered that he and Mary had disappeared, and could not be found anywhere around the two homes. I think Mary was about two or three years old and Willie about four. The search for them was extended out

into the fields, and then into the woods that bordered on the open fields, and along the road west and east. Mrs. McLaughlin was most frightened and excited. She was weeping and calling Willie's name. She declared she was sure he had been eaten by a big bear out in the woods. There was also the danger that they might have gone to the river, which was not far away, and had been drowned; Then, just as searching parties had been organized to go farther in all directions, and evening was approaching, the two youngsters came walking leisurely along the road from the east.' How far they had gone nobody ever found out. But it developed later that some woman, at some farm had talked to them and asked them who they were, and that, probably, then they turned around and walked back.

During our earliest years in Manitowoc County there was no school and no schoolhouse in the community. To help this somewhat, secured a tutor for the older children, especially Andrew, who was six at the time the family came there. Before long there was a school-house built about half a mile east of our house, at th e crossroads. It was a log house quite magnificent as I thought,' and at the time I made my entrance there, the school was presided over by a tall, young man with black, curly hair, I am afraid I had not reached the legal school age, as I was only five, and there was no kindergarten in that institution of learning. The chief reason for my starting was that I teased very hard to go. So then, equipped with a beautiful new primer with plenty of nice pictures in it. I entered and started learning how to road English. The tall, young man sat on his chair with my book on his lap and I stood in front and reached just high enough to look at the page. As I remember that school-room, I see in my mental picture a crowd of tall boys --- tall to me, perhaps, because I was so small --- and not many girls. This first school-house, built of logs and having as a background the tall forest trees planted by nature, was very soon replaced by a fairly good-sized frame building, more than half a mile straight south of the former, and close to the road. Just south of the school on this road, there was a hill, sloping south, sufficiently long and steep for good coasting. The bigger boys, like Andrew, had large sleds which could hold a load of children, big and small. In the winters, during the noon hours the whole school had much fan coasting. The hill would be full of sleds loaded with children, but I cannot remember that any accident ever occurred to mar the pleasure we had. In winter there was a great number of big scholars, especially boys. During the summer sessions these were busy helping with the work at their homes, and hence the school then consisted of smaller children, and the teacher, as a rule, was a young woman, while the winter teacher was a man. One of the lady summer teachers I remember espe-

cially, We little girls admired her so much. She the incarnation of refinement and beauty in person and dress. Her complexion did not need any powder, it was so white and velvety. The style did not favor red color in the cheeks at that time, but rather the absence of it. Her dark hair, almost black, hung in long curls all around her head, down to her shoulders or a little lower. Her eyes were large and dark, quite like those of a fawn. She wore hoop skirts and a wide-brimmed hat over which was thrown a veil, which was a large square piece woven of silk and wool, with a large marble-like button sewed on each corner to weigh it down. No ray of sunlight could tan her fair face when it was thus protected. No wonder her complexion was adorable. Her no-me was Miss Tucker, and she was just as sweet as she was beautiful. About this time I had a little Irish friend in school named Bridget Grimes, about my age. We were very good friends and told each other our innermost secrets. She lived quite far on the other side of our school, so we met only at school.

In a family as large as ours there was always a good deal going on. We early became very patriotic Americans and were glad we were born in America. our household was large, as there were hired men to help out-doors, and women or girls to help in the house. Often there were people who had no home for the time being, who stayed with us temporarily. Sometimes these were near or more distant relatives. The idea was to help those who needed a home or help. I remember a cozy old woman, quite stout and smiling, whom Mother had taken in for a short time. The house had a roomy hallway where the stairs led up to the second story. There she was installed with her spinning wheel which kept a-buzzing. She would keep me running errands for her around the house for a spool of thread or something else, saying “You go, Emily; you run so lightly.”

Perhaps this errand-running was what made me remember her. I was very small then. In the earliest times in Wisconsin we had a large open fireplace in our living room instead of a heating stove, as we had later. Sitting around the fireplace on winter evenings there were many stories told, especially about what had happened in Norway. We children were all ears, of course. There were stories of the different kinds of invisible folks. They were seen sometimes, but could disappear instantly. They were of different kinds and sizes: first. the biggest and most ferocious, living in the big mountains; second, the next size smaller, more like humans and living in the hills; and third, the little imps that plagued people in tricky ways, who seemed to have no definite place of abode. Our parents did not believe in the truth of these stories, of course, but there were some who told them who believed in them. more or less. They were also telling that in Norway there were a

goodly number of ghosts walking around wherever some tragedy had occurred, such as a suicide, murder, or unusual fight. We children were very thankful we were in America and did not have to meet any of these ghosts or other fearsome beings, The fact is that very early we were patriotic Americans although our background was so strongly Norwegian.

In the earliest years in Manitowoc County, before the first school was started, my father, by the aid of our minister, Rev. Ottesen, secured a tutor for the older children, especially Andrew, This tutor, an old man, was well trained in Norway, but knew little English. A few years later, about the time I was to learn my Norwegian ABC's, we had another Norwegian teacher, a retired sea captain, He. too, was probably introduced by Rev. Ottesen (the minister who baptized me). This teacher made the rounds of our neighborhood, staying at each home where there were children, about two weeks or so, teaching them religion in the Norwegian language. He was a peculiar looking person, large, very fat, and red-faced. As I remember him he wore a long and roomy faded-green coat, which I think must have been a lounging or smoking robe, descended from his more prosperous days. He filled it much as if you had put it on a very big barrel or hogshead. I remember that Betsey had to commit to memory long lessons in the catechism, and that she was terribly afraid of the teacher because he tried to kiss her.-- This strange man was a veritable storehouse of Norwegian "evntyr" (fairy tales). There was no end to the stories about "berg trolls" and their doings which he had in his bag. They were so individual, and the details so wonderful and particular. There was always an "askelad," who in the end chopped off the head of the fearful troll, or rather his three heads. In the evenings we all, big and small, sat and listened to Captain Rhode telling these wonderful stories, and you may be sure we listened with all our ears. Once in a while it happened that the captain fell asleep when he sat there so cozy and warm before the fireplace, and we had to wait for him to wake up and begin again. Then he would say lie was trying to remember just how the story went at that point, and was thinking hard while his eyes were shut. But we all knew he had been asleep.

When I was five years old the civil war broke out. It was an exciting time to us, as well as to everybody. The newspapers were eagerly read for they were the only source of news from the battlefields, as the war progressed. After some time, when the ranks of the volunteers were thinned, it became necessary to draft men for the army. When the first draft was made, by drawing lots, my father had not reached the age limit, which, I believe, was 45. We were afraid he might have to go, but he escaped. It would have been a

calamity for a man to leave a large family like ours and go to war, perhaps never to return, When the second draft was made, which took many of our neighbors, my father had just passed the age limit. A neighbor boy enlisted early in the war while very young, He rose to the rank of lieutenant, and having been wounded, though not very badly, came home on furlough. He called at our house, and I still can see the tall, straight young man in his beautiful blue uniform with its numerous shining gold buttons. My mother set a small table and treated him to a nice lunch, as it was between meals. During the war, in 1862, the famous "Indian scare" occurred. It came so mysteriously and spread so quickly that Wisconsin had it the same day as Minnesota. There were Indians living in our woods, but they were peaceable and were just as much frightened as the rest of the people. The rumors were that the Indians were only a very few miles away, murdering people and burning homes. My father went to a meeting of men at a nearby country store, where excitement ran high and each man arrived carrying a gun, axe or pitchfork. However, he didn't get as scared as the rest; it wasn't in him. But it was thought best to get ready to escape in case the Indians came. When he came home from the meeting, my father had a large lumber wagon brought from the barn over to the house and loaded with necessities. I secretly brought out my best doll, with a china head and a stuffed body, made by my mother, and hid her in the back of the wagon box. The horses were harnessed and stood ready in the barn. That is as far as we went in making our escape. There was a story told about a girl in the neighborhood who had just bought a new hoopskirt, and who dug it down under some trees in the edge of the woods to save it from Indians. My mother, whose business it always seemed to be to help the unfortunate, was especially active during these civil war years. A widow with a large family to take care of lived a short distance west of us. She was worrying because, with winter coming on, she needed warm clothes for her flock, and had no money to buy cloth for making clothes. In those days women spun yarn, wove cloth, and sowed garments in their homes. She had woolen yarn she had spun, but no cotton yarn for warp to weave the cloth. My mother went to the near-by store and bought cotton yarn set it up on her own loom, and, with the woolen yarn the widow had, wove the much-needed cloth. It was so thankfully received that the incident was indelibly impressed on my youthful mind. I may then have been about six. When the war was over and Lincoln was shot, we were all terribly excited. My father, and probably Andrew with him, had been to Manitowoc City --- 12 miles away and our nearest town, situated on Lake Michigan. They returned in the evening with the news that all the flags in Manitowoc were at half mast because Lincoln had been shot. I see all those flags yet as I saw them in my mind's eye that

day, although “half mast” was an expression the meaning of which was not quite clear to me.

I do not remember exactly what year it was that my father and mother took a trip to Minnesota to visit their relatives, but it must have been just after the war. My mother had her mother and step-father and three brothers living in Rice County, Minn., where they had come ten years earlier, having gone on westward after coming from Norway to my parents while they were still in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. My father had never seen the prairies before, and fell in love with them at once-when he saw the Minnesota prairies. Rice County and the neighboring Goodhue County had not only prairies, but plenty of fine timber land also. It was a beautiful country altogether. My father wanted to sell out in Wisconsin and move to Minnesota. and would not rest before he accomplished it. Mother was not so willing to “pull up stakes” and leave the comfortable home they had established in Wisconsin, but finally agreed to go. The farm in Wisconsin was sold, and land was bought in Minnesota. I remember seeing my father receive payment from the buyer of the Wisconsin place, He emptied out, from some receptacle, a pile of shining gold and silver Coins on a table --- the biggest pile of money I had ever seen, or ever expect to see. Everybody got busy! For one thing we all had to have new clothes. And didn’t we look fine in our new outfits! I was old enough to wear a hoopskirt, which I loved. Our route of travel was: by team to Manitowoc City, by boat on Lake Michigan to Milwaukee, by rail to LaCrosse, by boat on the Mississippi north to Hastings, Minn., and by team to Rice County (because the train had not yet reached Northfield, --we -had to take this circuitous route). In Milwaukee we couldn’t read the signs on the stores because they were in German. In LaCrosse where we boarded the boat an the Mississippi on a dark evening, I pretty nearly stepped off into the river because the water looked so bright in the darkness. I was saved by Orson, who held my hand and pulled me back. He had been appointed to hold my hand and be my guardian. Each older child was to take care of a younger one, according to Mother’s arrangement. The fact that we traveled the circuitous route described above seems strange at the present time, but there were not many railroads then and therefore the waterways had to be used, Our relatives met us at Hastings with teams and wagons to bring us to our destination, now Nerstrand, about thirty miles southwest of Hastings. Nerstrand is about ten miles south-east of Northfield, which at that time was our nearest town and market. This moving happened in the summer of 1865, when I was not quite ten years old. With the caravan which brought us and our belongings from Hastings to my grandmother’s place, came a pale, young man returning from the war to his mother in Goodhue

County. The meeting of mother and son was a moving sight even to a child like me. He had been wounded in battle and had remained in a southern hospital for a whole year, until he was able to return home.

The settlement we now came into was about ten years old. The neighbors nearest to us were nearly all Norwegians. They had lived there long enough to have their farms well under cultivation and were about to replace their log dwelling houses with larger frame ones. I cannot remember more than two or three white-painted frame houses in that neighborhood when we arrived there. My father had bought a two-hundred acre tract, of prairie land, virgin soil, untouched by the plow, and also eighty or ninety acres of partly-wooded land. Here was a, good-sized two-story log house, which could serve as a temporary home. This farm was located about two miles west of the larger farm. Here we lived until the other land had been broken and made ready for cultivation, and house built. This was the house that is still in use on the farm in 1940. It was a well-built and comfortably large house with a full basement of limestone. This limestone came from the quarries in the Valley Grove woods near our small farm. On moving from the log house on the small farm to the large farm, we spent one winter in this basement house had -been roofed over temporarily. Then during the next summer the house itself was built. There was, accordingly a time when the family lived on the small farm, called the "Slaatten farm" from its previous owner, and the men worked on the large farm during the summers. To shorten the road between, we drove or walked straight across intervening farms instead of going on section-line roads. This was common practice in those early days, and it had the good effect of making people more neighborly. This 200-acre farm of ours was about the only piece of land left which was still uncultivated, as everything had been bought up. It was the property of a widow whose husband had suddenly died before beginning to work the land. This accounts for the fact that it was still for sale when all the land around it was occupied. There was much traveling between our two farms. A shanty had been built on the large farm as a convenient shelter. Food had to be prepared, and transported to the men at work on the new farm. Nearly always it was Thorstein and I and the dog, Passup, who acted as carriers. Passup was large and strong and carried -quite a load when it was arranged is in saddlebags. Thorstein and I also had some rides along with the load, which would indicate that the dog was large enough to keep our feet from dangling on the ground. So we three made almost daily trips between the two-farms. The dog was probably some kind of shepherd dog, good-natured though powerful, shaggy, tan-colored with white patches. He was a gift from our neighbors living in

the woods near the Slaatten farm, on land owned by their relatives, who had helped them build a house there. They were poor, and had been helped by these relatives to come from Norway. The father was a harmless and good-natured "ne'er-do-well" who never did any real work. There were several children, much like the father in disposition. The family had a cow, pig, dog, cat, and a few chickens, and cultivated a patch of potatoes. The mother, who was the real supporter of the family, was a professional beggar. She carried a bag and walked around the neighborhood, visiting, drinking coffee and peddling gossip. When she returned home her bag was filled with chunks of meat, cheese, a bit of four, etc., thanks to the kindness of the farmers' wives. They did not always tell their husbands about these free-will offerings, for the men did not believe in this system of making a living. The father stayed at home and took care of the domestic animals. We children thought the family interesting and listened with wonder to their tales of what an unusual rooster they had, with red feathers and such a fine crowing voice; what a beautiful litter of kittens they had; and about their dog that could perform unheard-of tricks. These children knew everything about the woods around --- where the best plum trees were, where to find the best patches of blackberries or raspberries. They know where in the depths of the forest, the creek made a rushing sound as the water flowed over a limestone ledge into a deep and wide basin below with high walls on three sides. There was also another waterfall hidden deeply away, but at some distance from the first. To find this, you had to hunt and listen for the sound of rushing water which told that you were near it. These were truly wonderful woods, with hills, deep ravines, and sparkling brooks; and the whole was over-grown with trees, bushes, and plants of numerous kinds. And, hidden away in the depths, were the most wonderful wild flowers. Many years l after, when Thorstein and I were students at Carleton, we explored these woods one weekend and carried back with us a store of rare specimens for our botany

During the summer of 1866, while we were still living on the Slatten farm, Thorstein and I attended the neighboring school "west of the grove," as we used to say. There was no summer school in our home school house then, hence we went to this other school. To get there we had to walk through the woods for about half a mile--first down-hill, then over a large creek then up-hill till we got through the woods, then past the stone church, which was probably built about this time and stood on the hill just west of the woods, then on westward about half a mile till we reached our destination. One beautiful morning as we were on our way to school, and had reached a point where the road was level for some distance, before it climbed the west hill, we were suddenly

startled. We heard a thud, as of some heavy object dropping to the ground. Looking south in the direction of the sound we saw the bough of a large tree swaying back and forth. What animal it was that jumped from that tree we never found out. We took to our heals, holding hands, and ran for our lives till we were out of the woods. This mystery was never solved, but we thought the animal was maybe a wildcat or panther. The Slatten house, which served as our home for a couple of years, was Edward's birthplace. It had a long and varied history after we moved and were living on the large farm. As I think back, I can recall at least half a dozen families who lived there for a longer or shorter period. "Half a dozen" is putting it at a very low figure. I see with my mind's eye the different groups, though I have forgotten many of their names. It made a convenient home for homeless people coming from Norway or other places, and later moving on westward to "take land." It was, of course, rent free. During the summer months, when our men had work there, cutting hay, cultivating corn, building fences, etc., they generally took me along to get the meals and set the table. Provisions were brought along from home. Finally the log house disappeared when Ole Hougen and Mary took possession and made their home there some time in the 1880's. They added more land and built it up to be a real farm. Ole died in 1934. Mary is still the owner in 1940, and makes her home there in one part of the large farm house, her tenants occupying the rest of it. There was an interesting story connected with the Slaatten house from the days when Mr. Slaatten himself lived there. He had at one time a considerable amount of money on hand, and not feeling that it was safe in the house, he dug it down under an oak tree near by. There were no banks around there in those days. It was in the form of gold and silver coin --- somewhere between fifty and a hundred dollars. But when it came to digging it up, he had forgotten the exact place and could never find it. So the story went. The money was never found, but the oaks grew big and finally disappeared, cut down one by one.

The stone church which stands on a hill just west of the Valley Grove woods was built one of those first years we were in Minnesota ---1865, 66, or '67. There I was confirmed in 1870. Arid not only I, but also most of our family. Many of our family were married in it, and some were baptized there. There are the graves of our parents, also those of Uncle Haldor and my three brothers. Two of them died in infancy, and Thomas at the age of twenty-three, after a two-years' sickness which attacked him while he was a student at Carleton. His death was a sad thing, for he was a very handsome young man, very gifted, and possessed of an unusually agreeable disposition. An old lady, our neighbor, said, "When Thomas comes along with his pleasant smile it makes me feel so good." At

the time of our arrival in Minnesota in 1865, Thomas was three years old. His death occurred in the spring of 1885.

When we came to Minnesota, our home school house was a small log house, but this was very soon replaced by a roomy and comfortable frame house --- roomy, I seem to remember, largely because my father worked hard to have it made larger than some of the men in the district thought necessary. Everything was interesting in these days, because it was different from the more settled state of things in our Wisconsin community. The chief concern of the family during the first two or three years was to prepare the 200-acre farm for raising crops and to make it a suitable home. Two things were to be done then---plowing and building --- and the whole family took a hand. Not only the humans, but also the oxen which pulled the big breaking plow through the heavy sod, overgrown in places with hazel brush and even young trees such as cherry and "popple." But they had to bow down and be covered by the rich brown earth. No wonder, when attacked by such a force --- three ox teams with a big plow, and my father, Andrew, and Orson, aiding and abetting the oxen. My mother, Betsey, and the remaining members of the family were busy working on the west farm, preparing food and doing other work. To Thorstein and me fell the task of transporting supplies to the men on the east farm.

The Valley Grove woods, or, as they have been called lately, the Nerstrand woods, were a convenient source of timber for all uses, and held also great limestone quarries. My father first built a full limestone basement for the new house. This was roofed over and used by the family the first winter on the farm. Then the superstructure rose on this and was ready for occupancy by the next fall. It is easy to understand that we were quite crowded this first winter when we lived in the basement, One thing happened then which throws light on a strong trait in my mother's character --- her helpfulness, There was an old woman whose relatives had helped her to come to America, but who was unable to find shelter when winter came. Her work, whereby she made her living, was to spin woolen yarn. My mother let the poor old woman come and stay with us all winter. She prepared her own meals on my mother's cook stove and slept on a cot-bed in one corner. Her spinning wheel hummed lustily all day and evening. Besides being a good spinner, she furnished considerable entertainment for the younger members of the family, for she was a queer character and, like many old people, a good deal of a weather prophet. When asked what the weather would be tomorrow, she said, "It looks like both-ways." So her prophesies always came true.

All the children who were old enough at-

tended the district school, until Andrew broke away and went to the public schools of Faribault to get more education. Then he taught a school near by. At that time, life in the country was lively, with spelling schools in the evenings, when neighboring schools attempted to spell each other down. There were debating societies, singing schools, etc. Looking around for a school in which to continue his education, Andrew found the young Carleton college and started there in 1871 (I think). Orson first attended the public schools in Northfield about this time, then Carleton a little later. I followed Orson into the Northfield public schools in the spring of 1872. The next year I began at Carleton, taking desultory studies there, whatever I seemed to need most. Then, in 1874, Thorstein also came to Carleton, he and I both starting with the preparatory course, corresponding to the high school course of today. We took Latin and the required studies. Because there were practically no high schools then, the college had to maintain a. preparatory course. Only a few students were in the college proper then, because classes were small. The preparatory course students made up the greater part of the student body so it was no disgrace to belong there. In June, 1874, I saw the graduation of the first class, of two members --Mr. Dow and Miss Brown. They were married a little later. I remember just how they looked on the stage that day. It was in the summer of 1874 that my father built the two-story house in which we lived most of the time while attending school in Northfield. Because so many of us were going to school it was necessary reduce expenses by having a place to live and prepare our own meals. Provisions were brought largely from home. Counting all who attended Carleton, or the public schools of Northfield those years, before the house finally sold after serving its purpose, there were: Andrew, Orson, Emily, Thorstein, Mary, Thomas, Edward, and Hannah. Edward and Hannah were too young for Carleton at that time, but attended the public schools. They were, however, students at Carleton some years later. I graduated in 1881 and Thorstein graduated in 1880. The following quotation from an article in the American Economic Review, by John Maurice Clark of Columbia University, a son of Dr. John Bates Clark, professor at Carleton in my day, tells how Thorstein did it:

"In the spring of 1880 a member or the Junior class of Carleton college presented to the faculty an unprecedented request. He asked to be permitted, at the end of that academic year, to take the examinations for the Junior and Senior classes both. Attempts to dissuade him were futile; he took all responsibility and asked only to make the attempt at his own risk. The task seemed impossible, as the academic year was already far spent; and the faculty feared injury to his health, Nor were they inclined to make concessions to this

particular student, whose unconventional character had not endeared him to an institution where smoking was ground for expulsion, and the professor of mathematics opened every class exercise with prayer. But permission could hardly be refused; and the tests were given, that in economics being under a young professor by the name of John Bates Clark. It soon became evident that the student could not be baffled by any legitimate question; and he passed a virtually flawless examination. In this manner Thorstein Veblen received his college degree, rated by one at least of his professors as the most brilliant man the college had graduated."

Thorstein and I had started out together, and studied about the same subjects together, but he left me behind and graduated the year before me.

Our house was located in the northeast corner of Northfield. On our north was "Mr. Nourse's pasture," an attractive place, grassy, with a few groves of small trees like plum, cherry, and "popple," with a creek running through. A few rods to the east was the Nourse's pleasant home. Mr. Nourse had reached the age when real farming was too hard work for him so he and Mrs. Nourse had retired to this small farm, large enough to keep a cow, horse, and maybe a pig. How many acres it was I do not know, but the whole was, in the course of time, given to Carleton and added to the campus. The Nourses were a childless couple and had as it were, adopted the young college as their child. Mrs. Nourse liked to do things for the Carleton girls, and soon came to call on me. I remember she brought me a red geranium plant for my window one of the first times she came over. I used to go to call on her, or rather to answer her call on me, and to look at and admire her beautiful flower garden, and would return with a lovely bouquet. She always included me in the "tea parties" she gave the Carleton girls she liked. Mr. Nourse was a kind and intelligent old man, always reading. I might compare him with my own old, reading husband now, in 1940. That was in the years 1874-1881. I mentioned "Nourse's pasture" above. It was a very popular resort for young student couples who wanted to take a walk alone, They would climb through the slats of the fence at the end of the street just in front of our house, for this was the city limits at that time, and saunter along the more or less shaded foot-paths of the pasture, far from the spying eyes of any "lady teacher."

During the last three years of my college course Orson, Andrew, and Mary were married. Betsey had been married in 1874. The summer of my graduation Andrew, who had taught at Luther College for four years, was planning to go to Johns Hopkins for further study. His family consisted of his wife and one child, Oswald, one year

old. He offered to take me along also and pay my way. I was, of course. eager to go. I would then look for a teaching job in the city schools of Baltimore. I was about to accomplish this in the summer of 1882, when I had to hasten home because my mother was taken sick. The year I spent in Baltimore was very worth-while. It was my first experience of a big city. I saw there the first electric lights, as one or two big stores had just installed them. The street lights were all gas lamps yet. The street cars were drawn by mules, which moved at a steady trot, but none too fast. At their rate of speed, a trip to the shopping district, miles away from our apartment, was a long-drawn-out affair. But fortunately my new-found friend, Sophia, and I, were not too busy, and made many of these trips together. We were sometimes invited to dinner by Norwegian sea captains' wives on board their ships, a very interesting experience. I remember the names of two of these ladies: fru Blauw and fru Strei. Their husbands were carrying cargoes in their sailing vessels from port to port, and their wives would rather sail with their husbands than sit at home, with their husbands far away. In those days, a sea captain was ranked in Norway with professional men and the more "substantial" business men. He was high up in the social scale and his wife was given the title "fru." There was a small Lutheran church in Baltimore, served by my friend Sophia's brother. The captains and their "fruer" came to church looking very impressive, the men in high hats and canes, the ladies in stiff black silk and white kid gloves. One day in early spring some young folks made up a party to go to Washington for the day. For me it was a day well spent and never to be forgotten. We saw the capitol and climbed up into the dome, saw the navy yard, the Washington monument in the distance, then building but not completed, the White House, the wide streets, etc. Another excursion also much enjoyed was made by half a dozen or more of us to Barnum's three-ring circus. There were, in the Norwegian colony in Baltimore, at that time two young men, whose names were Mr. Arnts and Mr. Haugen, who were always seen together and always did things together. 'Arnts and Haugen' seemed to us to be a composite man. They took it into their heads to invite about six ladies, including Sophia and me, to go to the circus. It was a great circus. The famous elephant Jumbo, still alive, was there, together with a whole drove of interesting animals, But best of all, Barnum himself walked around the ring in front of the seats, smiling his kindly smile and talking to us as though he had known us all his life. This Barnum's circus was starting out early in the spring of 1882 from its winter quarters somewhere in New England everything in the huge show, fresh, new and bright, full of life and vigor, ready for a trip through the United States. Not a tired-out, bedraggled circus, half dead from heat and dust, as we sometimes have seen them in the middle west.

The next fall, after my return home, I taught the Kenyon school. The school house was small and old, and Kenyon itself, then, before the railroad came through, just a drowsy country village, but much more interesting than the larger town I saw years afterward. A village hidden away in a picturesque spot, can be more than a good-sized town trying to be a city. Bordering the village on one side was a deep gulch, its hills covered with trees, shrubs, and vines, and a stream running through. On the level ground beside the gulch ran the one street, east and west, with many homes and a few business places, as the post office, doctor's office, etc. If you went far enough to the west you came to the woods, in the edge of which you found Gol church and parsonage. Strange to say, I never in all my life have been so homesick as I was those few weeks in Kenyon. Every week-end I went home, and I was as happy to go as any little child. I was homesick because I had such a good boarding place. The lady was an exemplary housekeeper, gave me the best meals, a downy bed, and every comfort. But she, and the whole family, were too good to me. As soon as I entered a room, someone came running with a chair for me; in short, they almost killed me with kindness.

In the fall of '83 I came to St. Ansgar to teach at "St. Ansgar Hoiskole," as it was then called---later St. Ansgar Seminary. I was there two years, and the most important thing that happened was that I there met for the first time Sigurd Olsen, in 1884, with the result that we were married in 1888. You may wonder "why not before?" But that would be too long a story to tell. My stay in St. Ansgar was pleasant, made so principally by the young people of the school. The boys were fine, but, naturally, I knew the girls best, There were, of course, Helga and Mollie Olsen, Helga 17 the year I came there, and Mollie 15. Besides them there were the two Lubiens girls, Alice and Lillie, Lizzie Helfrita and Maggie Hume, and other nice girls.

In 1888 1 was married in Blooming Prairie. It had been the talk for years by Orson and Soneva that my wedding should take place at their house, and so it turned out. Present there were all the Olsen family, and, on my side, my father and sister Hannah, besides, of course, Orson and Soneva and their son Tom, then about ten. There were also a few friends more at the wedding. We lived at Neenah, Wisconsin three years, and Freddy and Carl were born there, Then ten years were spent at St. Ansgar, where Rakel, Ingvald, and Edgar were added to the family. In 1901 we moved to Argyle, Minnesota, when the children ware, respectively, about 12, 10, 8, 6, and 4 years. We lived in Argyle three years and in Stephen four years, and then moved to Oslo in 1908. We were there six years during which time Carl was married and Freddy died. During the years we lived in

Oslo, I do not remember just which one, the following incident happened. A nice old lady came to our house one day saying that she was working for a good cause, and hoped I would take her in to stay while she was in town. At Caribou, where her son had a store and Post Office, she had established a Sunday School for the neglected children of that wild country in northern Minnesota near the Canadian border; The Sunday School was going on successfully, but she also wished to build a church, a small church, where the Sunday School could meet, and where services for the older people could be held whenever a minister happened around. It would be a sort of community church in this wild and uncivilized region, where any number of different nationalities could be found. So she was gathering funds to build this little church. Her method was to give a lecture and ask for donations, then move on to the next town or to a country school house. When she asked to stay with us I excused myself, saying I had no spare bed for her, and was too busy taking care of my own large family to take anyone in even for a couple of days. "But you have to take me, sister," she said. "I can't stay at the hotel and spend the money I gather for my church." So I had to take her, and afterward I was glad I did. She was so nice and so interesting. She told me that in younger days she had been associated with such women as Susan B. Anthony and Frances Willard, working for the women's cause. She had traveled all over the United States lecturing to big audiences. No wonder that in her old age she had to go on working for some good cause. After her departure I heard no more about my old lady and her work in the wilderness. Many years afterward, it may have been as much as ten, I was at Hallock one summer. A party of us decided to drive up north near the Canadian border to pick raspberries. We sped on northward through a country that seemed to be nothing but brush and trees with a few open spots, the white, sandy highway stretching endlessly to the north. Finally we came to Caribou, which was no town, but a large store full of supplies to serve the needs of a country so far removed from the rest of the world. Across from the stores half hidden by the forest growth of bushes and trees, stood the little church my old lady had built. But she was no longer there, She was resting from her labors.

In 1914 we moved to Cooperstown, N. Dak., driving in our new car across the Dakota prairies until we reached our destination at the evening of that day. We lived there seven years. In 1918 we celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of our wedding. It was held in one of our churches. There was a program followed by a dinner, all the churches participating with attendance and gifts. The celebration ended with another dinner in the home. A few friends were there, together with our whole family, which then consisted of Carl and Anna with their two oldest children and Rakel,

Ingvald and Edgar.

In 1921 we left Cooperstown and came to Minneapolis where we bought our home in 1923, and where we now live in 1940. In June. 1938 we celebrated our golden wedding anniversary in our home. Present were our children, grandchildren, relatives living in the Twin Cities, and a few friends. This pleasant affair was prepared for us by our children.