

Indications are that Silas Usher of Maine was here by 1863. Other early settlers were the Charley Wrights and Samuel Gilmans. In the summer of 1869 the Robert Lunny family were new settlers on Section 10 in Maple Ridge.

To this wilderness was soon to arrive a group of hard working courageous foreigners with a language that was new and strange to most Americans, and a most significant change was in store for both.

A LETTER FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

By Olof Olson

On May 12, 1869, Eric Olson, his wife Margaret, and their five children, Carrie, Ingeborg, Margaret, Mary and Olof, started on a long adventuresome journey, which proved to be full of trials and hardships.

I, Olof Olson, was the only son of Eric and Margaret, a boy of but six years, and as I now tell of our journey and early life in Minnesota, I have reached the age of 75 years and am the sole survivor of the family.

In our company were 63 persons, all from the small village of Venjan in Dalarna, Sweden. Our relatives and friends whom we were now leaving, most of whom we had very little hope of ever meeting again, wept bitterly with us. It seemed as if even the weather was in harmony with this sad occasion, for a cold heavy rain with dark cloudy skies and sodden grounds made the first step of our journey more difficult. We children, not realizing that this was to be a definite parting from our homeland, were eager to be on our way.

To us America was a land of milk and honey, so, spurred on by the illusions of fairy tales, we left the meager board Venjan had afforded us, for the faraway promised land. We were facing starvation as there had been several consecutive years of crop failure, due mostly to poor soil and early frosts, and there was not enough food in Venjan to feed its inhabitants.

When leaving Venjan, each family loaded into its wagon bare necessities such as bedding and homemade chests which were filled with homespun clothing, copper kettles, hatchets, knives and other articles. They set out in a long caravan, the entire company on foot, only babes too young to walk being given a place to ride as the wagons were loaded to capacity with odd pieces of baggage.

In this manner we traveled a distance of 25 Swedish miles, which equal almost 175 American miles, to Arvika, where we sold our horses and wagons and loaded our earthly possessions onto a railroad train which brought us to Kristiana (Now Oslo), Norway, and here, after a delay of three days, we boarded a steamer of the Anchor Line, whose destination was Litt, Scotland. The North Sea, being a body of sweet water, was very very rough. Our baggage slid from one side of the ship to the other and needless to say, we were all seasick. In three days we docked at Litt.

At Litt, we boarded a train for Glasgow, which was a four hours' ride. At Glasgow we had to wait four days for the steamer which was to take us to America, but were glad to have a chance to rest and recuperate from our rough

voyage over the North Sea.

We feared we would have the same experience on the Atlantic Ocean, but it was not as rough and the steamer was much larger. After fourteen days we docked at Ellis Island.

We had expected to be furnished with food on the steamer, but all we received was rice and ship bread. The rice was dished out with a ladle from a huge kettle as we marched in line, each with his own dish and spoon. The ship bread was a cracker made from flour and water, not crisp and flakey like the soda cracker we enjoy today. They were in a very large barrel in the center of the room and each one could help himself. No restrictions were necessary as they were not edible.

Drinking water was not plentiful. We had to wait in line for a drink and with each drink we got a chalk mark on our backs. The only sweet water on the ship was what had been brought from Scotland, so after a few days it was far from fresh. It was not at that time known how to extract the salt from sea water.

After two days on the Atlantic, I contracted measles and my father went to the captain and requested medical aid, but instead of aid, the Captain told him there was no doctor on board and in his gruff voice advised my father to "throw the youngster overboard." My parents worried a great deal, not only about my recovery, but they feared they might have trouble taking me ashore when we arrived at our destination. Luckily I recovered quite quickly, but still had scars when we landed, so when we were checked over at Ellis Island, I pulled my homespun cap down to shield my face, and was passed by the immigration agent, much to the relief of my worried parents.

When our baggage was checked over, our mattresses were destroyed while we stood helplessly and watched the fireman feed them into his hungry furnace. (This was done to prevent the spread of disease). The poor mothers wept, for this was indeed hard to see. After all the weary miles of walking on blistered aching feet from Arvika in order to make room for the bulky mattresses on the wagons.

When we had finally passed inspection by the Ellis Island officials, we were jammed onto a ferry like a herd of cattle and taken to Castel Garden, where our company was locked up to await roll call. Then we received our tickets for Chicago, which we had paid for in Glasgow when we purchased our steamer tickets at 200 crowns per person. We stayed at Castle Gardens until the following morning, when we boarded a train for Cleveland, Ohio, where we transferred onto the Chicago train.

Arriving in Chicago, we were immediately met by confidence men whose racket was selling railroad tickets. We finally bought from one whose price was \$3.00 less than any previous offer. This train took us as far as LaCrosse, Wisconsin, where we once more moved all our baggage, souvenirs from our homeland, and this time we loaded it onto a freighter which took us up the Mississippi River to St. Paul. There were several mules on the boat and they were separated from us by a partition of trunks and bags. The crew was composed of colored boys whom we, of course, thought very strange looking as we

had never seen a negro back in Sweden. They were very quarrelsome and we were afraid of them. Many of the passengers were robbed by these negroes, but we kept watch over our possessions all night and lost nothing.

Arriving in St. Paul, we had a little surprise for there was someone to meet us. It was none other than the man who had sold us the railroad tickets to Chicago. His intentions were not of the best as he took immediate possession of our baggage and threatened to hold it until we paid him more money. Father and Uncle Andrew inquired if there was a Swedish consul in St. Paul, and when they learned there was, they became brave and went to this racketseer and told him they would seek the aid of the Swedish Consul and he would get into trouble if he would not immediately return our baggage and leave. He then lost nerve and left us, a loser at his own game.

We now left St. Paul for Carver County, a distance of sixty miles. We arrived there June 24th, a big Swedish holiday—"Midsummer Day"—after a journey of forty-three days. Here the mothers stayed with the children while the men set out to seek homestead land. They were anxious to get homes of their own, so on the very day we reached Carver, the ten men in our company set out on foot for Alexandria, a distance of a hundred miles, to the land office. Upon reaching there, they were told there was no homestead land to get. They then walked still farther from their families as they had been advised to go to Otter Tail County, but when they reached there they were told that they would have to wait until Spring when the surveying should be completed. They did not feel that they could wait that long and returned to their families in Carver. Several of the families moved to Minneapolis, where they worked for a year or two, but Father, Uncle Andrew and Sigfred Anderson and his Father were persistent in their determination to locate on a homestead if it were possible to obtain one.

These four went to a land office at Taylors Falls and were told there was some homestead land to be had at Stanchfield Brook. (At this time Dalbo, Maple Ridge and Stanchfield Townships were one, and the whole tract was known by the name of "Stanchfield Brook").

They were directed to what is now Section 18, Maple Ridge Township, where homesteads were at last obtained and they then walked with lighter hearts back to Taylors Falls, a distance of 55 miles, where the necessary papers were signed. They returned to their newly acquired land to cut hay for the stock which they planned to purchase in Carver. They also blazed a trail for six miles. The Lunny family had settled on Section 10 the same year, so the trees and brush had been cut that far.

Their families were overjoyed to see them upon return to Carver and they were eager to see their new homes in the wilderness. Father and Uncle Andrew each bought a steer and a cow, and the Anderson family bought a yoke of oxen and a cow. The families also bought two wagons and yoked their oxen to the wagons and for the last time loaded their odd looking baggage which they had brought from the homeland onto their wagons and started out on the last lap of their wearisome journey. They had no canvas over their wagons to protect themselves and their goods from the rain and sun.

When they were within 45 miles of their destination, it rained and it was here, near Anoka, that a son was born to my Aunt and Uncle. He was named Andrew after his Father, following the custom of naming the first son after the Father. He grew up to be a strong man, and lived to see the age of 52 in spite of the unfavorable circumstances of his birth.

When this company of the four remaining families reached their destination, Section 18 of Maple Ridge Township, they hurriedly built an oblong hut of bark and brush with an opening at the top for the sparks and smoke from the fire which was built in the center of the hut. This surely was a poor fire risk.

Immediately upon completion of the temporary shelter, they started to build a small log cabin, 16 x 18, in which the four families, consisting of nineteen persons, lived like one family until the following Spring. In this log cabin which they first built, each family had a corner for their "bedroom" but they had no beds. They slept in bunks attached to the wall; there were two such bunks in each corner. The children slept in low cribs which were placed in the center of the room at night and pushed under the bunks in the daytime.

The older folks often spoke of their mattresses that had been burnt by the immigrant officials and what a comfort they would be in the log cabin. There were none to be bought even if they had had the money. They made mattresses from hay on which they rested after each hard day's work of clearing the heavily wooded land for fields. Among the first crops raised was corn, and the husks were saved to use for mattresses and found to be more comfortable than hay. But even these were none too comfortable compared to the inner spring mattresses of today. They had to be shaken up and evened out each morning as a restless person turning in bed a few times would find himself in a hollow with hardly any husks under him. Of course there were no springs, only slats which were pretty hard to lie upon.

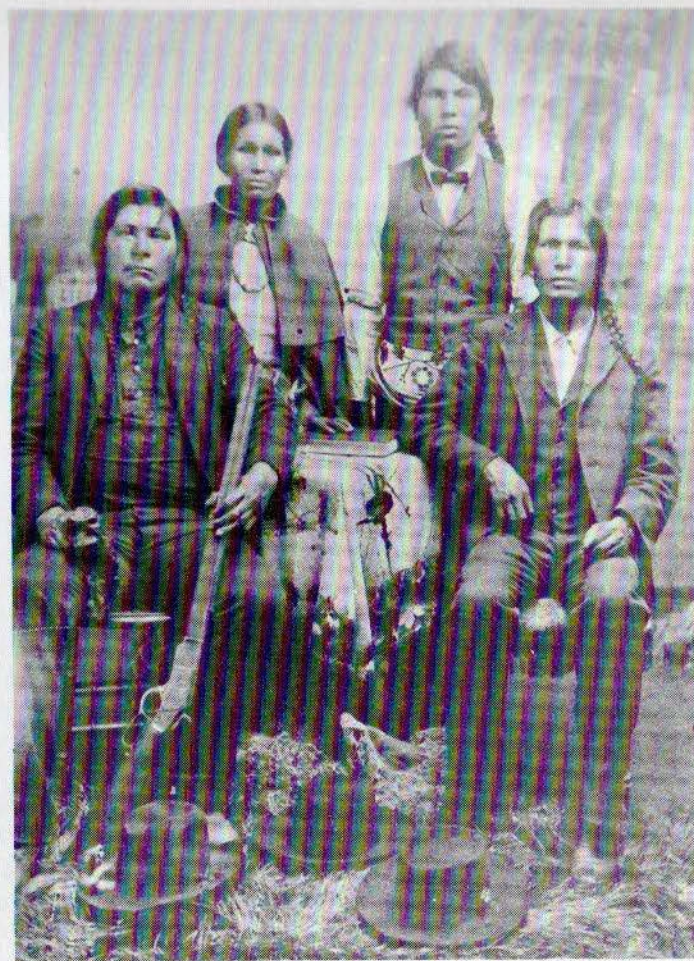
In the spring, each family built its own cabin on its own land, all working together until each cabin was completed. The women also worked together with sisterly love, helping each other with spinning, knitting and weaving. They bore out the truth of the proverb—"Unity makes for strength." They often wept together over the hardships they had to bear while their stalwart husbands tried to comfort them. It was hard for those pioneers to be courageous under these conditions. Of course they knew nothing about modern conveniences such as telephone, automobiles, etc., but they lacked even the necessities and missed the social life they had enjoyed in their homeland, especially their neighbors, schools and churches.

When we got located in our long-sought-after land, we found ourselves surrounded by Indians. We treated them in the most friendly fashion, being careful not to show fear, nor did we in any way antagonize them. We traded with them, receiving venison in exchange for bread and potatoes. They did us no harm, though we were sometimes startled by their uncivilized habit of covering our windows with their blankets while they peered in on us. We were just as much a curiosity to them as their painted faces and strange ways were to us. We had settled where no one but Indians and wild beasts had ever walked.

I now wonder how our parents dared leave a child at home alone even for a short time. At one time when I was left alone, a very old Indian came to buy potatoes. I could not understand his language any better than he understood mine, but he made himself understood by gathering a few stones the size of potatoes and burying them in the ground. He then motioned to our potato patch and I dug up the stones he had planted. We walked out to the potato patch and I dug enough potatoes for a few meals. While he helped me pick them, he admired me for my bravery and patted me as he spoke words of praise. This I understood by his actions rather than his words. I received a large piece of venison for my potatoes.



Ole Olson, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Olson and Mrs. Anna Olson, Edblad, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Olson were six years when their families arrived in Dalbo. All their family possessions were in this home-made chest.



Shingwaw family



Indian dwelling



Mary Edblad, first teacher in Day School

Our nearest Indian neighbors were the Shingwaw family who lived near a spring about half a mile East of our home. We enjoyed coasting with these Indian children, who had become very fond of us. Sometimes Mr. Shingwaw would join us in our fun. He would sit in the front of their long toboggan and act as pilot going down hill and then pull the toboggan up hill, which left us free to run at will. His squaw also wanted to, in some way, show her kindness toward us. I remember especially one certain occasion when she had cooked a large kettle of soup and dished it out and invited us to come and help ourselves to each a dish. We did not relish the thought of it, and while we hesitated, one of her many dogs got there first. She shooed the dog away, lest he should eat so much that there would not be enough for all, as to her it did not matter if a dog should sample the soup out of her dish. We did not hesitate any longer but rapidly made our way through the woods to the log cabin and to Mother's more appetizing corn meal mush.

Mother did not enjoy the Indians' lengthy visits. They were in the habit of coming in and sitting around our fireside which was more comfortable than their own. It was not wise to ask them to leave, so Mother had a very peculiar way of using tact with these friends. She had learned that the Indians did not like the smell of barley roasting (this we cooked as a beverage in place of coffee), so when their visits became unbearable, she would roast some barley and they would be on their way just as surely as we were when they offered us their soup.

Sister Ingeborg's light colored hair seemed very queer to them and not being able to express themselves in words, they would take a bunch of flax and hold up to her hair and laugh hilariously.

The most impressive Indian costume that I have ever seen, was that worn by a bridegroom. His clothes were gaily decorated with beads of various colors and he had a great many shiny sewing thimbles in which he had punched holes and then strung on ribbons with a knot between each thimble. These ribbons he had tacked onto the front and shoulders of his blouse or shirt and he had also tied some on his hair braids. This made a tinkling sound like little bells. He had painted his face with streaks of red to indicate joy. The custom of this tribe was to serve a dog at wedding feasts, which was considered a rare delicacy.

They once carried a corpse past our place on their way to Stanchfield Lake seven miles to the West of us, where they had a burial ground which was marked by a long pole with a carved crow at the tip. Those in the funeral procession had streaks of black paint on their faces to show that they were sad. After they had buried their dead, they built a small structure resembling a dog kennel on the top of the grave and friends could show their respects to the departed by leaving tobacco and maple sugar in this "dog house" which they believed the ghost of the departed would enjoy. Should they find this offering remained untouched, they would be very happy for that meant that he had gone to the happy hunting grounds and therefore did not need it. If it had disappeared, they thought the ghost of the departed had devoured it. The truth of it was that the squirrels had made a feast of the maple sugar, but I doubt that any animal other than man could enjoy the tobacco.

At times other than when a Indian was in sorrow or great joy, he would paint his face in streaks of both red and black. The medicine man held a place of high esteem and performed marriage ceremonies and conducted funeral services. He had no higher education than any of the others, but was appointed by popular vote. We were happy in having the Chippewas instead of the Sioux Indians to deal with, for the Sioux were a quarrelsome tribe. The line between the two tribes was only twenty miles South of us and we were told that the Sioux had begged the Chippewas to join them in a massacre, but at this time the two tribes were not on friendly terms and the Chippewas refused to join the Sioux.

The Indians kept a fire burning in the center of their wigwams—they had no furniture and sat on the ground around the fire. In the summertime they built their fires outdoors and near the fire they had a scaffold where they hung pieces of venison which in time became preserved from the smoke. They also ate squirrel and muskrat and relished it as much as we do steak or chicken.

Their canoes were very light and often carried them when they traveled from Stanchfield Lake to Mud Lake, thereby saving themselves miles of paddling. There are many bends in the creek East of us, so they never followed it, but picked up their canoes and carried them through the dense woods. They would walk past us with the canoes on their heads and it was always a mystery to us how they could do so with such ease.

When drunk, the Indians became violent, lost all sense of reasoning and burned houses and committed murder, so there were laws making it a crime, punishable by imprisonment for at least seven years, to give an Indian liquor or "fire water" as he called it.

While on a cranberry expedition, we found berries in abundance and thought we would reap quite a harvest, but this we were prevented from doing by a group of about twenty-five Indians who discovered us and the berries. At this time we witnessed a ceremony of hardening a helpless Indian Babe. This child, an infant barely able to creep, was stripped of his clothing and placed in the water of the cold marsh. It was very cold as the ground was white with frost. His lusty cries brought shrieks of laughter from his elders. This was the test where, as we would say, "only the fittest survive."

Although I am an old man, I still enjoy visiting with the Indians at Mille Lacs Reservation. My children speak of them as my relatives.

We cut hoop poles for flour barrels and bunched them fifty to a bunch and sold them in Anoka for \$12.00 per thousand. A trip to Anoka and back home took three days and we often slept out in our wagons. We also sold cranberries, hauling them by oxen over sixty miles of winding roads to Minneapolis, where we sold them for \$2.25 per bushel. Washington Avenue was at the time, the main business street. As it was not paved, after a rain, it was so muddy that there were men at each street crossing with shovels and they were kept busy shoveling mud off the planks so the pedestrians could cross the street. All sidewalks were board walks.

We also sold ginseng for which we received \$1.25 per pound. It is now \$15.00 per pound. Procuring a few pounds of ginseng required a lot of hardship. We

scoured the woods near and far, sometimes walking seven miles from home. Occasionally we took provisions with us and were gone for three days at a time, camping out in the open where the wolves howled and the night owls hooted mournfully throughout the night. Now young people cannot sleep unless they have spring coil mattresses, but we slept soundly on the ground with the roots of trees coiled under us. Upon occasion a bear which had been attracted by our bonfire, came up to our camp at night. We were not afraid as we always carried guns. These expeditions were made in the Fall when it was cold and we kept our bonfires burning all night. We were sometimes awakened by the cold on damp frosty nights when our fire got low, but someone would put on more fuel and it would soon be blazing and we would go back to sleep. None of us was troubled with insomnia.

In this way we made our living for the first few years until we had cleared some of the heavily wooded land, which was done by cutting and burning the trees and brush. We then started farming and enlarging our farms by clearing about an acre a year.

We did not care to live much like our uncivilized neighbor, the Indian, but had the urge to bring civilization to the wilderness. In the year 1871, a school district was organized and one of the two rooms of my Father's log cabin was set apart for a school room. My Father was elected clerk with my Uncle Andrew, director. Mary Edblad was employed as our teacher. Her school term was two and a half months in the Spring, and two and half months in the Fall. The salary was \$20.00 per month, and out of this she must board herself. The school got some aid from the Federal tax. Mary had a portable organ which she brought with her and taught the children hymns along with their lessons.

I used to envy the children who had a distance to school, as I had no chance to do any mischief on the way to and from school. Since school was held right in my home, I was always under my parents' observing eyes as well as at my mother's beck and call. She would call me at recess to go for wood or water. We had an open well and the water was brought up by the bucket attached to a rope which was worked by a pulley. I had no schooling in Sweden as I was not of school age, but I remember accompanying my sister Carrie to school one day and that I did not like their severe method of punishing children for any little disobedience.

I also remember the privilege of accompanying my parents and sisters to church on an early Christmas morning. It still being very dark, each person carried a torch made out of dry pine with plenty of pitch smeared on, which burned brightly. Torches could be seen in all directions for quite a distance as the folks came toward the church. Some of the people came on skis, while others rode in sleighs drawn by horses. As each one reached the church, he stuck his light in the snow to burn as long as it lasted. This was an impressive sight in those non-electric days. Inside the church was a high arch of candles which I thought very beautiful and wonderful. There was very little of beauty or enjoyment and therefore we enjoyed anything which was a little out of the ordinary. The church had no heating plant, so although we wore home-knit stockings, homewoven

clothing and sheep-lined coats, we were very cold. Before entering the church, folks would wish each other "Glad Jul" (Merry Christmas).

Our nearest post office was fourteen miles away, being in the Southeast corner of Stanchfield Township. I well remember when my cousin Andrew Sohlberg and I were sent to mail a letter to our uncles and aunts who were still in Sweden, telling them how we were faring in the new country. The rains had been very heavy and the streams were high. As our bridge had been washed away, we removed our clothes, wrapped them around our letter and tied the little bundle to the head of one of us and swam across the stream with our letter still dry. Then we dressed and continued on our way to the post office.

In the early days everyone walked to his or her destination and not consider it a hardship, in fact we rather enjoyed it. All the young people within eighteen miles of Cambridge attended confirmation school there and no child was confirmed without having had two years of instruction. We would walk to Cambridge one day, and return the next, enjoying hospitality which is rare today. We, of course, did not demand soft mattresses, in fact, we often slept in hay lofts.

Brunswick, twelve miles away, and Cambridge, fifteen miles distant, were our nearest towns, and we had to go all that distance for our provisions which were obtained in trade for butter and eggs. Ginseng roots were our only means of obtaining real cash for the first few years until we raised saleable crops.

In those days, Cambridge did not have water works, but had a public open well where the town folks, as well as the farmers who came to do their trading and marketing, would gather to exchange bits of gossip and news of the day while they quenched their thirst and also that of their horses or oxen, for whose convenience, troughs were placed near the public well. There were no community newspapers, nor did we have telephones for many many years, in fact it was not until 1908 that it became the common thing for the farmers to have phones, at which time we had ours installed.

On February 17, 1874, the Salem Lutheran Congregation was organized by these families and several others who met in Sigfred Anderson's log cabin. This log cabin still stands, and it is used for housing livestock. The building of the church was commenced in 1880 and the first building served as the house of worship until July of 1899 when it was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. A larger building was then erected which is our present church edifice.

During each Spring of the first few years, we tapped three hundred maple trees, collected the sap and cooked approximately 75 gallons of syrup and made some sugar. We ate the syrup on our johnny cake (corn bread) and pancakes and as the maple sugar was the only sugar we had, it was used in our coffee as well as eaten as a confection. Sap buckets were not obtainable, so we learned from our red neighbors how to make serviceable containers from birch bark. These were made in several sizes so that when they were stored away, they could be fitted one into the other. The largest held two gallons. They were light to handle and of course did not rust. The blisters in the bark were sealed with a sealing wax made from pine tar and tallow which was applied while hot. This

art we all learned from the Indians. We youngsters collected the sap and mother cooked it into syrup in large vats which were fitted over fire places out in the maple grove. She would read her Bible while she rested from tending the fires and watching and stirring the syrup which was cooked to different stages in the various vats. It takes thirty gallons of sap to produce one gallon of syrup.

I shall never forget the first cow we tried to sell. Father and I led her through dense woods and across bogs and streams for a distance of thirty miles to Rush City, where we were offered \$15.00. Since we had paid \$50.00 for her a few years previously, Father decided not to sell her. The butcher could be independent as there were no St. Paul Stockyards then, and he had no competition within fifteen miles. Rather than practically give her away, we led her home again and butchered her for our own use. We made Swedish sausage from part of the meat, smoked some and put the rest down in brine. I felt quite relieved when Mother served the last portion of the poor cow.

In those days there were no fences, so it was possible for us to make short cuts through the woods. It also made it possible for the cattle to wander far away from home during the daytime and it took each farmer a long time to find his cows at milking time. Each herd had a bell cow and each farmer would recognize the tone of his own bell. When other settlers moved in and there were many cattle wandering at will over the countryside, the state soon passed a law ordering each farmer to fence his own farm. This kept our cows at home as well as kept out the neighbors' cows from our land.

Each family had one or two cows which supplied them with milk and butter. We sold some of the butter for as little as five cents a pound. As soon as the lumber camps were set up at South Fork, we found a better market for our butter. When the price was too low, we stored it in cold spring water and waited for a higher price before selling. Though the supply was small, the demand was not so great, so from these early days we farmers have played the market as well as gambled with the weather. We now have great improvements in the dairy business. We have co-operative creameries and do not even have to transport our own milk or cream, as the creamery's trucks collect it.

As soon as my parents permitted me to be the possessor of a 45-60 Winchester Rifle, it was my trust companion whenever I ventured away from the cabin. One of my favorite chores was fetching the cows at milking time. On one such occasion, I was met by what might have been the characters of the Fairy Tale of the Three Bears. The Mother Bear was the first to appear and also the first bear to be bagged with my new rifle. Excitedly I walked up to my dead bear and while admiring it, I heard a snarl from behind me and there to my amazement was a cub of about six months of age. Being uncomfortably close, even too close to take aim, I fired at random. Not being fatally wounded, it ran around bewildered, uttering painful cries. He was a difficult target to hit. My last round of ammunition proved to be a lucky shot and I was overjoyed and proud at having shot two bears. My joy was short lived, however, for Father Bear had heard my numerous shots and the squeals of the cub and came to see what was taking place, but he was too late to save his family. I now faced what might have been a

very sad experience for me, as my rifle was useless, my ammunition being all gone. He already knew I was a dangerous object to face and he climbed a tree. With a watchful eye, I made my retreat, moving very slowly until out of sight, and then hastened home as fast as I could for a new supply of ammunition. Upon my return, the bear was not to be found. During the days of early Fall, both Bruin and I made daily visits to our first meeting place, but we never chanced to meet again. I could, however, see fresh tracks in the soft ground. I have had other experiences with bears, having shot five all told.

Deer were plentiful in the early days and all seasons were open season. I have shot more than thirty deer in the immediate surrounding country. I have also tried snaring deer with baling wire and had some success, one deer being my only catch. However, I found it advisable to quit this practice. One day Uncle's steer was missing from the herd and when I heard of this, I did not tell anyone of my suspicions, but wasted no time checking up on my snares and found the angry bellowing steer securely caught by his horns. My conscience was very much relieved to find him unharmed and after some difficulty, I succeeded in releasing him.

Bears being lovers of honey, have upon several occasions raided my apiary of honey, eating the whole contents of a hive in a single night, which would be no less than thirty pounds. On the day after, Old Bruin must have felt very uncomfortable due to bee stings as well as over-indulgence.

Our first crops of grain were cut with a scythe and picked up by hand. These means were improved upon by the cradle, which was a scythe having four wooden tines the same length as the scythe blade, so arranged as to catch the grain and keep it straight and untangled. This back-breaking job of cutting grain, was done by the older men, while we children tied the cut grain into sheaves, using straw as a binder, and then set the sheaves up into shocks. After the grain was thoroughly dry, it was threshed. This was done by spreading it out on a specially constructed floor and then beaten with a flail. The straw was then removed with a fork, the grain and chaff remained on the floor. This was gathered up and stored until the first windy day, when, with a certain amount of skill, a little at a time was tossed in the air. The chaff now being "gone with the wind" and the clean grain being left in the bin meant that the threshing was completed. This crude method of threshing was used for about five years, when, with the help of a carpenter, we four families built a threshing machine which, with the exception of a few steel shafts, was built entirely of wood. The motive power was two oxen hitched to a long beam and driven around in a circle. The oxen, not being created for this kind of work, soon became dizzy and their unsteady gait would time and again break a cog in the wooden cogwheels. This did not mean much delay as we were prepared for such accidents and kept a supply of new cogs on hand and quickly replaced the broken ones and the threshing was resumed.

Our most progressive step was the purchase of a reaper. This machine, although a great improvement over the cradle, still left the hard work of tying the sheaves to be done by hand. Years later, as our farms grew in acreage by

laboriously clearing the dense woods, we bought a "self binder" which we thought the marvel of the age as it both cut and tied the grain in one operation. At this time our threshing was done by custom threshers, the first machine being driven by horse power, (ten horses being used) and later the more modern machine driven by steam power.

EARLY TRANSPORTATION



Then we had the evolution in transportation. We first jogged along in ox carts, then the horse and buggy served us for many years until the automobile took its place. In recent years flying has become quite common and I have enjoyed several aeroplane rides, fortunately having happy landings.

I have jotted down the things which at this time seem most interesting to me about the early days of our pioneer forefathers and hope you will enjoy reading about our childhood. We did not for a minute think we were suffering hardships and in fact we actually did not suffer because we knew of nothing better and we youngsters really had a happy childhood.

Now that I am nearing the four score mark, like all elderly folks, I live a good deal in the past and am often reminded of a verse reading about as follows:

*"When time which steals our years away
Shall steal our pleasures too,
The memory of the past will stay
And half our joys renew."*

Note: A Letter From One Generation to Another is the memoirs of the late Olof E. Olson as he related them to his daughter Miss Martha Olson who in turn compiled them into book form. A sincere "thank you" is extended to Miss Olson for permission to include this in our Centennial Book.

THE SEED IS PLANTED

"I will plant you and not pluck you up"

The forest was flushed with green September 10, 1869, but displayed, here and there, brilliant splashes of red and yellow, dramatically heralding the coming fall. Amongst the trees where dappled shade frolicked with bright sunshine upon the forest floor, trudged the little group from Venjan, Dalarne, Sweden. Regularly the steely crack of a sharp hatchet on hard squeaky wood rang out as the trees were blazed to better mark the trail, or the underbrush was slashed away to more easily accommodate the creaking wagons, lurching and bumping along behind the plodding oxen. The wagons held all their early possessions, trunks, tools, grindstone, spinning wheels, copper kettles and flour.

Likely, first of the little procession was one or two men with hatchet and ax who whacked away the underbrush. A cow was perhaps tied to the rear of each wagon while on top of the loads rode the youngest children, on one load rode the mother with her day old son in her arms. Behind, now completely weary, walked the others while the older children, still with sprightly steps, ran ahead or lagged behind as some new sight caught their attention.

The going was easier now than it had been a few days before when the men alone had been here after taking the homestead property on August 12, 1869 and had started cutting a trail and had built crude log bridges to facilitate the arrival of the rest of the group.

Following is a list of the people who were to spend the winter of 1869-70 in one