

## **BEGINNINGS OF THE "SLIP UP CREEK" SETTLEMENT.**

After seeding was done in the spring of 1872, a party of 5 men started out to look for government land for themselves and for a number of relatives and neighbors who were without land and who wanted to move west if a satisfactory location was found.

This party consisted of Lasse Bothun with a team of horses and covered wagon, Lars Brandvold, Johannes E. Berdahl with a team of horses and covered wagon and his two sons, Andrew and Erick. Lasse Bothun was the leader and instigator of this expedition to the southern part of Dakota Territory as he in 1861 just after the Territory was organized had gone from Wisconsin on foot across Iowa to Sioux City and thence to join the first actual Norse settlement on the Missouri bottom at or near Vermillion, D. T. Here he entered into government employ as a freighter of supplies for the soldiers at forts farther up the river.

He was elected and served in the 2nd. and 3rd. legislatures of the Territory in 1862 and 1863. Was an enlisted soldier and lieutenant in the company of Home Guards to protect the settlers from the Indian depredations. Was married in 1862. After much strife and trouble with the Indians those war years, and having a family now, he decided in 1865 to move back to more civilized and stabalized communities, and finally late in 1865 stopped. at Calmar, Iowa, where for 3 years he joined in the clothing business with a tailor by the name of Grundeland.

Selling out there he came to Amherst Twp., Fillmore Co., Minn. in 1868, where he bought 80 acres of good prairie land, built on it a home and began farming. Here he came to be neighbor of the Johannes E. Berdahl family who had come to the neighborhood in 1866 from Houston county. The winter of 1871 he was a representative from our county in the Minnesota legislature at St. Paul.

As stated, the 5 of us with the 2 teams and two covered wagons wherein we brought with us a breaking plow, axes and spades, some oats for horse feed, cooking utensils, flour, meat and potatoes for our food and blankets for our bedding, proceeded west thru the southern tier of counties to Luverne, in Rock County, thence south west to Sioux Falls, D. T. which at the outset was our first objective point. Before reaching the village we came to the Sioux river at or near where East Sioux Falls was later located where we forded the river, proceeded across the hills and again crossed the river at about where is now the foot of 9th. street. Coming into the town we found C. K. Howard located in the old commissary store on 10th. street and Willie Van Eps had started a store in a small frame building on 8th. street. In between these two stores, as I remember it, was a small frame building with the sign above the door, R. F. Pettigrew, Land Office and Locating Agent. North of 8th. street on Phillips Ave. was the Stockades called the fort where was the post office and some other offices. Over one of the doors we saw the sign, Cyrus Walts, Surveyor and Locating Agent.

This was about all we saw comprising the village of Sioux Falls at that time. But about 10 blocks of the S. W. quarter of section 16 had been platted by Dr. J. L. Phillips which now includes the main business section of the city, and besides those mentioned a few other families had settled here.

We found now that all the timber land and much of the bottom land on the Sioux river as far north as Madery in Brookings Co. was taken and settled on, but that the prairie land was all vacant on both sides of the river. Not wishing to go farther into the wilderness we decided to engage surveyor, Cyrus Walts, to show us around on vacant land as near to timber as possible.

The first day he took us east and south of the village across the line into Lincoln Co. But the land we saw that day did not suit us. Some was too hilly and some too flat, as it is in northern Lincoln Co. So the next day we went northeast, most of the way along a military road laid out in 1864 by the military company from Yankton and Vermillion in a straight line southwest from the Pipestone quarries in Minnehaha to Sioux Falls.

About 10 miles N. E. of Sioux Falls we found a government stake near a creek which our guide said was named Slip Up. This stake was plainly marked and found to be at SW. corner sec. 30 and NW. corner 31, T. 103, R. 49 and SE. corner sec. 25 and NE. corner sec. 36, T. 103, R. 49, being on the range line between two townships.

Looking north from this stake we could see quite a bit of this Slip Up creek valley, and it looked good to us, for here was water in the creek and meadow land on the creek bottom and apparently fairly good soil on both sides.

So without further investigation, during the day we began to pick our locations, because we thought we could not afford to spend more days, as we were paying the locating agent \$5.00 pr. day furnishing transportation and food.

If we had been wise we should have spent more time and secured possibly a little better land for ourselves, but our loss was perhaps gain for some of those whom we expected to come later on.

This writer was the first to pick out his location in sec. 30-103-48. Father next to mine, then Lasse Bothun, then brother Erick and Lars Brandvold, all side by side north on the creek.

When the description of each ones claim was figured out and written down by our locating agent the day was nearly spent, so it was to drive back to Sioux Falls where had been our camp now for several nights.

The next morning was the 1st. of June, 1872. So after securing citizen papers for some of the company we started to drive across the prairies for Vermillion where the Land Office was at that time, to make filings on our claims.

After making our filings at the land office on June 2nd., we spent 2 or 3 days visiting some of those early settlers where and with whom Mr. Bothun had spent the years 1861 to 1865 and with his wives mother, brother and sister, now married to Ole J. Nesheim who still lived in the Vermillion neighborhood.

We had work to do on our claims so coming back, we established our camp on Mr. Bothun's claim. Brother Erick and I began breaking the sod with our two horse-teams. The law required 5 acres breaking on each claim to hold it against all comers, and after six months to show that we had been there to make more improvements, starting the claim residence and the like. Well, we did the breaking on all the claims, but did not get time to start any building, except on Bothun's claim. Father, Bothun and Brandvold started the dug-out while we were breaking as he intended to move out for good with his family in the fall. The rest of us would make a trip out here then to make our further improvements as we could not move out for good until the next spring. We started for home, I think, the last days of June. We could report to neighbors wishing to join us here next spring that all the prairies, east, north and west of us were vacant and open for settlers.

While we were on our way home another company of homeseekers from our neighborhood in Fillmore Co. had followed our trail to Sioux Falls and there found out where we had located our claims. This company had all their belongings with them and were prepared to settle down for

good on locations they might find to suit them. This company of homesteaders consisted of the following: Johan J. Stokke and wife, his two sons, John E. and Thomas, grown to manhood and 4 or 5 daughters younger, and his old mother; Ove Erickson, his wife, two sons, Erick and Martin, and one daughter, also with them his foster mother and her daughter; Andreas Pederson Nyenget, his wife and two daughters; Anton Hegge, a single man, and Lars Olson Griner or Bonrud, a young widower. These people found our claims and decided to pick their future homes next to ours, so Johan Stokke filed on land on the creek joining mine on the south, his son, Thomas, on land joining his on the south and east and next to his the old grandmother filed. The Ove Erickson family selected land on the creek joining Johan Stokke's on the south. Andreas Pederson family settled on land joining our claims on the north, Anton Hegge north of him again, and Lars Olson Griner pre-empted a quarter section to the west of us where land was more level.

Johan Stokke's oldest son, John E., took more time to investigate this prairie land and found, 8 or 9 miles farther north, as he thought, richer soil where he established his future home. While we were the first to file and do breaking in this northeastern part of Minnehaha Co. comprising the townships of Edison, Palisades, Highland and Logan, the last named company became the first real settlers of this territory and eastern Sverdrup township.

From this first locating trip we came home shortly after July 4th. in time for haying and harvesting. I went back to Houston, Minn. where I had been employed for some time before as clerk in a store with W. C. Dyer.

The Homestead law required that a person should not be away from his claim more than six months. And we had all the time planned to come back here in the fall so as to live up to the law and perfect our titles by making some further improvements.

Mr. Bothun moved out with his family and all his belongings in October having with them Allan K. Hamre as helper who also filed on land near Bothun. His brother in law, Ole J. Nesheim, came here also in October with his family from Vermillion, and filed on land joining our claims on the north. So now there was quite a community of settlers all ready in October, 1872, up and down the creek from Ove Erickson farthest south to Anton Hegge on the north.

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#### About Our Second Trip Out Here in November, 1872.

A day or two after the election in November, 1872, the Berdahls, father, Erick and myself, taking with us mother's cousin, Chris. O. Henjum, started out for the west to make further improvements as mentioned before. Lars Brandvold was sick so he could not go. The weather had been good all fall so we had no thought of winter setting in on our way west, nor did we know how these winter storms sometimes sets on these wide open prairies.

With a team of good horses and a covered wagon prepared to camp out nights we made fairly good time until we reached Fairmont where we camped outside of the little village. That morning on waking up we found it had been snowing all night, and the wind coming from the northwest. The horses were standing knee deep in snow. The harnesses and things taken out of the wagon to make room for our beds were covered up with snow. A real blizzard such as we had never seen was upon us. Digging our things out of the snow and getting our horses harnessed, we managed to drive into town and found a little hotel, a stable for our horses, and stayed there all day. The next day was still windy but sun coming out sometimes, so we started out and reached a farmer near Jackson where we were given lodging and stable for our horses. Here we stayed all the next

day as the blizzard was still on. After resting one day with this farmer, and the wind having subsided some, we started out hoping to reach Worthington which we did but late at night. All day was extremely cold and many snow drifts to pull through for our team, so it was one of the hardest trips that I have ever traveled. In order to keep from freezing we would walk, run and tramp, changing about to drive. We were not dressed for such weather, having no overshoes or fur coats. Overshoes were not invented until years later.

Arriving at Worthington late in the evening we found the Sater Lumber Yard where in a little office building was a young man whom we knew from our home county. He took us in to his office, and found a place for our horses. This was Saturday night, a week and a half since we left home. Here we stayed all day Sunday and rested after our strenuous days in the blizzard. On Monday morning it had moderated some and we reached Luverne in the evening. On Tuesday by way of Sioux Falls to Paul Brende north of town, and on Wednesday finally arrived at our claims, making our headquarters with the Bothun family who had now been here a month. Their sod house was not very large and how we all found sleeping quarters in it is hard to imagine now, but we did.

The ground was now frozen hard so there was not much we could do. But to show that we had been here, we drove west to the river and bought some trees, cut them in proper lengths for crutches to hold up a roof on a sod house we would build later. I remember I cut through the frost and set up the crutches, got them down deep enough so they would stand, one at each corner of the house to be. Thus our second improvements were made.

#### On Our Way Home.

Having done what we could in about a week's stay here, we rigged up and started for home. In about two days we reached Worthington, where we stopped again in the lumber office.

The following morning was bright sunshine but still very cold. About 10 or 12 miles east of Worthington was a settler near the road where we decided to stop for lunch and rest close to his sod stable. We had just tied our horses to the hind end of the wagon and fed them their oats when another of the sudden blizzards was upon us. A heavy black cloud with furious wind howled about us, with snow coming so thick than in a very few minutes we could not see anything around us.

This settler probably had seen us so he came to us, and accommodating as he was he crowded some of his cows together, so as to make room for our horses in his stable, and led the way for us to his sod house, which we never could have found in that storm. They had a very small house or dug-out, with many children; but we were crowded in, so with our own prepared food and blankets on the floor we were warm and sheltered that afternoon and night.

The next morning the storm clouds had drifted away; the sun came out bright but very cold. So we left these good people and started for Jackson. The roads were badly drifted in places which made heavy work for our team, but we came to Jackson by noon. Going from Jackson one of our horses got sick.

About 10 miles east of Jackson there was a settler near the road where we stopped to rest and treat our sick horse. But all our treatment was of no avail. Before morning the horse was dead. There we were stranded with only one horse. The man where we stopped had no horses; but he told us that two brothers living about 4 miles away had horses. One was a single man and we might hire him with one horse to take us to Blue Earth City where we had some acquaintances

originally from Houston county, Minnesota, and where we had stopped over Sunday on our way going west. While brother Erick and Chris Henjum buried the dead horse I trotted over to these new settlers and told them our predicament. After some consultation among themselves, the young man said, "I will take one of my horses and go with you to Blue Earth City. This was about 40 miles. How much would he charge us? "Well", he said, "I have a sister living there and will visit there which wont cost me anything, but I will have to make some sort of a sled to come home on, so I will have to charge you \$4.00." Well, we were in great luck, and I certainly thanked him. When could he be ready? "It wont be long," he said. In less than an hour we were on our way to our camping place. The cheer it gave to father especially and the boys who had just buried the dead horse when they saw us coming with a horse can only be imagined. Before the noon hour we were on our way toward Fairmont, which we reached in late evening.

Camping out in the open now was impossible as it was full winter weather. So each night we had to find some place where we could get shelter for ourselves and our horses. We were now back to the place where the first snowstorm struck us going west. From Fairmont to Blue Earth City is 20 miles. The road there was a little more travelled so we made it in the early afternoon. Finding some of our friends in town, who lived 7 miles east of town, to help us to their home, we settled up and bade goodbye to our kind helper.

Here in this Blue Earth settlement were three brothers who ten years before had been our neighbors in Houston county, Minnesota. Namely, John, Gjert and Peter Frande where we were taken in, and where we visited for 3 or 4 days.

While here father sold his wagon to Peter Frandle. Brother Erick and Chris Henjum made a sled for the one horse and with that rig they journeyed home, visiting on the way near Adams with Ole Njøs, Chris. Henjum's brother in law, and others. Father and I took the train from Delevan to Lanesboro our home town, arriving home safe and sound, but with a lot of hard experience.

Thus ended our second trip to Dakota Territory. It did cost something to get free land!

#### About Our Final Trip and Settlement on Slip Up Creek, Dakota Territory.

About the middle of May, 1873, the following named families had their wagons all ready and loaded with all their earthly possessions, their cattle, colts and sheep herded along following the wagons.

The John E. Berdahl family consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Berdahl, their sons, Andrew and Erick and his wife, (They were just married), and Anfin, Ole, Herman, John, Christoffer and daughters, Christie and Martha. With them were Aunt Syneva and C. O. Henjum. They had 3 covered wagons, 2 horse-teams and 1 ox-team.

Then came Widow, Mrs. Powers, her family consisting of sons, Joseph, Samuel, Charles, William and Allen, and daughter, Mary. With them were John Power, a cousin of the children of Mrs. Power, and his father Allen Power. They had 2 covered wagons drawn by horse teams.

The John H. Loftesness family consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Loftesness and their children, Carrie, Hans, Andrew, Herman, John and Christina. They had 1 covered wagon drawn by an ox team.

The Olaus Jensen family consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Jenson, their children, Clara, Hjalmar and Gilbert. They had 1 covered wagon drawn by an ox team.

Then came Mrs. Lars Brandvold with her son, Albert. They had one covered wagon and a team of horses. Mr. Brandvold had died during the winter.

These all started from Amherst township, Fillmore county, and camped the first night near the southwestern corner of the county. Thence west into Mower county towards Adams where we camped for a day or more waiting for the following from near Calmar, Iowa, who were to join us there.

Thor Hermanson and wife with their daughters Henrietta, Kaia, Hansina, Lena and Anna, with one covered wagon and ox team. And grandfather Herman Wangsness and wife with their youngest son, Christoffer. They also had 1 covered wagon and ox team.

After they joined us there we were a caravan of 10 covered wagons with 5 horse-teams and 5 ox-teams. Together we had a herd of 85 head of cattle, 8 colts and 30 sheep to drive. The first few days out from home it gave all our young boys and girls plenty of exercise to keep all this big herd together and to follow the caravan of wagons. But after the first week or so, and after coming out of the timbered country into more open prairie there was no trouble. The cattle- cows especially- would come along just as soon as they saw the wagons move. Some boys would ride some of the older colts and round up dilatory colts and sheep, and the youngsters had lots of fun.

From home we brought with us a large tent which we set up every night where we camped. This gave a lot of the youngsters sleeping quarter. Brother Erick and I who had been over the road twice naturally had to take the lead and decide on places to camp at night. Father had gone on some time before by train and other transportation to build some sort of habitation for the family.

This was a very wet season. Heavy rains every week, so that all sloughs and creeks were overflowing. To detour around sloughs, and often getting mired even so bad sometimes that we had to unload to get the wagons pulled out, made our progress very slow.

On account of the Blue Earth river being at flood stage, we were advised at Albert Lea to go north of the lake and head for Wells. This road was on higher ground and away from the river; and yet even there some of our teams got stuck in the street going thru the city of Wells. There were no paved streets in those days. West of Winnebago City we had to cross the Blue Earth river. A ferry was operated there to take teams and cattle across. Here got to be a day of hard work. The ferry could take only one team and wagon on each trip, We were now 11 wagons as Bill Tobin had caught up and joined our caravan. With all the cattle, colts and sheep, the ferry taking only 8 to 10 on each trip it was evening before we got all across.

A good rest was made at our camp on the open prairie across the river.

From here through Martin and Jackson counties we proceeded without any trouble except the usual incidents of the teams setting stuck in some little sloughs. To lighten the loads all who were able had to walk and wade thru long stretches of water. Some of the stronger men would carry the older women across on their shoulders. Olaus Jensen was an expert at this. He would create a lot of fun by pretending to fall and dip the women he carried partly into the water.

Another incident on our trip I must relate-When we came to the Little Sioux which, I think, is in the western part of Jackson county, 10 or 12 miles east of Worthington, we found the whole valley about one half mile wide covered with water. This was where we were caught in that sudden blizzard when going home in the fall. Seeing that it would be impossible to cross this water with our heavily loaded wagons, knowing that the creek proper was quite deep, we found that the settler together with others had built a large flat boat or raft on which we could unload our wagons and the men and boys push it across. This work commenced about 10 o'clock A. M., the boat carrying one wagon load each trip. 10 wagons were unloaded and 10 trips were made

across with the boat pushed across and back by the men wading in water up to their necks more in crossing the creek proper. The empty wagons were pulled across by ox teams. Bill Tobin had no load so he came across without help. This took all day.

Having got everything across about sundown we were all so tired and tuckered out that we did not attempt to set up our tent or do any cooking for supper. Our good mothers had done the milking and I had bought a grain sack full of crackers at Jackson so most of us, I believe, satisfied our hunger on sweet milk and crackers.

Our wagons being now practically empty we found sleeping quarters there. It took us all the next day to dry some of our clothes and get our wagons loaded again. Our cattle found excellent grazing on this wide open prairie; and our cows furnished us with an abundance of good sweet milk all the way.

Having everything loaded again, we started on the last lap of our journey; and through Nobles and Rock counties we found the land much drier, being better drained. So we went along at the ox-gait without any further delay.

From Luverne we struck across the prairie about due west and crossed the Split Rock just below the Palisades, and arrived at Slip Up creek in the afternoon of June 18, 1873, having been about 4 weeks on the way. We made our camp just east of the creek on the land now owned by Ole J. Berdahl, on the east line of father's claim. While some of us were putting up the tent as usual for the night, father's 3 wagons started across the creek to his claim hut of sod which he had built while we were on the way, he having come out here ahead of us as already mentioned. It was here for the first time I saw any of the mothers dispondent. Mrs. Margaret Power actually broke down and cried when she saw them leave us for a house tho rude and simple, thinking perhaps of the good home she had left and now out here with a large family and only the wide expanse of the prairie in sight.

I gave her what comfort I could in the fact that in a day or two she could decide on a location close by and that I would stay with them until a location was decided upon and a home built. It was not long before she was as cheerful as ever.

Before we arrived in sight of our claims a peculiar thing happened which I have always remembered. John Power and another man had started on walking ahead of the caravan moving slowly up along what we called Mud creek valley. As I came along with one of the teams I saw John and the other man sitting down on the incline to the creek. He hailed me and asked, "How far is it now to your claims?" I said about two miles, I think. "Well", he said, "I like the lay of this land, so I'll pick my claim here." No one disputed his right to this location. And the east half of section 29 became his as long as he lived.

After a good night's rest in our camp, we, men and boys and some of the women, started out to look for locations. A government stake was found on the southwest corner of sec. 20 one half mile east of our camp. This was our starting point. As mentioned, John Power had picked out his homestead, so we first decided on the southeast quarter sec. 20, joining John Power on the north, for Mrs. Power; her son, Joseph, on the east of her; and Bill Tobin north and east of Mrs. Power. This concluded the first day's locating.

The second day we started out to locate the Loftesness family, Thor Hermanson family, Grandpa Wangsness, and Sam Power, as they wanted to be as near our claims as possible.

Allen Hamre who came out with the Bothun family the fall before had filed on the southwest

quarter of sec. 20 for his father, Knut Hamre, and for himself on land in sections 17 and 18, now the John Henjum farm. So stepping and counting my steps north from the stake already mentioned, I determined where the other section line was. We went east on that section line and uncle John Loftesness picked out the E½ of NW¼ and the W½ of NE¼, of sec. 20, where the Loftesness home has remained. Thor Hermanson joined his on the north in sec. 17, and Grandpa Wangsness north of him. Sam Power selected a long quarter, to wit, the E½ of the NE¼ of sec. 20 and the E½ of the SE¼ of 17. This took all day to decide on these locations. Now we yet had the Olaus Jensen family and Albert Brandvold left to locate, and brother Anfin who wished to pick out a claim tho he was not quite old enough yet to file.

The Hans Steffenson family and Paul Evenson who had followed a short distance behind us from Fillmore county had now arrived and were deciding on claims just northeast from Grandpa Wangsness' claim on the military road from Pipestone to Sioux Falls. So, after locating these people, the above named of our company decided to go farther north where the land was a little lower and more level.

Olaus Jenson and Albert Brandvold picked out claims in section 4, and Anfin in section 5. This took about 4 days of walking in the prairie grass before all of our company were located.

Now came the trip to Sioux Falls where the Land Office was located to make the proper filings. 16 claims were filed on by our company and the Hans Steffenson and Paul Evenson families, all in what is now Edison township, and along or near the Pipestone-Sioux Falls Military Road.

Then came the breaking up of the camp which had been the home for a week or more, each family moving on to their claims with all their goods and cattle. All their household property except clothing and bedding was unloaded from the wagons and set out on the prairie; a fire place built for cooking meals by those who had no stove, and the covered wagon used only for sleeping quarters. Mrs. Margaret Power, who had the largest family, was given the use of the tent that we all had used jointly in moving out.

Now came breaking or haying. 2 or 3 families would join together to do this work; and before cold weather set in sod houses were built for man and beast.

Those already named as being the first homesteaders were not long to be alone on these prairies as the following additions to our settlement will show.

1873- This same year the following from Fillmore county, Minnesota, had followed our trail and took up homesteads near us

Nils Quammen with family on sec. 28, Edison township.

John Monson with family, on sec. 20, Edison township.

Knut Hamre with family, 3 boys, Ellend, John and Ole, as mentioned, had filed on sec. 20, Edison township.

Lars Hove with family settled on sec. 15, Edison township.

Per Hatleli with large family on sec. 28, Edison township. His oldest son was of age and homesteaded on sec. 3.

The same year the following came from Winneshiek county, Iowa, and took up land on or near the Pipestone creek in the eastern part of Edison township:

Iver Ellefson and family had filed on sec. 13 in 1872,



Ellef Ellefson, then a single man, had filed on sec. 13, in 1872, came now to build and settle.

Rognald Benson with large family, 2 boys and 1 girl of age, who also all homesteaded in secs. 1 and 2, Edison township.

Mads Hermanson, a single man and brother in law of Benson, filed on sec. 1, Edison township.

Lasse A. Vadheim with family filed on sec. 12, Edison twp.

Gulbrand Erickson with family filed on sec. 12, Edison twp.

Lars Nesheim with family filed on sec. 34, Logan township.

Sever Larson Kirkebo with family filed on sec. 35, Logan twp.

Elling Larson Kirkebo, a single man, filed on sec. 35, Logan township.

Erik Iverson Tveito with family filed on sec. 7, Palisade township.

1874- Came Johan Hermanson with family and settled on sec. 10, Edison township.

John I. Henjum with family settled on sec. 11 and 14, Edison township

Ole Elstad with family settled on sec. 3, Edison township.

Knut Henjum with family settled on sec. 11, Edison township.

Andrew A. Grinde, then a single man, settled on sec. 2, Edison township.

Casper Anderson with family settled on sec. 5, Edison twp.

John Gullickson with family settled on sec. 6, Edison twp.

Nils N. Henjum, a brother in law of John I. Henjum and other Single men came this same year so not much vacant land was left now in Edison township.

In 1875, adding to and joining our settlement on the north came the following:

Jens Johnson with large family on sec. 32; a brother,

Fredrick Johnson, then a single man, on sec. 27.

Anders Pederson with family on sec. 33;

Torbjørn Olson with family on sec. 32. All Logan township.

Per J. Johnson Nerdahl with family on sec. 5, Edison twp.

In 1876- John Roysum, a single man, on sec. 4, Edison twp. and

Nils Fuglsbo with family on sec. 34, Logan township.

The years 1874-5 and 6 nearly all the government land was filed on in the northeastern part of Minnehaha county, including what is now Logan, Edison, Highland and Palisade townships.

These townships contain the best farming land in Minnehaha county.

All the people mentioned and others went to work, as soon as they had located, to do some breaking, to build sod houses for themselves as well as their cattle, so that in 1876 it was no longer a wilderness, but teeming with life and good cheer all thru these settlements.

Early in the spring of 1874 school district No. 13 was organized with boundaries as follows: taking in the two western tiers of sections in Edison township and the eastern tier of sections in Sverdrup township, being six miles north and south and 3 miles east and west. During the summer and fall a large sod school house was built on Lasse Bothun's land. The first public school was held for 4 months in the winter of 1874 and 75.

This sod schoolhouse served all the northeastern part of our county until 1877 or 78 when other school districts were organized, and our sod house was superseded with a frame school house.

The years 1874 to 1877 were the memorable grasshopper years, when great swarms of hoppers

would swoop down upon us, and destroy all the growing crop wherever they alighted. But some fields escaped their ravages, and the meadows yielded their usual crop of hay so feed for cattle was plentiful for the most of us. So inspite of the hoppers the settlers made a good living and were creating national wealth. If the grain crop failed, we still had our cows from which we raised calves and thus increased our herd every year. The most of us raised colts, lambs and pigs which every year were growing into money.

In 1877 the hoppers left us before depositing or laying their eggs; and since that year our county has not been visited by any swarms of these migrating grasshoppers.

Except for the summer of 1894, which was so exceedingly hot and dry that our crop was almost a total failure, we had no very dry years until 1931 when the dry years began.

Up to 1915 but very few farmers had any mortgage debt on their farms. The original homesteader as a rule would rather do without certain improvements than to borrow money.

We were then a happy and prosperous people. But suddenly a great change took place caused by the enactment of the new banking law of 1913, The Federal Reserve Board.

This Board, it seems, was given a free hand by Congress to issue money. They started an inflation of currency; notified our banks that they could get all the money they could loan out. Gradually this inflation of currency began to be felt upon prices of all our products going up-land values also to unheard of prices. Speculation in land became a craze. Valuation would increase \$25.00 per acre over night, until in 1919 a farm near Sioux Falls was sold for \$400.00 per acre. During 1917 and 1916 most of our young boys were called into army service; some enlisted; others were drafted. Many of them were sent across to France never to come back. Wages to such as were above military age and willing to work rose to 8, 10 and 12 dollars per day. But the prices received for our products were such that we could afford to pay these exorbitant wages. Our cheapest grain was oats at \$1.00 per bushel, corn \$2.00 and over, wheat \$2.50, cattle and hogs up to \$20.00 per hundred. What we had to buy was in the same proportion. As a sample, we paid as high as \$20.00 for 100 pounds of sugar.

Then came 1920 with orders from the Federal Reserve Board to our banks to call in the loans and pay up. A crazy deflation set in. The prices of all farm products during this year reduced to less than one half, and kept going down the following years. The consequence was that our banks could not collect the loans they had made and, during the years of 1924-25, six of the eight banks in Sioux Falls were forced to close, as well as a number of banks in the smaller towns. All because of the crazy manipulation of money by the Federal Reserve board withdrawing the money from the agricultural northwest and loaning the money to the industries in the east creating a boom there that came to a crash in 1929.

The foregoing is a verbatim account by Andrew J. Berdahl.

Of those in the caravan mentioned, the following are alive at this date - December 10, 1941:

Anfin J. Berdahl, 2545 Portland Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.;

Ole J. Berdahl, Garretson, South Dakota;

Christoffer J. Berdahl, Garretson, South Dakota (*hand-written notation added on 2/8/1961: only survivor*)

Mrs. Lena Hermanson-Hatlestad, Garretson, South Dakota;

Mrs. Christine Loftesness-Anderson, Dell Rapids, S. D.

Mrs. Clara Jenson-Nettum, Miami, Florida;

Hjalmar Jenson, Montana;

Gilbert Jenson, Yankton, South Dakota;  
Mrs. Mary Power-Klein, Brainard, Minnesota.  
Andrew Loftesness, Granville, North Dakota.  
Mrs. Kaia Hermanson-Wangsness, Calmar, Iowa.

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Dixie Hansen  
Saint Paul, MN

