

Grandma's Story

By Mina Levorson



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Introduction

The purpose of this little family history is to inform the younger generation of their ancestors, where they came from, and how they came to settle on what is now known as Mariland Farm.

Our grandparents arrived here in the early spring of 1857. It was then more or less a great wilderness, but they stayed on, worked and made plans for the future. Here their children were born and grew to manhood and womanhood. Our grandparents did not move, but remained until one by one, they passed away.



Front row (l. to r.): Mr and Mrs. P. S. Evanson and daughter Karine; Grandmother Levorson, Mina Levorson, Margit Johnson, Laita Levorson, Mrs. Levor (Ma) Levorson and Albin, Levor and Oscar Levorson. Back row: Neils, Helene and John Levorson, Mrs. Celia Johnson and Johannes Levorson.



*Mina Levorson in the Log Cabin
built in 1957
for the Mariland Farm Centennial*

Our Grandparents

GRANDFATHER

I never saw my grandfather so everything told here has been related to me by grandmother and other members of the family . . . most of it by grandmother.

Grandfather's name was Levor Levorson Rueslaaten. He was born in Aal, Hallingdal, Norway on the 29th day of November 1827. His father was Levor Nilson Rueslaaten, and his mother was Haldis Oldsdater Slettemoen. He was baptized December 16, 1827. He was the fifth child of a family of twelve children.

At the age of twenty-two he decided to leave his native country and immigrate to America. An older brother, Nils, had left Norway and come to Iowa in the year of 1851.

Grandfather was not a tall man. He measured five feet, and two inches in his stocking feet. His hair was red and bushy; he was coarseboned and had hazel colored eyes. By what I have heard of him, I imagine him to have been quite an optimist.

In the year of 1849, he arrived at Mineral Point, Wisconsin. This is in southwestern Wisconsin where people from Cornwall, England had come to find their livelihood in Wisconsin's lead mines early in the last century.

Here Grandpa hired out to an American farmer for a year at twelve dollars a month. This man was what we call a "bad pay", so he stayed only six months, and for the six months he got a pair of boots. By this time he was somewhat acquainted and he found work with a man named Hiram Case. He stayed with Mr. Case three years, and it was while he was there he commenced to learn English. He bought pen, ink, paper, a candle, and a New Testament, the pages of which were divided into two columns, one English and the other Norwegian. From this Testament, using his spare time and with Mr. Case's mother as his teacher, he learned to read and write the language of his adopted country. The kind old lady, Mrs. Case, must have been a good teacher and Grandpa a diligent scholar. My father said his "father was often taken for an English man because he spoke the language so well."

The winter of 1854 Grandfather and his brother Nils traveled south as far as New Orleans, Louisiana. Here they spent their time cutting cord wood. When spring came, they migrated back to Wisconsin. In the meantime they heard of a Norwegian settlement at St. Ansgar in Mitchell County, Iowa, and decided to go there. They left Wisconsin and arrived in Mitchell County in the year of 1855. Grandpa stayed on and worked on farms near St. Ansgar, but Nils traveled on to Worth County. He took a claim in what is now Brookfield township. He was one of the first settlers in that township.

In his wanderings around St. Ansgar, Grandpa met a number of Norse men who were natives of Hallingdal, Norway. Among them was Assor Groth. He had arrived in Mitchell county in 1854 and had bought land one and one-half miles north of St. Ansgar. Here Grandpa was always welcome and it became home to him during his sojourn in Mitchell county.

GRANDMOTHER

Grandmother Levorson was born in Hjartdal, Telemarken, Norway on the 28th day of October, 1836. Her parents were Jon Johnson Thoe and wife, Anne. In the community where he lived, her Father

was also known by the name, "Store Jon Thoe." She was baptized in infancy by Rev. Finkenhagen and given the name Mari. She was the second oldest in a family of six children. One little brother, Anon, died at the age of two years of the dreaded disease small pox.

Grandma was six years old when her father died. He was stricken with consumption and died young. She often told us about her father's death, and that she did not want to go to bed the evening he died. A lot of his relatives had gathered at their house that evening. She said, "My father sat in a big chair and I knew something unusual was happening, so I sat in the stairway wondering why my mother and others were standing around his chair. I sat there until they came and told me my father was dead, and I must go to bed." Her mother lived a year after her father had passed away, leaving five orphans. A brother, Johannes, and four sisters Aslaug, Mari, Anne, and Margit. Margit was a little baby not quite a year old at the time. Her sister, Anne, died at the age of eighteen years.

At the age of seven Grandma went to live with her grandparents at Flatland . . . they were her father's parents. She told how her sisters parted at the cemetery where her mother had just been buried, some going to Flatland and some to Thoe. Aslaug the oldest was old enough to work, so she hired out. The brother who was younger than Grandma went along to Thoe where Margit went. We did not hear much about her relatives, only that her grandparents lived to be very old, they were close to the century mark. She mentioned her aunts, and such names as Dollum, Løksli and Gislesen were in the relationship. Knudt Gislesen, a relative, later became bishop in Tromsø stift.

In summer she followed her aunt and the girls when they took the cattle up the mountains to chalet- "seters", as was the rule in those days. She herded the cattle, helped the girls in the chalet, and picked berries. Many a time she told us children about the luscious berries she found on the mountain side. But what capped the climax with us children was when she told us she found gum on certain trees! Then we really wished Grandma had remained in Norway so our home had been there. Grandma was good at telling stories and we children always asked for more. When autumn came, the cattle were taken back to the home in the valley.

On Pentecost Sunday in the year 1853, she attended services

for the last time in her native land. The next day, in company with an aunt and her family, she left Norway. She was then seventeen years old. After spending many weeks on a sailboat they landed in Quebec. They left Quebec by train and arrived in Waupaca County, Wisconsin; here they met people who had come from Norway and many of them from Telemarken. Later her brother Johannes and sister Margit, then eleven years old, came and joined her here. Grandma had sojourned in Wisconsin three years when all three decided to journey west to Dodge County, Minnesota. They found work and a good opening for settlers here, but no Lutheran pastor, and little sister Margit was not confirmed yet. But reports were that there was a Scandinavian settlement and a Lutheran pastor in Mitchel County, Iowa. So they left Minnesota and came to St. Ansgar in 1856. Grandma got work with a Madam Clausen, a Danish family.

DAYS OF LONG AGO LIVE AGAIN

When Grandmother Talks

We peek into her room, here she sits in her high back rocking chair, her book, out of which she has just finished reading a chapter, lies in her lap. Her eyes have that far away look as she is reminiscing with herself; but as we enter her room she is willing and happy to share her thoughts with us.

She was always eager to tell us about her wedding, and it began like this. Levor and I were married on the seventh day of March 1857 at the Assor Groth home near St. Ansgar, Iowa. Assor was a friend of Levor and so was his good wife Kjersti. The Rev. C. L. Clausen married us.

Levor's brother, Nils, had moved to Worth County in the year 1855 and settled in what is now Brookfield township. In the year 1856 Levor had come there and acquired 160 acres near his brother's place, but in 1857 he came back to St. Ansgar to get married and take me back with him to Worth County. So after everything was over, we bid goodbye to our kind friends. Our packing did not take long. There was a chest, some cooking utensils, our books, a few dishes, and our clothes - nothing much in worldly goods. But I felt quite proud sitting in the sleigh beside Levor, dressed as he

was in his fur cap and buffalo coat. I was quite dressed up too in a woolen dress, made in the style of that time, a basque trimmed with glittering buttons down the front. As we traveled across the cedar prairie, I remember how I listened to the clank of the oxen yoke and the creak of the sleigh runners as they traveled across the hard-packed snow. To me this sounded like music.

We drove on as far as to some friends named Helgeson, where we stayed overnight. Early the next morning we started out leaving the Cedar prairie behind, we came west of what is now Northwood. Here the snow was so deep the oxen sank in and could not get any farther, so Levor unhooked them. I walked to Rustads while Levor turned back and borrowed a hand sled on which he packed all our goods and came on and joined me at Rustads. It was now quite late in the day, and the Rustads invited us to stay for supper. We stayed and we also visited awhile. I enjoyed my visit with this hospitable lady and almost forgot that Levor was anxious to go, until his challenge to me hurried me to accept the invitation to walk with him to his brother's place.

So bidding farewell to our kind hosts, we started out walking the many miles to the Nils Levorson home. The night was beautiful, lit up by bright moonlight and a million stars.

As soon as we reached the Nils Levorson home, Levor knocked at the door. It did not take long before Nils swung the door wide open and gave us a hearty welcome calling out "Come in!" It was late at night, but Anne came too and took us both by the hand and wished us a happy wedded life. It was like coming home after the long trek across the snow-covered prairie and through what was more or less a wilderness. But as I always said, we were young and happy and this long walk was a wonderful wedding trip. Nils and Anne would not hear of us walking any farther so we stayed with them overnight. The next morning we walked to our own home.

This home in Brookfield township that Levor had acquired, consisted of 160 acres of good land. But when he was offered three hundred dollars and a pair of young colts he sold the land and we moved west to Bristol township. Here we met Knudt Trustem and his wife Kari who had come here the year before in 1856. At this time people were few and far between, and as both Levor and Knudt had emigrated from Hallingdal, Norway, they soon became acquainted and also become good friends. Levor began to look

around for land, and when Knudt offered to sell his rights to the south eighty of his land to Levor, he accepted the offer. To this eighty he bought rights to another eighty south of this, and Knudt added eighty acres to his on the other side. The Trustems also invited us to stay with them until our cabin was built. We accepted the invitation and stayed with these obliging people until we moved into our log hut.

THE HOME IN THE WILDERNESS

Our cabin, or hut as I called it, was small, built of logs and plastered between the logs with clay. It was a crude hut, but when Levor lifted me over the doorstep and joked about me being so heavy, it really came to me - this is home, and I must do my best to make it a good and pleasant one.

Our food supplies were meager those first years. We lived on milk and potatoes, but we never really suffered for want of food. We learned to make butter and cheese from our milk and cream. and then we thought we really lived high. Now and then a weary traveler would stop in and we would always have something to share with him. One day my brother Johannes came and brought us some corn. By this time I had a coffee mill, on this little mill I ground some of the corn and made corn bread. I remember how good we thought this tasted after living so long on milk and potatoes. Now that I had ground corn meal, Levor named me the family miller!

We did encounter hardships those first years of our pioneer life, but we were young and we were blessed with good health so we got along very well through those years. The winter of 1858 was bitterly cold. We had a lot of snow, and the blizzards sent the snow whirling in the air and it piled up around the cabin so all we saw of it was the stove pipe and the smoke coming out of it. But Levor was optimistic and always said, "There are better days coming." He would go and stand on the biggest snow pile and call to his neighbor, Knudt, who would be outside too and they would keep on talking to each other. All this snow helped to keep it warm inside our cabin so after all we were glad and thankful for the snow.

Often at night I would lie awake and listen to the wind and the wolves keep up a weird duet through the night. It was then that

my thoughts would drift to beautiful Hjartdal in Telemarken, Norway where I spent so many happy (and some sad) days when my parents died and left me and my sisters and brothers orphans. Levor had worked hard much of the time outside in the cold, so he was tired and slept through it all. When morning came, it was to forget Telemarken and the home over there and think and work for the home we were building here.

Letters telling of friends coming from Norway came now and then to the settlers. So one morning Levor got ready and hitched Fanny and Dock to the wagon. I got busy and prepared a lunch for him. Our coffee which was chicory, I cooked and filled in a bottle. Some bread, meat, and what I had I packed in some paper for him. After saying goodbye, he started off on the long trek to McGregor, Iowa where he hoped to find friends who had arrived from Hallingdal. McGregor was our nearest market place, and when Levor started out for that far away place, I knew he would be gone at least a week or maybe two. Very few roads had been laid out, so it was to drive across country over marshes, bogs, and rough places, making it a tiresome journey both for man and beast.

Arriving in McGregor, after taking care of his horses, Levor began looking around for friends which he hoped had arrived. These friends that he was looking for had come and were standing in a circle on the landing place. Just as soon as Levor saw them, he hurried over to where they stood, and grabbed his friend by the hand and said, "Welcome to America!" It was a happy reunion for all of them. The travelers had traveled far and were tired. They had made friends with some people who came on the boat with them, but it was not like meeting old acquaintances here in a land that was strange to them.

The next day Levor got his horses, hitched them to the wagon and, when all their belongings were loaded and the people were seated as comfortably as could be in a vehicle of that day, they began the long journey westward. Levor told his friend of the good land he had found in America and hoped his friend would like the new country as well as he did. There was much talk about relatives in Hallingdal and they brought greetings from a lot of them and this made the journey seem shorter than usual. As Levor drove into an opening in the thick timber, he surprised his friends by calling, "Come, Mari, here we are." I had gone to the spring to get

water and when I heard Levor call me, I hurried over to where they were. There was Levor's friend, Erick, and his wife and two little girls. It seemed a crowd to me after being alone a good deal of the time. They were happy to have found friends and we were happy to be able to give them shelter until they got something up for themselves. The country was new and we were more or less dependent on one another.

Our life on the frontier became more and more busy and exciting. The Seth Thomas clock Levor had bought, ticked away. I was real happy to have it and to hear it "tick tock" and ring the hours away. My neighbor, Kari, had one too and I remember how happy and proud we were of our clocks.

The hours grew into days, and months and finally the memorable year of 1857 came to an end and 1858 came in cold and stormy. It was that year, on January 9th, that our little Helene was born.

Later that year Levor's brother Ole, his wife Guri, and two children - a boy and a girl - came to live with us until they could move into their own cabin. We were real happy to have them with us. The brothers often talked into the wee hours of the night. We, Guri and I, were almost asleep when all of a sudden we heard their hearty laugh ring out loud and long.

Ole took his claim in what is now Hartland Township. Here he went every day to work, cutting down trees and clearing a patch of ground on which to build his cabin. But one evening he did not return at the usual time. We waited thinking he might have been delayed with something. As time went on and he did not come, we became worried. Something must have happened, so Levor and some men got together and went to look for him. The timber was dense, and the night was dark. After looking around for awhile, they found him lying under a big limb of a tree he had cut down. The men had brought a lantern along and by the faint light it could give they were able to see what had happened. The tragedy brought deep sorrow into our home and especially to Guri who was left a young widow with two fatherless children. Now there was the question where to bury the body, for there was no dedicated cemetery that was Lutheran around here.

The brothers, Nils and Levor decided that he must be taken to St. Ansgar where there was a Lutheran pastor and a cemetery. They

took him there and he was laid to rest in the cemetery a little ways south of St. Ansgar. After the funeral, Guri and her children returned to Spring Grove, Minnesota where her brother, Ole O. Ruud and other members of her family lived. The parting with her and her little ones was sad, but as always we found comfort in God's Word.

We were well and we found plenty to do to keep us busy. Levor worked early and late to clear some land so he could plant a patch of corn and potatoes. This was hard work as the tools he had were mostly homemade ones. Levor had learned to carve while at home in Norway and it served him well now when he had to make spoons and bowls for me. Besides this, he had to build a log stable for his cattle and horses too, as they could not be left outside in the cold. A well had to be dug. All this took time, but little by little it was done. Benches took the place of chairs. Things were simple, but we were happy for every little improvement that was made. Besides all this, Levor had to be his own tailor, but I took over and made Levor's clothing and my own. Our clothes were simple, as was everything in our home. In order to make it, it had to be strict economy in those days. But as I said "It is not how much you have, but how satisfied you are with what you have."

Bristol Township in Worth County was organized on the 13th day of October 1857, and the village of Bristol was laid out and platted in the spring of that year.

The village could now boast of a small store where we could buy some groceries, also denim and calico goods. Bristol also had a doctor, as Dr. James Keeler had arrived in Bristol in the month of September 1856. Bristol was now the county seat of Worth County so it was there we had to go to pay our taxes and do our business.

One bright sunny morning Levor asked me if I would like to go along to Bristol as he had to go there for something. Of course I would go! I would like to see the place I had heard so much about. I remember as we drove across country how we went humpty bumpy over rocks and stumps. There were no roads laid out yet. We did get a good shaking up but no one was hurt. We were happy we had a good strong wagon and a team of spry horses. There was also a place in Bristol where the settlers could have their pictures taken, so Levor suggested we ought to have ours taken. which we did. It was just a tintype picture, but they were as stylish in those

days as the kodak is today.

Levor's brother Nils sold his claim in Brookfield Township and moved back to Mitchel County and settled near St. Ansgar. A sister, Aagot, who was married to Halvor Grogard had come to St. Ansgar and settled near there too.

More settlers came every day now to make their homes around here, so we had neighbors to the east, north, and west of us. To the south, none until a couple of years later when a few Bohemian families moved in.

Missionaries began to visit our little Scandinavian settlement. They came from Wisconsin or St. Ansgar, Iowa. Rev. H. A. Preus, on one of his missionary journeys to this settlement in the late 1850s, conducted services in the Lars Loberg home. People came from far and near, some driving horses, and some in kubberulles drawn by oxen. Twelve children were baptized at this service. Our Helene was one of them. This having an ordained Lutheran pastor come and conduct services for us was something we had longed for, and we were really happy as we drove home. This gave us hope that maybe someday we would have a Lutheran congregation in our community.

Some of our new neighbors that came were the Trilhuses and Flutoes east of us, the Hundebys to the north, and the Groes to the north and west. In the early sixties, Levor's mother, Haldis Levorson Rueslaaten and her two daughters Kari, a young maiden, and Sissel married to Arne Tostenson, came to St. Ansgar where Aagot, married to Halvor Grogard, lived. Haldis was then a widow. Most of her children had left Norway and immigrated to America so she decided to come along and she came to stay with us.

Our little Levor was born March 10, 1860. We named him Levor for his grandfather Levor Nilson Rueslaaten. When he was nine months old, he walked. Now it was not long before he wanted to go out with me and see what there was out there. He walked around and nothing scared him. But I became afraid he would wander off and get lost in the woods, so I hung on him a sheep bell I had brought from Norway, thinking it would be a help to me if he should get lost. There were also rattlesnakes to look out for. I killed 2 rattlesnakes in the grass.

In the meantime my sister Margit came to stay with us for a while. She took care of the children and did the cooking while I

worked outside planting my garden and helping Levor. But it was not all work either; the neighbors got together and had good times now and then. Sometimes we would take a trip to St. Ansgar and visit Levor's brother Nils, and his sister Aagot and family, and the friends we had there - always stopping to see our friends Assor and Kjersti Groth.

THE CIVIL WAR

It was now the year 1860 and war clouds were banging low over our country. Every time our men met either in town or happened to meet on the road, they took time to talk and to find out what they could about the war and the secession of some of the states. When they came home we waited eagerly to find out what news they could tell us. In 1861 our Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, was elected and was inaugurated on March 4th that year. Now we all felt we had a good leader. But there were traitors in our country and they were busy plotting and planning, and before we knew it, there was a war and we were in it. The men became restless thinking they must enlist and join the Union army.

Worth County was first represented in the 15th Wisconsin Regiment, some of our Norwegian boys enlisting in the infantry, Col. Heg commanding. On the 23rd of December 1861, my brother Johannes enlisted in this regiment. It was called the Scandinavian Regiment. He had built his log cabin up to the eaves on the land northeast of us where he had squatted. He sold the land and all to Aslak Lien, married to Barbro, a sister of the Trilhus boys, Tollef, Halvor, and Anders. The day he left us has never been forgotten! Little Levor stood close by us admiring his uncle's cap and other things his uncle had on. With a heavy heart we bid him goodbye saying, "God be with you wherever you are." He was a good penman and wrote to Levor. He served with his regiment in the battles of Murfreesboro, also called Stone River, Chicamauga, Missionary Ridge and minor engagements. He kept us posted as to where he was so Levor wrote to him.

Margit had now gone to Mitchel to be a maid in the John Elliot home. Mr. Elliot was then elected state auditor of Iowa and they all moved to Des Moines, taking Margit along as a maid and naming her Maggie. Here she stayed five years. These were the war years, and Margit heard quite often from John, as they called our brother

Jobannes.

Levor's brother, Nils Levorson Rueslaaten, enlisted in the Union army and left home the 16th day of January 1862. Our twin boys, Johannes and Nils, were born July 29th that year. They were also called our war babies. So when the babies were to be baptized Levor said "We will name them for our brothers, Johannes and Nils. You name the big and strong one for your brother and I will name the little Nils for my brother."

As most mothers did, Haldis dreaded to see her son Nils leave for the war. Mother Haldis made her home with us at the time he left. He was captured and imprisoned in the Andersonville prison where he died. One short letter came in one of my brother's letters. written by Nils to his mother, where he asks her to forgive him for leaving without seeing her. Nils is buried in the National Cemetery near Nashville, Tennessee. On his tombstone is engraved: "Mr.N.Slaaten, Grave No. 646." This gave Levor a lot of extra work as he became guardian for his two children, Levor and Helen.

My brother, John Johnson Thoe, served with his regiment through all its activities and was with General Sherman's March to Atlanta when he was instantly killed in the Battle of New Hope Church on the 27th day of May 1864. He is buried in the cemetery near New Hope Church, where Col.Heg and so many of his men gave their lives.

THE INDIAN UPRISING OF 1862

It was not only the Civil War that was a worry to us, word came one morning to the settlement that the Indians were coming. The settlers had heard rumors of how they massacred the people and set fire to their homes. So Levor, like so many of the neighbors, got things in order and got ready to leave home. First he let the cattle loose, then clothing and other needful articles were loaded into the wagon. After getting the four children in (the twins just a month old) we drove east to seek safety in the older settlements. But when we came as far as the Shell Rock River, a man on horseback came to say the Indians had been driven back. With grateful hearts, we returned home, arriving after dark. The only light we had was the homemade lard lamp, and that was stored away somewhere in the wagon. The children were crying for a drink, but the cows were away, and the drinking water had to be carried

from a spring a quarter of a mile away. Even so, we were happy we had reached home safely, and so with thanks to God for delivering us from this danger, we got ready for bed and the sleep we needed for the tasks of the morrow.

IOWA THE BEAUTIFUL

Early Iowa looked beautiful to the pioneers. On the fertile prairies the wild rose bloomed. In the spring the wild crabapple trees bloomed on the hillsides, and the sumac with its red berries and leaves gave color and beauty in the fall. We found out that all these things could be used in some way. The wild crabapples could be used for sauce and jelly. The sumac berry we picked in the fall and used it as a dye. We dyed our white yarn a nice gray and knit stockings and mittens both for ourselves and the children. If we wanted a different color, we took the outside husk of the walnut and from that we got a beautiful brown color.

Levor had been busy building a house that was larger and better than the first little cabin. This one consisted of three rooms downstairs. One big room served as a kitchen, dining room, and living room. The pantry was in the southwest corner of the house. It was here I did my baking, made doughnuts, bread, and churned butter. In the northwest corner was the bedroom, and the stairway leading upstairs was between the pantry and the bedroom. The upstairs was much like the downstairs, one big bedroom and two small rooms. Little by little we furnished our new house mostly with homemade furniture. Benches took the place of chairs. A big cupboard was built by a carpenter who came from Sweden.

This cupboard was built on the south wall in our big room and reached from the ceiling to the floor. This made plenty room for all I had in the line of dishes, crocks, and pans.

After the house was finished and we had moved in, I was real happy. I even believed a queen couldn't be more happy in her palace. Now we spent our winter evenings making things for our new home. Levor made a stand about the size of a small lamp, unto this stand he fastened a tin basin which he filled with tallow or lard. A rag was set fire to and dropped into the lard and this was our lard lamp. To get more light into the big room, we opened the front door of our kitchen stove. The bright flames of the burning oak

wood gave a glow around where we sat - Levor with his work, carving, sawing, and hammering, and I busy spinning. The whir of the spinning wheel made music in the room, but at times it was almost drowned out by the noise of the saw and the hammer. Now and then our laughter would ring out as Levor would try to sing one of his favorite ditties. After a time our new home began to look like a fine home to us.

Our nearest neighbor, Knute Trustem, had built a better and bigger house too, but he left his little house standing and our first term of school was taught there. We had a lady teacher, but I have forgotten her name. So many things were happening in the year of 1863. Kari, Levor's sister had spent some time with us and some time with her sister, Aagot, in St. Ansgar; but now she had come back to us and Sissel. Tollef Tollefson Trilhus made frequent visits to the place where she was and before long we were invited to their wedding. My sister, Margit was with her and fixed her up as a bride so she was named the bridesmaid. Kari moved to Trilhus and spent her life on the place there. We were glad to have them as our neighbors.

Our mail was to be brought from Mason City to Bristol, and now and then one of the settlers would go and get it - so our neighbor, Knute Trustem, offered to get it. There was snow on the ground, so he took his skis and started out for Mason City. After leaving our place he did not see a person nor a home until he got close to Mason City. This was quite an undertaking as most of this territory between our settlement and Mason City was wilderness. Kari told me she had never been so glad as she was when she saw him come home again.

Our son, John, was born on the 28th of December 1864. He was not a big baby, but healthy and quick at noticing things. Arne and Sissel Tostenson, who lived a short ways from us. lost their little son while on the Atlantic Ocean and had to bury him there. They begged us to let our little Nils stay with them so feeling sorry for them, we let them have Nils for awhile. Levor always called John our little preacher, so we all began to say to him, "Kom her du vesle prest."

On the 12th of March 1866 we were happy to welcome our little Anne into our family circle. Our spring came early that year - the green grass was already showing up on the hillside where the sun

got at it, even the last days of February. I had been up and outside, but caught a bad cold and became sick in bed, so when Levor came home and found me in bed, he said, "What have you done to her now, I thought you were to take care of her while I was away." But I was soon over my sick spell and up and doing again. It was on that morning that Anne was born, that Grandma Haldis died here on the place. So death and life met at our house that day. We buried Haldis on the cemetery on the hillside near the Erick Ellingson place.

People were busy buying land, so we had neighbors to the south of us now. But before they could move into their places, a lot of work had to be done, and so the women and children had to live with one of us older settlers. One time we had as many as sixteen children on the place. We did not all find room in the house, but we fixed up the granary so some could live there. My sister, Aslaug Gullickson, came at this time. Levor met her in McGregor and brought her and her four children here. Her husband, Gullick, was dead, and as she had her two sisters here, she decided to come here. We were the three sisters left of the immediate family, and we two who were here, were anxiously waiting for her to come and join us. We felt it couldn't be soon enough. When they arrived, tired after a long journey on water and land, the meeting of the three sisters was a very happy one. Aslaug looked at Margit and wondered if it was the little girl she had said farewell to when my brother and she left Norway. Everything was new to the children, but it was not long before the cousins got acquainted. Helene and Anne became friends and so did Jon, Gullick, and Anond. Jon, the oldest, was helpful to his mother and they all became friends to the cousins, our boys. They stayed with us until Aslaug bought a place that was for sale about two miles south of here. She bought eighty acres. Levor helped her and soon the neighbors came to the place to offer their help. The west forty was mostly timber land with big oak trees that her boys thought were so nice. We that came from Norway always looked for trees as we liked them. Levor planted more trees on our place. He planted cottonwood trees around our dwelling place and poplars along the driveway from the road leading up to our house. He had already a grove of black locust trees that he had planted from seeds he brought from the south when he and his brother Nils returned from there after

spending the winter cutting cord wood. These trees grew tall and straight, had beautiful foliage and about the last part of May they had flowers much like Sweet peas both in shape and odor. The fragrant odor would fill the yard with a beautiful aroma. Levor took pride in the looks of his place, so he worked hard keeping his buildings and everything in order with the few implements he had.

Our little Johannes was taken sick quite suddenly. We had plenty of help as some newcomers had arrived from over seas - many of them from Sweden. But when Johannes called for "moster" as the children called my sister Margit, we sent for her and she came. The little one said, "I knew you would come." He did not live long after that. The children missed their little brother and so did we, but we knew he was better off so thanked God for letting us have him this long. We buried him beside his Grandma Haldis.

The years slipped by, and another little one was born to us. A little boy came to gladden our home September 16, 1869. Levor said to me. "Now I think we will have another Johannes as it seems that is a favorite name in your family. It is either Jon or Johannes like Levor and Nils is in my family." So our little golden-haired baby was baptized and his name was Johannes.

We had no resident pastor in our midst yet, but now a Mr. T. A. Torgerson, a candidate for theology from the Theological Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Mo., accepted the call extended to him by the church council in behalf of the congregations. He was ordained on July 23, 1865. He preached his first sermon at Elk Grove in a schoolhouse. Now we had an ordained pastor, and we did not have to wait long before our children had to begin study in catechism. Teachers in religion came from Norway, and we had school sometimes in our house, and sometimes other places. Of course we wanted our children to get a good religious training and we got good help from our pastor Rev. T. A. Torgerson. We also had the common public school in our neighborhood. Levor served as school director and that year all the directors in the county were given a chair. We had another chair now, a sturdy oak chair in our home.

As time marches on things are happening. Our pastor went back to Dane County. Wisconsin. Here he was married to Dena Anderson on the 10th day of June 1866. After three years in the Silver Lake parsonage, they moved south and he served Lime Creek,

South Silver Lake and Concordia congregations. South Silver Lake bought the place that my brother Johannes had squatted on and had begun building his house at the time the Civil War broke out. Aslak Lein bought it and finished the building, and it was now bought by the congregation and the Torgersons moved there. The cemetery for South Silver Lake congregation was laid out in lots and there was room for a church building on the place.

In 1872 May 30th, a baby girl was born to us. The children thought she was tiny, just like a doll, and that she was. But I said, "She will have plenty time to grow big." Now what shall we name her? Sissel, Kristi, or what? We had really run out of family names like Haldis, Helene, or Anna, so someone told us Cecilia was a good name and the children liked that name, so that's what we named her.

It was about this time our friend Gustav Anderson, a brother of Mrs. Andreas Kalhiem, came from where he was working. It was towards evening so he stayed overnight with us. The next morning he planned to go to his sister's place some over two miles south of here. But he had to cross Elk Creek here and being it was in the spring of the year, the creek was well filled and running over its banks. As he said goodbye he also said, "I dreamt about that creek last night. I do hope it will not be my grave, but I must go in Jesus' name." So he walked across the fields and was going to swim across the creek. The neighbors saw him and thought he must be sinking into the water, so they got a wagon box and set out to get him. None of the men there could swim, and when they finally got him, he was already dead. Rev. T. A. Torgerson had gone south to preach at Concordia that Sunday morning. He was a good swimmer, and people thought if he had been home, he might have been able to save him. Now this man was the first person buried on the South Silver Lake cemetery.

Levor made several trips to St. Ansgar. One time he took both Helene and Levor, also Margit along. I had the little baby so I stayed home. We had a newcomer from Sweden staying with us at the time. His name was Albin Nelson. He was a good friend of this G. Anderson that drowned and a good help for us. He was a carpenter and made things for our house.

Rev. Torgerson gathered the young people for choir practice and when Christmas came, they also went caroling, besides singing

an extra number in the church Christmas service. Many of these newcomers were good singers, and the pastor had quite a choir. The pastor also covered the territory on his missionary journeys, and if not too far, his choir went with him. The roads were often bad and there were places where there were no roads laid out yet.

Levor had not been so well this winter so we urged him to see a doctor. He did not think it necessary, so time went on this way until one day he was in town he thought it was maybe best to do it, also to satisfy me who had been urging him to do so. He saw a doctor but he told him he knew of a good Norwegian doctor in Wisconsin and he would like to see him go there. Levor didn't see how he could go so far, but the doctor urged him and said, "It's not so far. Remember you came all the way from Norway so this should not be too far." Coming home he told me what the doctor had told him to do, and we all thought it best for him to go. He talked to his pastor about it, and he thought like the rest of us.

So Levor decided to make the trip to Wisconsin and he began to get ready for it. It was the last part of March 1873, and soon we had to prepare for our spring's work. Now Levor was ready to leave and we bid him goodbye, hoping things would turn out favorable for him. I myself dreaded to have him go alone, but there was nothing else to do. He said, "Take good care of the children, Mari, and I will be back before long." My sister, Aslaug, had come to see Levor off. She was the oldest of us three sisters and came here as a widow, So now in this time of trouble she was quite a comfort to me. Margit came too. They both thought a lot of Levor as he had been kind and helpful to both of them.

Now that he was on his way we all hoped he would see this doctor and get relief from his pain. The week came to an end, and here Levor came home a sicker man than when he started out. The doctor he went to see was not at home, and as Levor felt really sick he hurried home. We called our doctor and he told me, "Your husband is really very sick with pneumonia and he needs good care." Good old friends and neighbors came and offered their help, but I felt I must be up and around all the time. His two sisters, Kari and Sissel, came as he meant a lot to them, being their only brother left as Ole and Nils had gone before. The week was almost at its end when we understood that the end was near at hand. Two of our neighbors came that evening and offered to stay. They also

told me to go and rest a while and they said, "We will be sure to wake you if we see any change." But the end came with no more warning, and when I came, he was already dead.

I thought, "What am I going to do now?" But it seemed an answer came to me and said, "My ways are not your ways." So I began thinking of the children that I had to care for. Helene, the oldest was 15 years old and getting ready for confirmation, and Levor, thirteen, who had been reading in the junior confirmation class. His father had asked the pastor how Levor was getting along, and the answer was this, "He will have to improve on his reading as that is not good. but he understands what he reads so he can give a correct answer when he is asked questions."

The next hard thing for me to do was to arrange for the funeral. I would so liked to have done it the way my pastor told me to do - leave off the getting together for a big meal. But his relatives and friends said, "Levor surely left so much you can give us a good meal." Oh yes, but that was not what bothered me, I was tired and almost sick from grief and sorrow. but I could not shed a tear, so they thought I did not mourn but it seemed my tear ducts had dried up.

My neighbors and friends came to help. Little Cecilia was only seven months old when Levor died April 3rd, 1873. So I had seven fatherless children to take care of. Most of them stayed with us, some went to Trilhus to stay with Kari. Our pastor who had seen Levor almost every day the week he was sick, preached a good funeral sermon. When all was over and everybody had left, it was for me to go out and help with what was necessary to be done. Levor missed his father so much as he had been with him on his trips to town, also to the timber land called the Bently Woods where we owned a lot, and to St. Ansgar to see his folks there. Levor's good friend, Ole Ellingson, Sr. was chosen as administrator. I did not think I could stay on this place anymore, but my pastor, Rev. T.A.Torgerson and Ole Ellingson said, "You better stay here, we will get things straightened out, but it may take awhile because of these minor children of his brother, Nils, that he had been a guardian for." They had some money that had been loaned out and that had to be collected. The mother of the children became their guardian, and as soon as the money was collected it would be sent to Anne. She was married and now was Mrs. Larson. Money was scarce and

it was not easy to collect.

I had to be careful not to buy anything, but once I was in Albert Lea on an errand I needed something to fix a fence. Nils was with me and we met Mons Grinager and told him what we needed, but we did not have money to pay for it today, but would as soon as we could. He said he couldn't let me have it if I didn't have money to pay right away. We knew it was no use and said we would have to get along the best we could with the fence across Elk Creek. In the meantime, Mons Grinager and Nils had begun to talk of the Civil War. Nils said he had an uncle in the Fifteenth (15th) Wisconsin Regiment also named the "Scandinavian Regiment." His name was John Johnson. "Are you a sister of his?" he asked me, and I said, "Yes." "I knew the honest young man and you can have what you asked for." I was glad to hear what he said about my brother. To us he was what we call a true Christian both in word and deed, and that often goes far, and it did for me. We went home happy.

Time went on and my little John was ready for confirmation. His father had always said he was to be our minister son. Levor had several teachers and ministers in his relationship in his homeland in Norway. I was also urged to send John to school. He was fifteen years on the 28th of December 1879, and now they said it is the time for him to begin, as it will take him surely eleven years of schooling to finish the course, if not more. This sounded impossible to me. But it was finally decided that he should go to Decorah and enroll at Luther College. He was then fifteen years old which I thought plenty young. Besides his school work he got work cutting wood for some of the professors. A friend of Levor's was also going there so we sent John in company with him. Now that he was there, I felt I must do my best to keep him with books, clothes, and necessary things. After he had been there his first year, he came home to spend his vacation and got work during the harvest season.

Levor was at home yet, but he asked Nils to take his place here as he wanted to go with his friends on a trip to North Dakota where he could homestead on some land. Some relatives and friends were leaving for that far away country, and Levor wanted to go. He packed some clothes into a piece of cloth somewhat like a red kerchief and left in a covered wagon with these people.

Just the year before this happened, my good neighbor. Kari

Trustem passed away on the 16th of May that year. It was that night that Levor took our horse Fanny and went horseback to get Dr. Keeler to hurry off to Trustems as Kari was very sick. But there was nothing that could be done for her. She passed away that day leaving some little ones. and a grown daughter, Gertrud, married to Gule Guleson, a Wisconsin farmer. Olene was the baby, she was about Celia's age, and after her mother was gone I took the little girl home with me. Mrs. Kari Lein and I had stayed with our good friend, Kari Trustem until she died. A lot of Knute's, also Kari's relatives came from the Elk Creek settlement so there was plenty help and we could leave. But little Olene wanted to go with me and so she did. This was the 16th of May 1880. a beautiful day, but it was with a heavy heart I walked home that day thinking of the motherless home and the many little ones. But there is always a way. Kari's sister, Ingeborg Anderson, had come from Norway and she was there. She had brought with her a little girl named Caroline from Norway and she stayed with her.

Levor had been gone for a year or more when his friend, Ole Trustem, died leaving a young widow and two sons. Levor came home for his funeral. They had been good friends down through the years and so he arrived in time for his funeral. Nils tried to talk Levor into taking over at the home place, but, "not yet" was the answer he always got. Johannes could help along now, but he was not old enough to go ahead and do everything that had to be done on the place.

Margit had come to stay with me, but she was not well, and before long she had to go to bed very sick with rheumatic fever. I had been helping out here and there in the neighborhood especially where a child was born. I was now named the midwife of the neighborhood. a job that kept me busy now and then. I knew all these women of the second generation, and they knew me and we got along first rate.

Our pastor had now organized a "kvindeforening" or "ladies society" and we were to meet around at different homes. It was mostly as a mission society as we were to work for our schools in the synod, also for other missions such as the one in Zululand in South Africa.

After Kari Trustem passed away, it often fell to me to board our teachers. Two that I especially remember were Julia Swift and Jo-

hanna Lindflot. Julia later became Andrew Trustem's wife.

Helene was now in Decorah where she worked and tried to help John with money so he could keep on at school. When she returned home, she and Anne Gullikson decided to go to Mason City and apply for housework. They did, but they did not stay in Mason City very long, but came to Northwood where they found work. They said Northwood was a much nicer and a more beautiful city than Mason City. They thought Mason City wasn't near as well kept as Northwood, and they also found work for real nice people. Helene worked at the same place for seven years. Northwood was not so far away, but she could come home if necessary. Anne got together with some girls that were leaving for Minneapolis, so she went with them. They found work in the city and liked the change. Anne even had the experience of getting lost one evening so had to call on a policeman to get to her place. When leaving her he said, "And when can I see you again?" Anne gave him a quick answer, "O, when I get lost." It was like Ann - she always had an answer right there.

About this time I received a letter from Levor saying he planned to get married and asking if I could come to the wedding. But I could not get away, and besides I thought it was too far away. I wrote and told him, "You have Sissel Faster there, and she will have to take my place." His next letter told about the wedding. A Rev. Gronlid had married him and Ida Sagen on the fourth day of August 1884. He also said, "We will see you at Christmas as we plan to make a trip to Iowa then and maybe stay for the winter." And stay they did. There was much to tend to and Levor found plenty to do.

Margit was staying with Aslaug, and Helene was working in Northwood. Celia was attending school, and so was Johannes. So Levor and Ida were quite a help to me. Nils did not like farming. He would rather get off to business school and take a course in that, so he and a friend went to Decorah and enrolled in a college there. He stayed on and finished the course this college gave, and so he was ready to give up farming. He told Levor, "You will have to stay on. I will be willing to help you, but I'm not a farmer like you are." So time went on and Levor and Ida stayed.

Now that I had help, I had time to help out more in the neighborhood. I helped where there was sickness also where a

baby was born. I had been doing this, but now I could do more of it and I was soon named midwife around here in the country, and they came to get me from here and there.

It was the fall of 1885 now, and it was time to get our threshing done. It was already the 15th day of September and they were busy threshing here that day. My oldest, or rather first, grandchild decided to come then, and so it was really more than I could do. Anna was working in Northwood, and so was Helene, and Celia was in school. Margit was at Aslaug's, but they had to go and get her. She came and when I had Margit I felt safe as I knew she would do her share of the work. Lars Ellingson had his threshing rig here and was anxious to keep on, and so they did, and we got along real well. Ida was well and when the baby was two weeks old, she took her to church and had her baptized. I was to be her godmother and she was named for her two grandmothers - Mina for me and Kathrine for Ida's mother, Karen Sagen. The other sponsors were Helene and Nils. Ida had asked Johannes, but he felt he was too young - he was just confirmed then.

Mr. O. Myers was to teach our school in District No. 1 that year, and that was just on the corner where the roads going east, north and west from us, on the corner of Knute Trustem's land. A new school building was built there and Celia and her friends attended and finished that year. That year Celia finished her country schooling, she had to write a farewell to the school. She also sang:

*Goodbye to the school and goodbye to the stepstone.
God bless those I leave with a sigh.
It will cherish my memory while I am away
to bid this old stepstone goodbye.*

Ever so often we had company, Ida had some relatives in Northwood that came to spend a weekend. I had some distant relatives in Fertile, Iowa - they were the Landsverk family. Mr. Landsverk sold and repaired organs and other musical instruments. The Landsverk girls often visited here. Celia and Nettie Landsverk spent one winter in Decorah attending a school for teachers they had there.

Levor and Ida had two more little ones now, a little girl named Lotta. Her godmother was Mrs. T. A. Torgerson, and Lotta always said, "Gudmor me." Once the Torgerson boys were here to get

salt. Lotta came running in and said, "I must have a saucer. Gudmor me vil ha salt." Levor always had a barrel of salt in the granary, handy to feed some to the cattle too.

Levor was a good farmer so I felt I should sell my stock and let him get a chance to get cattle of his own. So I decided to have an auction and sell my cattle and horses and a few pieces of machinery I had. The sale was a success as far as getting rid of things. I even sold Fanny to a neighbor. I kept one of my cows and Levor bought a couple of them as he needed cattle if he should keep on farming here, and that I hoped he would. I felt kind of free now, so I could help out here and there where it was needed.

Oscar was born April 15, 1888. He was not as robust as Lotta. He was small and I felt he should be baptized right away so we sent for Rev.T.A.Torgerson and he baptized him and named him, Oscar, for his grandpa Sagen.

Ida's three sisters all lived in North Dakota at this time, and every time they wrote, they said they would like a picture of the children. Now Helene was working in Northwood and she said to Ida, "You bring the children and I will go with you to the Knudsen Photograph office. He is a good photographer and you have their picture taken." When we came to Northwood we went to the place where Aunt Helene worked. She was ready to go with us. When we got into the place where our picture was to be taken, Lotta was brave and walked right in, but Mina was thinking of what our uncle Johannes had told us. He had said, "Be careful now as it will hurt." So when it was time for us to stand in front of the machine, Mina decided she didn't dare, but she knew it wouldn't help to tell Mama. We had our picture taken and found out it did not hurt.

STORY-TELLING TIME, AND THEN CHRISTMAS

Then I was tired and I would say to the children, "Let's try to be quiet now and not say a word for five minutes." It was so very still those five minutes we could hear the old clocks tick, tock.

Celia was teaching school now, but came home to spend Christmas. We were all busy getting ready for the holidays. I always said, "We must be ready with our work both inside and outside early on Christmas Eve." Our pastor had told his congregations the Christmas tree was for the home, not for the church. So I told Johannes and Celia, who were home then, that they must find a tree and

decorate it, but go upstairs in the big room and do it. I had a little wood heater there and the room was good and warm. They did as I told them. The children were restless as they knew Uncle and Auntie were up to something. Then I sat down by the upstairs door and told the children how we celebrated Christmas in Norway. Also, about the life as we lived it there. Then I would tell about our cattle and how they were taken up in the mountains in the summer and how we called them by name: Come Ringli, Rangli, Rolind, Fjolin, Letfot, Himmeros, Haugeros, Adelin og Dropla. Now I have all my cattle except Ringlan and Rolan who are left on the mountainside where they find plenty to eat.

Margit and Ida had much to do, so we had to stretch our patience. Levor came in and he said, "The chores are done." The cream mush was cooked, the sausage was fried, the lefse was brought to the table, the candles were lit, so now it was for us to sit down. John had arrived for his vacation and he read the Christmas gospel, and we all sang Christmas songs. I had made plenty candles - a thing the children were so eager to watch me do.

By now we were invited to come upstairs and when we got there, the children were let in one at a time. When we saw the lit up tree there were "Oh's" and "Ah's." Gifts were not many in those days, but everyone got something. Lotta was especially happy about her gift from Uncle Johannes - a little iron kettle. We were all happy and when we had heard more about why we had Christmas, the children had to go to bed.

I had gone to the woods that fall taking Mina and Lotta with me, and we picked hazel nuts. These we laid in the sun to dry. When they were dry enough, we took the husks off. I got some old muslin, made a bag for each of the girls and filled them with hazel nuts and hung them up in the pantry. Now between Christmas and New Years, Pastor and Mrs. T.A.Torgerson invited the young married couples and other young ones over one evening to share in picking the Christmas tree. So Levor and Ida were invited too, and Margit and I stayed home with the children, and we gave them a little hammer and they would sit and crack nuts.

Time went on, and spring came and brought longer days. It also brought warm weather so the little ones could go barefooted. It was at this time Celia received a note from Mr. N.Landsverk of Fertile, Ia. that he had an organ he would sell her at a reasonable pri-

ce. He said he had ordered it for a man who did not want it because it had imitation pipes on, instead of the common decorations most of the organs had then. Well, it was to go to Fertile and see what we could do. John was home at that time, and he would take her to Fertile. I was invited to go along as Mrs. Landsverk claimed I was a relative of hers. So we three got ready and went. We went early one morning, stayed over until the next day. Mrs. Landsverk and I visited and talked about our folks that were still in Norway, and I was glad I had come along. The next day we loaded the organ into the light spring wagon and said goodbye to our friends who were more than friends, as Mrs. was a relative of mine. We reached home late in the day, bringing the organ. There was really excitement at home then, when they came home bringing the organ.

We thought Mama would let Lotta and Mina stay up a while longer that evening, but when bed time came they had to go to bed. But they decided to stay awake to bear Aunt Celia play; before long Lotta was fast asleep. Mina, too excited, was bound to hear Aunt Celia play, and she heard her play, "The Last Rose of Summer" which she never forgot. Then Johannes had his violin tuned and we had music.

When autumn came, Celia had to go back to teaching. The Strom school, two miles south of here wanted her to come back, and she, as well as they wanted her, liked to go there. She was rated a good teacher. She gave her pupils help when needed, but also made them do the work and find interest in doing so. The school house was close to Aslaug Moster's home, so she stayed with Aslaug and Anna. She also moved her organ over there so Anna Landsverk would stop in on her route around to give music lessons. I often went to my sister, Aslaug's place to stay a day or two, and then we would be in Hjartdal in Telemarken again with friends and relatives. We remembered a lot more of Norway than our sister Margit who was so young when she came here. She and Ida had never cared to go back.

That summer, Ida had a chance to go with some people to North Dakota, so we offered to take care of the children, also the work so she could go and see her relatives, especially her father who was not well. John was spending his vacation here at home then, and he too could help. Ida went and enjoyed her trip as she

got around to see relatives and Friends. The children were well and everything went well.

Aunt Margit read our "Sunday Paper" - "Borneblad" for Mina and Lotta. There were lots of good stories in that paper, and Mina and Lotta rowded up close to Aunt Margit and begged her to read more. Margit read better than I could. I was often bothered with a bronchial cough that affected my throat. Margit read, and sometimes the story was sad and the little girls shed some tears. And again it was like this, "Hip, hop i gallop lige til jeg siger stop."

After three weeks, Ida came home bringing greetings from the North Dakota folks. Mina was remembered by Sissel FASTER, she sending her a book in Norwegian, "Alene i London" or "Alone in London" when translated. Mina was quite happy about the book and Aunt Margit read it for Lotta and Mina.

It was now time to get to the woods and pick plums, grapes and sour crab apples, hazel nuts, and sumac berries for dying yarn and other things. I had some Telemarken friends living on the prairie, and they came to get plums and grapes. One afternoon in early autumn they came, so I got ready to go with them. Their little daughter, Hage, came along too, so Mina, Lotta, and I went with them to the woods and picked almost a sack full of plums. It looked like rain, so we hurried back to the house. Hage was afraid of the thunder, and I asked them to stay until the shower would pass by. Ida cooked coffee and we got doughnuts and coffee, jelly, bread and butter. It was always fun to visit with these friends.

Margit and Ida decided to divide up on the work now. Margit was to do the light cooking and Ida was to do the heavier work. I worked in the garden, raised beans and vegetables and potatoes. I often had a sackful of beans stored away for winter.

My old friend, Margit Lovodden or Buli, as she was often called, would come and stay for a week or two with us. She was a happy old soul and would tell stories. One day the Trustem children and we were sitting on the south side of the road. One of the boys ran out and looked to the east, and he came running back and said, "Here come Margit, the fortune teller." We came up in a hurry and ran home. I said, "Hush Up" to the children but they were happy as it was always the more the merrier to them. O well, old Margit spent some of the time this way as she was not able to work anymore. She and I went calling on the neighbors and we also enjoyed

going to the woods to find plums that Margit could bring home. Ida gave her some goods and made her a dress. When Rev.Torgerson went to Concordia he came by and took her home if she had no other way of going.

We always went to call on Kari Trilhus. Kari was busy with her many jobs, but always took time to talk when we came, and of course the coffee can was cooking, and we had to have coffee before we left. We also had to go into the bedroom and see old Grandma Trilhus who had been bedridden for a number of years. Kari was taking care of her. Kari's oldest daughter was married to D.O.Ellingson and moved away, so Helen was the only one to help her mother.

Later on Ida's aunt from Northwood came to stay a week. She was Ida's oldest aunt. Her name was Henrika Warnson, and she had come from Norway. Her man had been a tailor in Norway so got a job at a clothing store in Northwood.

Time went on, and we had to follow it. John was to be ordained, and besides our relatives here, we expected Anna and family from Northwood, N.D. Uncle Peter, Anna and baby Karine came on Saturday. Ida and Margit were busy - food for a big family had to be prepared for Sunday, and cleaning had to be done to every room in the house. I had white-washed the walls both inside and outside, so it looked nice. Ida had washed windows and hung up clean curtains. The little girls Mina and Lotta had washed the chairs, and now they were playing and having a good time. There was a good swing hung up in an old cottonwood and there we could swing plenty high.

In the evening when Aunt Margit was ready to go out, Mina wanted to go with her, but when they got into the summer kitchen ready to go out, a man was standing in the doorway, so we hurried in again. Auntie told Levor he better go out and he did. He brought the man in and asked if they couldn't fix some food for him. They did and he ate like he was very hungry. Levor told him there was no room for him in the house as we were many, but he would fix up a place for him in the granary, and he seemed pleased to get to sleep there. Levor was up early and went to see if he was getting up, but the man was gone. The man was not talkative but seemed glad to find a place where he could rest. He also seemed anxious to get on his way. It happened quite often that a pedestrian would

come along as walking was very common in those days. There were those we knew as peddlers, tramps, and beggars, walking about on foot.

The next day was Sunday and we were all going to church. Lotta and Mina got to wear their white dresses, but must not get them dirty as they were to wear them the next day when we must have our picture taken. The church was well filled that day. There were many pastors from the different congregations around here. John was ordained, and now he was ready to leave for his mission call to Astoria, Oregon. Helene was going with him. Before they left, she had company that came to say goodbye. Her friends from Northwood came one day for dinner, and there was company now and then. The reason the two, Lotta and Mina, remember that was that they brought their hats. Everybody wore hats in those days.

On December 14th, 1893, Johannes was married to Ella Olson, a sister of our neighbor, Ole Olson married to Maria Roppe. The wedding took place here. They went to church to be married, but the dinner and supper were served here. Neighbors and friends were invited. Two of her sisters and two brothers were here. Her brother, Ole, was a neighbor so didn't have far to come, but the others came from Fillmore County, Minnesota. This was Ella's native home, but she had spent some time working in Minneapolis. She also had a sister living there. She was a good seamstress and had made a very nice dress for Theoline Roppe that we admired so much.

Mina had been very sick the summer before with a painful bone disease, so she could not go to church. So Lotta and Hannah Ingretson stayed at home too, and they had much fun. In the evening after the supper dishes were washed and put away, the young people played games and had a good time. The children sat and watched. Uncle had gotten a couple of rooms at the Kivle home, so they moved in there after they had been in town to get a kitchen stove. They got quite a few wedding presents. Mina still remembers the bed they got from some neighborhood friends.

That winter was a rather cold one. Mina was not able to attend school that winter, so got in on a few other things. One thing she and aunt Margit got to do was go along to see where Uncle Johannes and aunt Ella lived. They had two real nice rooms which Aunt Ella had fixed up.

Mina's leg became better as our Dr. A. Quisling took care of it, but she could not walk yet. He always said, "Next summer you will run like a colt." And so it happened, and that fall she could hardly wait for school to begin.

Before this happened, our little two year old brother, Paul Edwin, was taken sick very suddenly one day. Aunt Margit had taught him the names of the days of the week from Sunday to Saturday, and we older children would stand around and listen and when he came as far as to Saturday, he would burry and say "Sateday" and we would clap our hands. After being sick a week, he died. Ida could not be around as another little boy was born before this happened to Paul Edwin. Pastor Torgerson came to the house and had devotions and I remember he patted Lotta and Mina on the head and said, 'Now you have a little brother in heaven.' Mina did not go along to church but Lotta and Oscar did. Lotta told Mina they got so cold but Mrs. Quisling came and took them in to church where she set them close to the stove so they got good and warm. We did get another brother, Paul, but this time it was Paul Gerhard as they wanted that.

Mama had told us that we would soon have another aunt and in the summer of 1894 Uncle John came home, and on June 26th he was married to Gurine (Julia) Harmon. There was to be a wedding at the Ole Harmon place near Tenold. Aunt Helene was asked to come and help them get ready for the wedding. Mama fixed our clothes, washed and ironed our dresses, and the evening before the wedding, she and Aunt Margit sat on the porch and polished all the shoes. We couldn't get any new clothes, but what we did have to wear was clean and in press. The next day, the 26th was a beautiful day, warm and sunny. We all got ready and went to church. When all was over, we went to Harmons, but Papa waited until the rest had gone as we were taking Anna Gullikson with us, and we stopped in there. Both she and Aunt Aslaug went with us. A cloud passed over and we had a little rain shower, enough for Grandma to open her big umbrella, and for us to crowd up to her. There were several little girls sitting on the lawn when we came there and we joined them. We had dinner, and it was the first time we tasted ice cream, and of course we remembered that!

That beautiful summer, Grandma was busy. She planted a garden east of the house, and we children were with her. Our help

was not too much, but we ran errands for her, and watched how she did it. We had lots of respect for Grandma. She never scolded us, but she demanded respect, and she was always willing to help us in any way she could. But if it was a slice of bread with brown sugar on it, it was to go to Mother or Aunt Margit for that.

We always looked forward to the Fourth of July celebrations at the parsonage. Most of the three congregations would meet there on the Fourth. The families would bring big baskets full of food, and they would find a shady place; we always sat in the shade of the big oak west of the house. Mother and Aunt Margit would spread a tablecloth on the ground and lots of fried chicken meat, biscuits, lemon pie and many other things. Then there was coffee and lemonade. One of the storekeepers from Lake Mills was always busy selling peanuts, candy, and lemonade. At two o'clock it was time for the afternoon program to begin.

There was always an afternoon program at these Fourth of July gatherings. And this time Rasmus B. Anderson, a brother of Mrs.T.A.Torgerson, had promised to come. He came and gave the lecture that day. For some years the congregations gathered at the Somber parsonage on the Fourth of July. One year the Luther Academy Band furnished the music there (this was in 1906).

The summer of 1895 was a busy time here and also so at many places in the neighborhood. Most of the old settlers had been living in log houses, but now they decided it was time to build a frame house, so before long one could hear both sawing and pounding of nails in the neighborhood. Levor was busy hauling lumber, digging the cellar, etc. Mr.Gunder Nelson, a mason from Lake Mills, plastered the cellar and Ole Bulie built the house. Margit and Ida were busy with their work as now they had men to cook for.

Celia and Grandma had planned a trip to North Dakota and were told, "You must go now that you have planned it and written so they expect you." So they took the tram from Northwood and landed in Northwood, N.D. where they were met at the depot by Peter Evanson. Grandma stayed all summer enjoying meeting so many friends and relatives-people who had moved there from Iowa, Minnesota and other places.

The summer went by so quickly and autumn was there in all its beauty before we realized it. The leaves were changing colors and before long the school bells would be ringing. It would be moving

into the new house too. Lotta and Mina didn't think it was so swell to move out of the old house, but dared not say anything about it. The old cupboard was too big for the small rooms, so Albin would not have that hiding place. He was lost once when he was little and we hunted here and there for him and we couldn't find him anyplace. Mama and Aunt Margit were really worried that he had wandered off to the creek and maybe fallen into the water, but then they happened to open one of the cupboard doors and to their joy, and ours too, they found him. He was fast asleep having a good nap.

Levor had bought a windmill and when it was put up, the women told him he must take the lower steps off, but he said. "No, they will have to learn to stay off until they will be able to climb it."

Grandma arrived home that fall in time for potato digging, and the potatoes were to be stored in the basement by the 28th of October, and that was her birthday. It was getting quite cold now, and she was glad to be home again although she had had a good time seeing so many friends and relatives. She and Aunt Margit had the room right above the kitchen that was the warmest upstairs. But then we asked, "Where is Aunt Celia?" O, she was to teach one of the schools in the country in North Dakota that winter. The four oldest children were of school age now and Mina was well enough to go along too.

In the winter of 1895 on the 17th day of December, our sister Martha was born. It had been boys all the time now, so Mina and Lotta were happy it was a girl. Mina had to ask Aunt Margit if she thought the little sister will be of school age before she would have to quit.

There were three big apple trees on the place. They were given to Helene, Anna and Celia by Arne Tostenson. Those apples were really delicious, never have we tasted any better. We used to climb the trees and sit there and eat apples. Our relative from Northwood, Louise Amundson, used to come out with her folks, and Lotta and Louise would go way up high in the trees.

Ingebrit and Kjersti Tollefson and our parents, Levor and Ida, were good friends. Levor and Ingebrit were cousins and Ida always said Kjersti was like a sister to her. So they often visited back and forth. We children were always glad to go along to Tollefsons. Oscar and Albin were great pals of Andrew Tollefson. Christina and

Lotta were good friends, and Mina was with them often too. On the second day of Feb.1896 a little girl was born to the Tollefsons. She was baptized and named Marie Louise, and she and Martha Caspara had some real good times together.

When Grandma came home, Lotta and Mina were glad as Grandma was always willing to help them and now it was potato digging time and Grandma and we helped. The potatoes were to be in the cellar by the 28th of October, Grandma's birthday. We never heard much about birthdays in those days. It was only that one was a year older when a certain date in the year came around and then one should have an extra pat on the back. But we always knew Mama's was the 23rd of June, and Aunt Margit's the sixth of May, and Grandma's the 28th of October.

Either Lotta or Mina had to go to get the mail from Mrs. Torger-son.

The next summer we had company from North Dakota. They came the latter part of June. Aunt Anna and four children, Karine, Mabel, Luella, and Jerome. That summer we had lots of company. Mrs. Mathia Markerson and Anna Myrie came along; a sister and niece of Ingebrit Amundson came to their place but later they came out here to stay a week. Mama had worked for Mrs.Markerson when she lived in North Dakota, so she and Anna Myrie came out here and stayed a week. We were a houseful but it was fun. We had a playhouse and were out there much of the time.

Uncle John had a house right west of us. Just now Uncle was busy teaching parochial summer school, next he helped Rev.Jenson who was not well. Aunt Julia was then alone, but we went over often and now that the N.D. people were here, they were out for afternoon coffee parties here and there, and to visit relatives and friends. Aunt Helene was working at Olsons that summer, so she could come home once in awhile. We often took our lunch outside and sat under the cottonwood trees and ate. We three girls, Mina, Lotta, and Karine, slept on the floor in Grandma's room. Lotta and Karine played and made so much noise that Grandma could not sleep, so she called to Anna and said, "You must get those girls to be quiet now and go to sleep." Mina turned to the wall and tried to obey, but it took the youngsters a little longer, so Papa called and said. "I do not want to hear any more noise from up there," and that finished it for that time.

Aunt Anna had a letter from Uncle Peter that he would be coming to Iowa soon and he could stay a couple of weeks. He came, and Papa went to Northwood to meet him when he got off the tram. They drove along and when they got west, on what we called the "Trilhus Haug," he waved his hand to the southwest and said, "This country is the most beautiful of what I have seen of Iowa."

While here he took some old board he found, also he went to the woods and got some branches, and built two play houses for us children, and, of course, got us children busy fixing and cleaning our rooms. Then he helped Aunt Anna and Mama hang out clothes when they washed.

They were invited here and there to relatives and friends and the time went fast. The two weeks were soon up, and the last Sunday they were here, the folks invited all the near-by relatives here for dinner. The invitations were accepted and they came. Anna Gullikson and her mother came with Uncle Johannes and family. Also Uncle John and Aunt Julia, Tollef and Kari Trilhus and their two sons, Ole and Tollef, Jr., Ingegrit, Kjersti, Andrew, Christena, and Marie, D. O., and Margit, Christena, Ole and Mina Ellingson. The Bakke family had not arrived, and we had not heard if they could come. It was dinner time, the long tables were set and the cooks had dinner ready, so Levor said, "We that are here better eat," so everybody took their places. But there was still one empty place, so Kari said, "Come right away, Man, and sit down - we are hungry." Grandma came. They all got busy both talking and eating. After the cooks, children, and all had eaten, Knut and Kristi Bakke came driving up to the house. They had been delayed, that was why they could not be here earlier. Kristi was a cousin of Kari Trilhus, also of Grandfather Levor Levorson. When everyone had eaten and dishes were washed, everyone went out to sit under the old apple trees. Kari FASTER. as she was called by her brothers family, was really the life of the party, keeping everyone entertained and in good spirits. They visited and had a good time, until it was getting to be time to think it would be nice to have a cupful of some good coffee, and that Ida would have to cook. It was made, and a lunch was also served. Everyone said goodbye to the North Dakota folks. Lotta and Karine had to bring Grandma's dresses, bonnet, hat and everything they had taken from Grandma's room back where they found them. All good things had now come to an end.

The next day we had to say goodbye to all of our cousins, Uncle and Auntie, as they left for home, leaving only some special memories with us.

The next event in the history of the family happened on the 19th day of November 1897 when the twin boys were born here. Herman, the oldest, weighed one half pound more than Johannes. We had school here at the time and the teacher was boarding here. She had her bicycle which she used every day going to school and coming home. But today she had to come home for dinner and she took Mina along and gave her a ride on her bike. It was a beautiful day, so warm they could stand outside on the porch and wash clothes. Grandma was busy caring for the babies and Mama, but they were healthy and adjusted themselves in the cradle and did not cry or fuss. But they were two instead of one so it took more clothes and everything, so Kari Faster came, first with her cream mush and yards of gingham, and later many more came bringing food and other things. The boys grew and were good babies.

Aunt Celia and a friend of hers, who had relatives not far from Joice, came and spent the winter of 1897 and 1898 here. This friend was Petera Brye and she went to stay with her folks part of the time, but came back later in the winter and sewed for the twins and Mama. She also sewed for Aunt Celia who had met Olaus Johnson while in North Dakota, and they planned to be married that spring. She chose May 30th as her wedding day and that was also her birthday. Olaus came a few days before the wedding as he had not met the family, and he had to get his license too. He came to Lake Mills, and Father was there to meet him when he stepped off the tram. We children were quite anxious to see the man who was taking Aunt Celia away. They came home in the afternoon, and Aunt Celia introduced him to all of us. Aunt Helene was at home helping to get ready for the wedding. She was going to bake a cake and of course make it extra good, but when it was baked, it was so hard and heavy she could not save it for the wedding. She wanted the children to eat it, but we said: "Aunt Margit, she can bake real good cake."

We wanted to go to the woods and get hawthorn flowers as Olaus and Aunt Celia were ready to go and we were going with them and help find where they were. There was "Langehaugen"

and a hollow where the hawthorn trees stood that was named by Aunt Aslaug who called it the "Thieves Den." There were some beautiful flowers just coming out. Olaus cut off some branches and we carried them home. Aunt Helene decorated the dining room with oak leaves and flowers in front of the south window, and under these decorations. Aunt Celia was married to Olaus Johnson. Now all of Grandma's children, except Aunt Helene and Uncle Nils were married. Papa had bought Aunt Celia's organ for twenty-five dollars as she was not taking that along. It was not a large wedding but relatives, neighbors, and a few friends were invited and came. Dinner was served at noon, and in the afternoon Aunt Celia and Olaus Johnson were married. They stayed here a week or more after the wedding. They went to see Aunt Aslaug and Anna Gullikson, Uncle Johannes and other relatives, and soon after this it was time to say goodbye. Lotta said to Mina, "Ja, Grandma gave Aunt Celia a good talking to, and she quoted from the Bible too. Grandma is good at that." Papa took them to Lake Mills. We did shed a few tears, but when Papa came home, we did as usual - ran down to the bridge to meet him and have a ride home. Papa had brought us May baskets from Uncle Olaus, so we were happy and our sorrow was forgotten. Once when Lotta and Mina ran to meet him, he had shaved off his whiskers while in town, so we didn't know him, and we turned back and made it home again in a hurry.

June came and the school bell rang and we hurried off to school. This was the beginning of our spring term. Our good teacher, Miss Tena Anderson, was coming back after a short vacation and we were happy. We four - Oscar, Albin, Mina, and Lotta - were of school age, and we were all ready to go that first Monday morning. But this was to be Miss Anderson's last term of school in Bristol Township No.1. So she asked us to tell our folks that she would like to have us bring a picnic lunch, take it to Northwood to her sister's place, and have our picnic on the lawn there. Also, we were to have our picture taken with her and everything turned out as she wished it would. Papa had an errand to Northwood so he took us four. Regina Trustem, and Peter, and Theoline Roppe, and most of the children came and we had a very happy day.

In the early morning of September 13th, 1899, Mina took her twin brothers for a ride in their little wagon. We went to call on cousin Lorentz and Aunt Julia. She asked, "Is everything OK at

home?", and Mina answered, "I think so." Uncle John was not at home, he was helping out at a place where the pastor was sick. After swinging Lorentz and the twins a while in the hammock that Uncle had made and hung between two oak trees, word came from home that Mina must come and bring the children. Aunt Julia and Lorentz went with her. Lorentz was a friend of Martha's and when we got home, Lotta came from school and she had to care for the children. Mina went in to see Mama and there sat our neighbor, Pernille swinging a little bundle back and forth in her arms. It was a baby girl and she was not so little either. Grandma was busy as usual when the babies arrived - she was really boss then. We were not allowed to leave the outside door open for more than a minute at the time. Now it was to find a name for the little girl. Almost everyone in the relationship had a namesake here, but Aunt Helene and Uncle Nils, so she was named for them and baptized Nora Henrietta. Mina was now, and had been, going for confirmation instruction, also attending her last year of public school.

On September 10th, 1900 our cousin Ruth Magdalena was born and later in the fall Aunt Julia, Lorentz, and Ruth were moving to Lake Mills to live with Uncle Nils and Aunt Helene until Uncle John had finished his job and could move to South Dakota. He had had a call from there and it was all settled - he should move that year. They got ready to leave Iowa. They made the trips around to see the folks and bid goodbye on both places. We missed having them near, but it was nice to know Uncle John was well and could go back to the work he had prepared himself for.

In the spring of 1901 Ingvald Lauritz was born. He was really a big baby and a good baby too. He was born April 8, 1901 on a beautiful sunny Sunday. Ingvald became the carpenter in the family. He was always interested in making things. Once he made a small radio and it had earphones. Grandma was willing to try it out so she sat there as proud as could be with the earphones on and said: "Of course I hear something!" Ingvald finished school from the Somber Day School and later attended and finished a course at Iowa State College in Ames.

Grandma was really young in spirit, so we never thought of her as a very old lady. She had something to say both to the youngsters and the old. Her old neighbor across the road said: There is

something good that follows Mari when she comes." I remember one time when we were eating breakfast Regina Trustem came running in, went right over to Grandma and said, "You must come with me, my mother is so sick and she wants you." Of course, Grandma hurried off with her. It was the way neighbors helped each other out.

I had finished my books in our school that spring, and as I was anxious to get more schooling, Mama finally said, "If you can stay with Aunt Helene and Uncle Nils you may go." I knew I could, so I got ready. I was so anxious to learn more. Lotta planned to attend school in the home school that year so would be staying home. I got along quite well and I liked school, but at Thanksgiving time Mother told me I had to come home as Grandma and Auntie were not able to do so much, and Lotta had to keep on as she did not plan to attend next year. I told my teacher I would come till after Thanksgiving, then I would have to quit and go home where I was needed. She thought it was too bad; I was to be promoted to another room but I had to go home and help out. Mother said, "You can go next year as Lotta can help out then."

Christmas and company came. Aunt Celia, Uncle Olaus, and little Joice came to spend their vacation in Iowa. We hustled around to get things ready, decorated our tree - a little oak that was brought from the timber. Our decorations were candles that we tied on, some red apples, and some bags made from paper that we had saved from different things - most of it from what had been around cottonball rolls that had been used while quilting, some were blue and some were pink. Mrs. T.A.Torgerson showed Aunt Helene how to fold and cut the paper bags, and they looked real lacy and nice when they were filled with candy or nuts and hung on the tree. Grandma always gave us money for nuts and candy. Aunt Margit made cookies with holes in the center to hang on the tree. Christmas was always celebrated in remembrance of the birthday of the Christ Child that was born in Bethlehem.

Father was school director that year, and we had to board the teacher so we had plenty to do. Lotta, Oscar, Albin, Paul and Martha attended school. Mina did help with clothes washing, always hanging them out.

Our neighbor, Knut Trustem, was very sick with cancer, and he passed away shortly after Christmas. This old neighbor had lived

here a year longer than Grandma, and being so near she went to see him quite often during his long and often very hard sickness. She was there the last morning he lived to say farewell to the old neighbor and friend.

We had gotten a lot of snow and Ingeborg who had returned home from the hospital that fall was not able to be with to church, so we met at the house and Rev. A.J.Torgerson, his pastor, gave a short devotion there. Aunt Margit and I, also Caroline, had to ride with Albert Ingebritson and his mother. A lot of snow had come down in the night and it was cold. Father had gone to church early to build a fire. Andrew and Julia had been there and lined the grave with white sheeting, and I remember the bouquet of yellow roses they brought. His pastor preached the sermon to a lot of relatives and friends, and the old pioneer was laid to rest by the side of his wife, Kari.

On the 27th day of February 1903, another little boy was bom. He was not as big a baby as his older brother, but Papa said he is like my father both in looks and stature. Now it was to find a name for him. Someone had suggested Levor, so it would be Levor the third on the place, but no, it was not to be that! So Mama said, "You liked the name Selma so well here some years ago, why not name him Selmer for your favorite Aunt Sissel. And so he was named Selmer Adolph for Aunt Sissel and Aunt Aslaug.

On the fourth of March that spring, our neighbor girl Addie Ingebritson was to be married. There was to be a large wedding as neighbors friends as well as relatives were invited. The folks could not go, but Lotta, Oscar and Mina went, also our teacher went to Bristol church where the couple were to be married. After the ceremony was over, Oscar had to take the horses home, but we girls planned to go in and eat supper and we did, and met a lot of our friends there too as it was really a large wedding. It had snowed a little so it was wet and slushy as we walked home, but it did not matter as we felt we had had a good time. Walking was a common way of traveling when going to the neighbors. Even Grandma at her age would walk a mile or two. It was two miles from our schoolhouse to the one out by Strom and that was close to Aslaug, Grandma's sister, and she often walked over there. Aunt Aslaug would walk to church and that was two miles.

Once a year in the summer time we would be invited to Auntie

and Anna Gullekson for a Sunday dinner.

Our brother Edwin was born the 25th of September 1905. Papa said, "Now I have a baseball nine." It was really getting quite crowded in the house so the question was, What can be done about it? Then there was the "John house" as we called it because Uncle John had had it, so Papa moved that west up to the house, built a little entrance in between a door leading out of the entrance both to the north and the south. Now we had plenty room but it was not so handy. But money was not plentiful in those days, and it took good management to be able to get along. Mother took good care of the clothes and was careful to make things reach. After Uncle Nils came to Scarville, Papa would drive there to get our groceries, also our dress goods. Papa was always busy. He lived near the South Silver Lake Church, so was often janitor and sexton of the cemetery. But he had help now from the older boys and so had Mother, so they could let up on the work and let the young ones do some of it.

Our little baby sister was born that year on the 28th of September 1907. When I came downstairs that morning, grandmother called to me and said, "Mina, come and see your baby sister; she is a perfect baby, well in every way." The doctor had just left and grandma had taken over. So much had to be done now before little sister was to be baptized. A name had to be chosen, and sponsors had to be found somewheres in the congregation, as all the uncles and aunts living near here had served in that way. Mrs. Ole Kaasa became her "gudmor" and she was named Valborg Amanda. It had always been the style in the community to invite the witnesses for dinner that Sunday of baptism and all came. Mr. and Mrs. Ole Kaasa and Christena and Ole Ellingson who were the sponsors.

The next summer, 1908, was a summer for company. It was the summer that Aunt Anne Petterson came to celebrate her sister Ida's birthday the 23rd of June. She was mother's oldest sister who had lived in Iowa but left there and moved to North Dakota after her husband Albin Nelson died. At this time she was married to Jens Petterson and lived in Mayville, N.D.

There was company off and on that summer, and places to go to too. Later in the summer Aunt Anna went on a trip. Grandma took off for South Dakota to visit Uncle John and family, and Aunt Anna to Aurelia, Iowa to visit her daughter Clara's uncle, the Lars

Nielson family. She stayed there a week. Then she came here and Mama and she went to Northwood to visit relatives and friends.

After they returned home, mama got sick with what the Norwegian doctors called "benvaerk." We had to stay up nights as we had to use hot packs for the pain. The pain pills were not much in use at that time. Martha had a full time job taking care of little Valborg, and I had to help take care of mama. Time went on and the next spring mama was able to walk again. But all the time between, especially in the winter, she had been suffering from this sickness, but the Dr. that came to her now, promised she would be able to walk as soon as it healed up which would be soon and it did.

The three youngest boys were of school age now, and besides they helped do chores, and when spring came, it was to help with field work too. But all work and no fun did not go so good so they had their ball games in the summertime, and in the winter it was ice skating, snow balling, and other games. Selmer was a real squirrel when it came to climbing trees and good as a bird when he got to the tree tops. They all played ball, but Edwin was especially so and played in the Tenold team awhile.

Ingvold and Selmer were interested in music too and decided to get a phonograph. They had some money, but not enough, so all of us gave what we could and they went to grandma. So at last they bought a phonograph and we all enjoyed the music. They played the "Whistler and His Dog" which was a favorite with all of us. And the song "When You and I Were Young Maggie" was grandma's favorite, so they had to play it real often for her. She always said, "Now you must play, "When You and I Were Young Maggie" ", and it was played until we almost learned it.

D. O. and Mrs. Ellingson were going to St. Ansgar to spend a weekend with their daughter, Mrs. Fred Hanson, who lived near St. Ansgar. They offered Grandmother and Aunt Margit to go along and they would take them to the old Assor Groth home to visit Grandmother Groth. Grandmother was anxious to go, but Auntie thought it would be quite a trip so maybe they should not go. But the folks urged them to get ready now when they had such a good chance. Neither of them had seen old St. Ansgar or had a car ride across the prairie in years, so Grandma enjoyed it very much. Many memories of the dim past came back to her as they rode down the lane leading to the Groth home. When they arrived

there, Clara Groth came to the door and D.O. told her he was bringing company for Mrs.Groth. Clara and Alma took them in to their Grandmother's room and there was a happy reunion when Kjersti and Mari met again after all these years. They stayed Saturday and Sunday with Kjersti and had a wonderful time. Coming home, it was wonderful to hear them tell about their trip.

Once again Grandmother was invited to Lyle, Minnesota where Anne Larson lived. Way back in time she had been married to Nils Levorson Slaaten. But Aunt Margit thought it was too far for Mari to go, so she did not go.

Grandmother did a lot of reading. Here "Kirketidende" did not lay around unread, and so with the "Decorah Posten." The day she expected these papers, someone would have to go and get the mail and before the day was over, she had read them. She always told father if she thought it was something he should know. She said, "Listen to this, Levor" - so he was sure to get it. She got her second sight and did not need glasses. She had most always been boss in the garden.

The first World War began now in 1914 and Grandma read whatever she could find in the paper about it. April 1917, there were few people who realized the sacrifice our country would share in winning the war that raged in Europe. Aunt Margit and Grandma had lived when the Civil War broke out and had seen their brother John Johnson enlist and never return.

Father and Mother decided to take off for North Dakota at this time to see relatives and friends both in Northwood and Mayville. They took Valborg along and we others were to take care of things at home. As Lotta was married and had gone to make another home for herself, Martha and Mina had to help Auntie and Grandma.

The young men were enlisting. Paul had entered the service in November 1915 - enlisting in the Navy. He became a chief gunner's mate. When Father heard that Oscar planned to enlist, they came home sooner than we had expected them. Oscar enlisted and served overseas with Headquarters Company of the 61st Infantry 5th Division, and saw active fighting in St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne. He was discharged July 28, 1919.

In May 1918, Albin entered the service. He served at Great Lakes Training Station and Detroit, and was released in 1919 when

he returned home. Now the three oldest boys had been in service. Worth County had a record - she had sent over five hundred men to the camps and the line of battle.

The ladies who were home were also busy doing Red Cross work, and were keeping the home fires burning while the boys were gone. The farmers and others worked, and one of the achievements that they supported was the Liberty Loan achievement. Our neighbors, friends, and relatives had someone or more in camp or service, so everybody tried to help win the war.

Grandma had her garden. One thing she raised plenty of was navy beans. When the beans were ready to be taken, she was ready to get them harvested. In later years the boys helped; they fixed some kind of a machine to make it easier for her. But as time went on, she sat more in her room, did a lot of knitting and piecing blocks for quilts and so forth. But when coffee time came around, she came out to get what she said, "A good cupful of Ida's coffee." On one of Ida's birthdays, she gave her a good-sized coffee pot, as she always liked her morning and afternoon coffee.

The first World War came to its end November 1919. The armistice was signed on the eleventh day of November. People were happy over it, but there was many a vacant chair in the different homes as many of the boys were sleeping in Flanders Fields. So both joy and sorrow came home with the end of the war. The boys found work after returning, and that made them forget the war. Many were sick and needed a rest.

Many other things came on, but the years slid by and Grandma's walk became slower. But she managed to walk to Aunt Helene's who had moved to the Roppe-Olson place. She also attended the Ladies Society meetings, and she walked to church on Sundays. If the young people had an ice cream social, as they had sometimes, she was there. Once she came home real happy, telling us she had met a lady whose parents had come from Hjartdal, Telemarken. She had had a real good visit with her, and she was so happy over this.

Birthdays were seldom mentioned in those days, but the reason we always knew when Grandmother's was, is that we were supposed to finish corn picking till the 28th of October, and that was Grandma's birthday. On the 28th of October 1925, Grandmother's

birthday. Mrs.Dena Torgerson came to spend the afternoon with her. As they sat together in front of the big heating stove, we others were in the kitchen getting a birthday lunch ready. Aunt Margit and Mother had also joined them and now the two old grandmothers, who had been neighbors and friends so many years sang,

*Taenk naar engang den taage er forsvunden,
som her sig saenker over livet ned,
naar dagen, evig klar, er hist oprunden,
og lys omstraalder hvert af mine fjed.*

A.S.V.

It was Grandmother's last birthday.

She spent a good winter, was up every day and was able to walk to church. But a case of influenza came into the home in the month of March, and she, with some of the others, had to give in and go to bed. I met her the next morning and we were both sick, so she said, "Mina, you will have to go and lay down, and so will I. But look at these little rugs I have knit. Do you think I can send them to Anna and Celia?" I said, "O, yes, you can." We did go to each our room. Most of the family got sick with the flu, but Martha and the boys were able to do the work.

Grandmother passed away after being sick for three weeks with bronchial pneumonia. She was buried April 2nd, 1926 at the ripe age of eighty-nine years and five months. She left seven children, four boys and three girls, and many grandchildren - even some great grandchildren. She had really been a pioneer woman, coming here when the country was new and seen it grow into a good farming country. Our county seat moved from Bristol to Northwood. All this and that she was happy to tell anyone who would listen to her.

Grandma had been busy doing her share helping where there was sickness in the homes. She could leave home to help others, as she had her sister, Margit, to look after the children. She had taken her sister, Margit home to be with her when she was very sick with rheumatic fever, and now after she was well again she stayed and helped in every way she could. Grandmother was blessed with good health and could go and care for the sick, and help out when needed. Once she came home from a place where she had stayed a while longer than expected and she said, "I felt bad for the young daughter who was so young and had so much to do."

And so to this pioneer grandmother the Lord had given health and opportunity to do it.

We children knew when to go to Grandmother, and when not to. If we had been naughty and Mother had punished us, it was no use for us to go to Grandmother until we had been sorry and said so to Mama. She did a lot of handwork. She made different kinds of quilt tops, but it seemed she liked her log cabin pattern best.

The day of her funeral was a nice spring day. As they carried her casket across the meadow to church, every one of the family, who were well enough, followed along. The congregation and neighbors had gathered too, and when all was over, they wended their way home again slowly across the meadow. Even if slowly, it did not cover much of our time, as it was Grandma's land our little church is on. We also thought as the Norwegian poet, "walk slowly - we will get home soon enough."

I Hjartdalsoga IIIa kan du finne desse folka:

Flatland

Flatland Haugen gnr. 23.2

Bruksnamnet er Hauganmoen

uttale: `hæugein`mo`n

2) Johannes Jonson Hauganmoen, brukar ca. 1827-48, f 1780 her d 1862

gllg? 1827 m Kari Haraldsdtr. Nordbø f 1796 på Nedre Nordbø.

Born:

1 Jon, "Store-Jon" f 1808, sjå 2a). (Far til Grandma)

Born i ekteskapet med Kari: Tvillingane

2 Jon f 1828 og

3 tvilling d s.å.

4 Bergit f 1830. Tvillingane

5 Gunhild f 1832 d 1833 og

6 Harald f 1832 d 1833.

7 Gunhild f 1834.

8 Harald f 1836.

9 Ola f 1839.

2a) Jon Johannesson, "Store Jon", leigebuar hjå faren da han stifta sin eigen familie, f 1808 d 1849 her.

glg 1833 m

Anne Anundsdr. Tho f 1809 på Nord-To d 1846.

Gllg m

Ragnhild Hansdr., alder uviss.

Born i første ekteskap, sjå Saten u/Ambjørndalen.

Jon og Anne budde i Saten nokre år.

Born i andre ekteskap:

4 Torbjørg f 1846 gm Kjetil Jonson, Stuvøy.

Torbjørg skreiv seg for Dalen. Ho kom til Dalen i Gvammen da det gjekk ut med foreldra på Hauganmoen

Nord-To:

Sonen Anund tok over garden.

4) Anund Jonson Tho, gardbrukar, eigar ca. 1821-49, f 1779 d 1864 g 1807 m Mari Halvorsdr. Dalen f 1778 på Ambjørndalen d 1864.

Born:

1 Aslaug f 1807 g 1848 m Kristian Olson Hovdejordsnuten, uvisst kor dei busette seg.

2 Anne f 1809 d 1846 g 1833 m Jon Johanneson Flatland, til Hauganmoen. (Mor til Grandma)

3 Halvor f 1813, sjå 5).

4 Gunleik f 1815 d 1837 ugift.

Ambjørndalen:

Ospelon plass u/Ambjørndalen

(Ospelon låg ned for urene og ufsehenget ovanfor Ambjørndalen. Der var bratt og turrlendt.

Ospelon var bustad dei første tiåra av 1800-talet. Der er ikkje att hus.

Kjetil og Anne budde i Ospelon frå om lag 1809.

1) Kjetil Halvorson Ambjørndalen, brukar ca. 1809-20, f 1783 på Ambjørndalen d 1876 i Bråten g 1809 m Anne Olsdr. Gutehus f 1783 i Kåsa u/Nordbø d 1858 i Bråten. Born, sjå Bråten.

Huslyden flutte til Bråten u/To etter nokre år i Ospelon.)

Seinast i 1835 budde ein ny familie i Ospelon.

2) Jon Johanneson gm Anne Anundsdr.

Born, sjå Saten.

Dei flutte til ein av Satenplassane etter kort tid.

Saten u/Ambjørndalen

Det er uvisst kor lenge det budde folk i Saten. Ei tid var det tre Satinplassar. Namnet kjem frå Sate, lita flate i fjellet, og har vel først vore bruka til slåtte.

Jon Johanneson Flatland "Store-Jon" f 1808 d 1849 g 1833 m

Anne Anundsdr. Tho f 1809 på Nord-To d 1846 på Hauganmoen, sjå der.

Jon gllg m

Ragnhild Hansdr.

Born:

1 Aslaug f 1833, til Amerika.

2 Johannes f 1835 i Ospelon, til Amerika. Han var med i borgarkrigen i Amerika, og sette livet til.

3 Mari f 1836 i Saten d 1927 i Iowa. Ho reiste til Amerika i 1853, truleg saman med broren og slektningar frå Flatland. I emigrasjonsprotokollen skreiv ho seg for Mari Tho. Ho kom til St. Ansgar, Iowa, og der møtte ho mannen sin, Levor Levordson Rueslåtta frå Hol i Hallingdal. Dei kjøpte land, og fekk seg ein farm i Worth county, Bristol township, Iowa. Dei kalla farmen for Mariland etter Mari. På farmen har dei stelt til eit familiemuseum.

Mari og Levor fekk ein stor ungeflokk, og etterkomarar har vore attende til Hjartdal.

Born:

Mina Katrine, Lotta, Oscar, Albin John, Paul Edvin, Paul Gerhard, Martha Caspara, Herman, Johannes, Nora Henrietta og Ingvald Laurits.

Foreldra til Mari flutte til Hauganmoen, Flatland, der dei var leigebuarar hjå foreldra til Jon.

Dei døydde tidleg, og ho og syskena budde hjå ein slektning på Flatland til dei reiste til Amerika.

Material for Grandma's Story was provided to Telemark Historielag by Albin Levorson of Northwood, Iowa.

The material was first provided to Gene Estensen of Marietta, Georgia as he researched the life of John Johnson Thoe, American Civil War soldier from Hjartdal.

See the December 2000 issue of Telemark Historielag for the complete story of this soldier of the 15th Wisconsin Regiment, "the Norwegian Regiment".