

ACROSS THE PRAIRIE FROM ILLINOIS TO IOWA

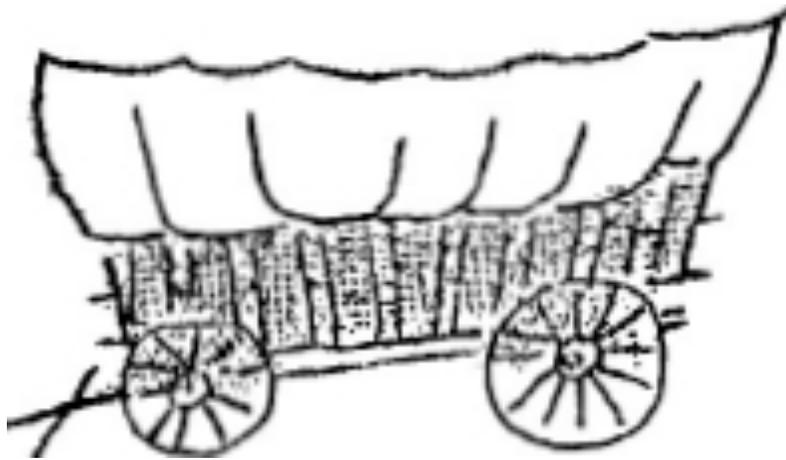
1864

The Story Told by

OLE ANDREAS LARSON TJERNAGEL

Translated by his son Nehemias Tjernaqel,

“From father’s dictation nearly verbatim” (Norwegian)



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Father and mother and their first-born, Lewis, left the Quam place in Illinois after having rented the 80 acre farm there for two years. They stayed a week at grandfather's home pending their journey to Iowa.

The Quam house was built of sawed logs in the Norwegian style and was 18 feet square. There was just one big room which contained all the necessary household paraphernalia, and very simple at that. Plain American bedsteads supplied with the regulation bed cord. There were two chairs. The old dining table was taken along to Iowa. The cellar was good and had been convenient to keep safely their modest stores. The food they had did not differ greatly from what we have now, seeing that they had meat and potatoes, bread, also lighter foods such as kringla, fried cake, lefsa, potato cake, etc.

A man by the name of Nils and his wife lived in the same room one winter. He drank and quarreled with his wife besides. Mother took such a dislike to him that instead of naming her third son Nils, after grandfather, she passed it up and gave him the name Nehemias.

Knut Ombeland and wife lived a year with father and mother, but unlike Nils, they were nice and agreeable to have around. Father knew them from Norway. The wife was a daughter of a brother of father's stepmother.

They left for the west with bedding, clothes, table and dishes, and with team and wagon and \$400 in cash! They forgot Milla, the dog, and immediately upon noticing her absence father returned in the wagon to get her, but was nearly washed down stream by the current in the river. "Fille Hoen." ("Sorry dog!")

Grandfather Follinglo lived in a log house of round logs with the bark on in the nearby Gov't. timber, where they had a clearing for garden, and kept a few cows and pigs. Grandfather worked among the neighbors to support his family of wife and four children, Martha, Andrew, Hans and Gurina. They, too, went west together with our parents but their team was not to brag of, the horses being somewhat poor and skinny. Their load was heavy, a stove being hauled alone, among other necessary things; and when they came to hilly stretches of country they had all they could do to make headway.

By the way, Slettavigs and the Tunges (Anbjoden) lived near grandfather in the Gov't timber. And let us here mention that Per Hauen of Illinois said that Store Per left the Fox River Settlement for Iowa (1858) with the finest ox team (svart rosete) and father with the finest team of horses (1864) that had ever gone out from those parts. And father had painted long and painstakingly to make his wagon look attractive. There were eight blue roses painted on suitable parts of the wagon box. How the natives did gaze at that gaudy looking vehicle! Continuing, father said he had iron clamps made and fastened inside the wagon box in which were inserted the schooner hoops of which there had to be quite many and being dear at that. Had four widths of good, well-stretched muslin with which to cover hoops. Nevertheless, in a heavy rain they were enveloped by a fine mist inside, but no drops formed. Some travelers covered the muslin with oil-cloth and thus kept out all moisture from without.

It happened that they traveled together with a Quaker family for awhile westwards, camped together, and they found them to be nice people.

When they came to Iowa City, father sort of made out as if he was acquainted, having been there before when Logan and he went on the land-questing trip on foot from there to Hamilton County in 1859, They found plenty of wood on the way since they made camp where there was timber, usually, and had no qualms about appropriating a few loose sticks for the camp-fire. No one considered it stealing, since these sticks would never be picked up for use by the owners, if any. They were young and not much afraid of anything. (While dictating just here father exclaimed: “Oi, naa stak eg haando i lommen aa inche kan faa na or igjen - han a saa vonde den armen min af saginjo aa loggingo ijaar.” “Ouch, now I stuck my hand in my pocket and can’t get it out again - my arm hurts so from the sawing and logging yesterday”) Father said the party figured on traveling some 40 miles a day, but doubted if so much headway was really made owing to twists and turns, sloughs, creeks, and whatnots. It took ten days to make the trip. The horses were tethered in the evening. Corn about 20 cents per bu. Traveled steadily from sun-up till sun-down with but an hour off for dinner. There were no bridges, but father does not remember being stuck in sloughs or creeks. Came to one creek that looked for all the world like a big swollen, sinuous snake. That crossing seemed impossible, but they got through somehow. Terrific risks taken, no doubt. They slept in the wagons. One of the party had to act as sentry in the night. This meant that either father or grandpa went without sleep on given nights. Probably mother and Margrethe “besto” helped out occasionally. As far as he remembers father thinks they usually sought out such roads or tracks that led by scattered prairie inns on the way. Couldn’t stop at those Places since “blood money” was extracted there, i.e. the rates were prohibitive for them at least. Wherever their route paralleled railroad tracks and towns there were no prairie inns met with. They went through La Salle and Peru, Illinois. River steamers came that far and even to Ottawa. Route led across country to Davenport, passing first through Rock Island. Drove right through both towns having been ferried over river on a steam ferry, horses, wagons and all. The railroad track over the Mississippi was laid on great big boats anchored in the river. They had started the 5th of May from Illinois, and the season being comparatively dry the great river made for favorable crossing.

Father did not remember the towns between Davenport and Iowa City, yet recalls that it was far between each station. Iowa City was the capital of the state on his first trip. Opined that it had been moved by the time of subsequent trip, Iowa City, nicely situated on the Iowa River, was already quite a town at this time. They didn’t stop; they found it less expense to be on the way, and that in a hurry. No gawking around. They must needs live frugally and make all possible speed. There are considerable risks attendant on such a Journey. Had, for instance, one of the horses buckled under - what then? Might possibly have been able to find another, but what of the bargaining and expense? They did not

have many dollars to spare. It was different with travelers who went in large companies and could help each other out with horses or provisions in a pinch. They were few.

From Iowa City to Marshalltown the route was largely forgotten by father. He doesn't recall for a certainty whether they went through Marengo or Cedar Rapids. Arrived at Marshalltown they bought a bedstead and two chairs. Wonder if bedstead is in existence yet. Marshalltown had made good progress in growth since father's first trip. There were four log houses and an unpainted grocery store then. In place of the log houses set on a little eminence now stood a court house. There were brick houses, too, now, which the newly-built railroad was much to thank for. They went from Marshalltown to Marietta, aiming for Nevada. On the route to Marietta and thereabouts as they drove along the hillsides they saw a vast stretch of bottom land below them wherein they noted many Indian wigwams near the river bank. From here the Indians fished or trapped or sought other game as the case might be. Later when father hauled lumber from Marshalltown the young Indian braves would come running in bunches as if threatening to stop his team, and then father, being at a loss regarding their intentions, grew uneasy. They could be seen in strings near their huts preparatory to pounce on the passersby and head him off. Father thought he was in for dire trouble, but they were milder than they looked and didn't attack him, merely asked for tobacco. But there was no tobacco forthcoming, let alone that he had one pound of it somewhere about him just the same. Conversation between them did not flow freely since neither he nor they could speak English very well. They sought to intimidate those wayfarers who came from a distance and were not used to their ways, while easily overawed by them, and returned bluff for bluff. Father had gotten on to the ropes fairly well, did not let on that he was afraid, hence was not seriously plagued or molested. Father said these young Indians were as straight as saplings, never having over-exerted themselves, and were fleet of foot as wild deer.

They decided to go by way of Nevada since father had already traversed this stretch and was somewhat acquainted. They would have done better to have aimed directly at Roland by way of the cross-country prairie road, but being unknowing as to any such possible advantage decided on the more familiar route. They came to Nevada about two months before the railroad which reached this town the Fourth of July. Work on the R.R. had reached as far as Colo when they passed through. On way met Ola Andreas Stokkaland a former resident of Illinois and a relative of Paulsrud's wife's folks, who was greatly pleased to hear fresh news from his former home. Letter writing was indulged in very sparingly back in those days.

They all came to Anders and Helga who lived in the old Hall house about half a mile south of our present home, but they could not all be accommodated there. Grandfather and family were taken by Madlina to her home. Father and mother and Lewis (two years old) stayed where they had come from about the middle of May till about harvest time. Both the people and animals had stood the trip well, which was usual with nearly all campers on such journeys. Our sleeping quarters in the Hall house were snug as you

please in a corner of the tiny upstairs room, and when Nils and Larsina came in July they were assigned to another corner. They could stretch out as they slept, and no more, in this cubby hole. It was inconvenient; and they cooked on one stove; all were poor, but no one complained. It happened so that when father went to get Nils and Larsina's household goods at the station in Nevada the house on the hill half a mile north, our home, was being shingled.

Telling the story in the order that father related it we now switch to the first road in Scott Township, built from our home place to the Story County line to connect with timber road further south. Fences had been put up most of the way. A bridge-culvert was laid to connect ponds some 70 rods south of our place and men came to help as far away as Cheesa Plassen working with spades to level up the ground to the bridge entrance. Father called it a "fille tre bru". ("a poor wooden bridge"). Kittel Knutson, who had moved into the Hall place after Anders and Helga, stood by smoking as the others worked, which moved father to say that if he expected to work out his road-tax he would have to dig in. "Vil du kondera gamle folk?" countered Kittel. ("Are you trying to boss old folks around?") when the road crew came to the short stretch west of Francis Wier and the three big Eglands, powerful specimens they were, hesitated to remove the obstructing fences. Store Per, who was in charge, pulled up the posts with his own hands and flung these and the rails in every which way most convenient, causing the contrary Eglands to scatter in panic to be safely away from there.

Father hauled pine lumber from Marshalltown immediately on arriving here so that the building of a new house might be begun without delay. The bass wood and oak lumber used was obtained from saw mills at Boone. The trip to Marshalltown took a day and a half. Started from home in early morning and arrived in Marshalltown in afternoon, and while horses were fed, wagon was loaded up. Drove in wagon truck and sat on "houndso" going down. The horses went on a trot much of the time. Coming back father would stop late in eve at Clemons Grove for the night. He slept on some rags on the ground. Heard plenty of noisy frogs and other sounds peculiar to the prairie those early days. Ate dry lunches on the way. No restaurants handy and no money for such extravagance anyway. Anders helped by hauling two loads. Endere, too, promised to help haul lumber, but when he came to Marshalltown Julia's desire for some furniture decided him to take that instead of the lumber.

The house lot was decided upon at once, nor was the original plan ever deviated from, even though Johannes Mathre strongly advised building nearer the timber on the highest point facing the road on the 40 about 60 rods east of the school-house. This would have cut up the 40 more, nor would the location have been as desirable. The prairie road from the N. E. crossed our yard just east of the house, but father put up a few panels of fence as soon as he could, thus diverting the roadway off our premises, a little to the east.

Besides the other lumber father chopped wood on a two-acre tract in the timber, east of the Uncle Nils place, where he obtained water elm logs for foundation material. This

tract went with the purchase of the 40 with the privilege of chopping all the trees thereon for a period of ten years. Soft maple and Water Elm grew well there, also a few ash, and one solitary Walnut. A little isthmus of land with barely an entrance for driving formed by the freaks of the river made up the two acres and father stripped it so bare by the time he was through with it that Ludvig, the barrel maker, could not even find suitable saplings for barrel hoops there. Thore Olson, who took over the land after father's option was over, looked wryly at the havoc father's thorough stripping had occasioned. Father had bought the 40 of Biggs in 1859 and his option on the timber tract expired in 1869. Not many years ensued before the two acres were again in timber, but the place became less accessible owing to new river channels. While he worked in the woods he took his lunch up to Larsina where he had coffee. Larsina had much on her hands during the sickness of her children, two boys and two girls having passed away of her twelve children. In pulling the logs home father secured Anders's log chain which he fastened about the log right under the rear axle and then pulled for home, Once when mother and Lewis were along father took hind wheel off, rolled the log onto the truck and weighed it up with a lever while mother replaced the wheel.

Speaking of the Petersons, Nils split rails when sap between bark and stem flowed most freely so as to conserve the wood the better. It is said that his main diet was beans and that he reported that he ate ravenously. Yet scarcely ever did he feel satisfied. He fretted greatly on account of possible floods and chopped madly so as to get the rails moved, in event of such a happening to a near hillside. his first great task was to build a log-house. Sivert Knutson helped with foundation logs and more, and so did father, each doing his separate piece of work, father the rougher part and Sivert the finishing touches. Sivert was kind and likable. He had a cheery way about him and was an unusually capable worker. And so was Lars Henryson, obliging and competent when he built our house. He took pains to be exact in his measurements both in the heavier material and otherwise and had a horror of wasting any pieces of lumber, little or big, unnecessarily. Father helped saw where carpenter Lars had marked the material. He ate his dinner with us at a small table that we had to ourselves down at Anders's place. When it came to a final settlement he asked for some extra dollars in return for the food he had consumed at home while building for us. But this was not according to agreement, nor was the extra 25 cents over the \$1.50 a day wage agreed upon, that he asked for, justifiable. He took his cue from Knut Asche who he heard was charging \$1.75 a day for similar work. Father said he would pay it even though it was not according to agreement, since Lars had been so proficient in his work. Father and his little family moved into the new house about the middle of July, during harvest, as far as remembered.

They bought a cow called "Svart Anders Kuno" from Anders for about \$15. They needed her milk for immediate use. Bought also three heifers from Haavar Thompson. One was a brindle and became the forerunner of many subsequent brindles. Bulls abounded on the prairie. Bought the heifers in fall and when grass came again they

followed the other cattle out on prairie to graze and came back to their new home never evincing any hankering for their old home by the timber. Once mother was to fetch home the cattle from the prairie, but though it grew late she did not return and father had to go in search for her. He found her and her charges just north of the swampy slough called "Springa paaen". Sometimes father fetched home the cattle himself and sometimes he got Sivert Knutson's boys, Albert or Andrew or the one that died, sometimes others, to watch them, or just to fetch them home. Old man Asche, great grandfather of the Hanson boys, found "fin skaat" on the cows. A hole or rupture in the belly had developed on the cow into which he stuck his finger, thus affecting a cure. (Find out from old Norskie what Fin Skaat might be in English.) Got a calf from the cow and later from heifers regularly, yearly. They built & stable for the horses and the original cow, and stuck the heifers into a lean-to by the stable. It was a log stable formed of water elms and maple. Father remembers that the price for a keg of nails those days was \$10. The roof over the stable consisted of a layer of suitable tree-branches overlaid with coarse slough hay thickly enough to keep the moisture out. The lean-to was buried in hay, both on top and on the sides and remained dry and comfortable wet or cold.

Father earned the 10th part of each wagon load for husking corn for Francis Wier and Haaver Thompson. Clean husking was expected, so much so that no husks or corn silk were ever left to cling to the corn ears. Father thus gleaned 70 bu. for himself, husking in all 700 bu. Together with the wild hay he had put up he got along with this feed through the winter and early summer, but had to buy a few bushels more before another corn-crop had matured.

Father broke prairie for Anders, receiving some feed and the use of an extra horse in return, and retaining the right to do some breaking for himself with the full outfit. He broke up some 15 acres in the west half of the 40, the eastern rim thereof reaching as far as "Store Paaen" ("Big Pond"). He had broken a strip immediately west of the house the first year, and would have broken more, but drought hindered it. Planted some potatoes there the next year, and harvested a rather modest crop. Corn seeds were dropped between the rifts in the sods and tamped down. Christen, he now surmised, helped him with this work. The corn came up through the seams and grew very well if wind and weather were favorable. Sometimes birds and squirrels proved a pestilence just after planting. They didn't cultivate corn planted in this fashion, the overturned sod remained too obdurate to allow of any stirring if the corn was to have a chance to grow. They had five acres of wheat in west end of 40 the 2nd year. Enough was raised to provide for food and seed. He went to Hughes' mill 7 mi. S.E. of Story City to have wheat ground. Later Mr. Soper took over, then Mr. Eagleberger who went bankrupt. Owing to lack of water in the Skunk River they would sometimes be obliged to go to mill at Iowa Falls. Sometimes they went to the Tunnel Mill on the Boone River, but were even there turned away for lack of water a time or two. Later father would on occasion do some milling at Hannum's mill about 2.5 miles north of Ames, through not often.

Reverting to soil preparation, father said that ground broken in spring (sometimes carrying some sod corn) remained fallow after breaking, till fall, when it was plowed the same way as before and some deeper lying black soil turned up with it. It disintegrated largely through freezing in the winter whereupon it was seeded and thoroughly dragged the next spring. Wheat was the main crop then.

Knut had a McCormick Reaper and Boen had a Manny Reaper with which to cut the grain before we came, but our near neighbor on the north, Osmund Weltha (Helgeland) got a Manny Reaper in time to help us out. A man was stationed suitably with fork in hand to rake off the grain, bundle-size, from the platform of the moving Reaper. Father had done this work back in Illinois and was able to help Boen and Helgeland during harvest. The man raking had a seat on back of platform with fixings in front to lean against while working, same as on Sigurd's kitticar. It was hard work when the grain was thick, and the bundles had to be calculated to a nicety for the four men who were to tie them, each on his station about the field. There were jolly rivalries between the members of the tying crew to finish station quickly so as to rest the longer. There were always gala lunches during harvest time. In a neighbor's field whiskey flowed, and failed to make a good head-balance. The bundles, too, were wobbly.

Now as to cradling, father said that a good cradler could cradle between 10 and 12 acres a day. One good man could bind as much as the cradler cut down. At each stroke or swing with cradle a section of the swath was deposited on the ground, while the implement would be jerked back for another cut. The tier of the bundles raked together the sheaves till he had enough for a tie-together and tilted rake on shoulder in readiness for the next raking, and gathering of sheaves. When cradling one had the grain on the right and when swing was made the straws fell over against cradle-frame and stood almost upright on a miniature platform when evenly tipped off, heads outwards and butts inwards. The cradle swaths were 8 or 10 feet wide, hence the acreage attained daily by a good worker.

Father couldn't keep up at first with his brother Store Per when the latter cradled. Per had learned to cut the grain evenly, leaving stubble of uniform height and not too close to the ground. Endre Tjernagel followed in his wake and kept fairly well at his heels during much of his cradling. It was no easy task and Endre must be given credit for being a capable bundle-maker.

There was a 10 ft. reaper those days in Illinois that was propelled by two teams of horses either side of a long tongue extending backwards at the end of which sat a helmsman on very heavy wheels controlling the direction of the machine to a nicety. Per in Illinois sustained lasting injury in trying to rake off the grain sufficiently fast as it fell on the machine platform. He thought he would be strong enough to do it alone, but got "slet" in the effort. There was also a machine that dropped the grain from platform sufficient for a bundle. It was left in the form of a swath wide as the reaper and was manipulated by the driver's foot. There was still another Reaper drawn by four horses

where three men stood separately as bundle binders and received each his portion to bind through the deft manipulation of a 4th man who raked up each his portion as the grain fell on the platform. The man who did the raking certainly had his hands full. And the (wolf) “den skrubben” who did the driving enjoyed seeing the others exert themselves, though some drivers did have some mercy. What a load of human freight to pull round and round the field! After these machines came the McCormick and Manny Reapers with their mechanical platform rakes; the first revolved around as would a perpendicular wheel, while the latter swung its rake round the platform vertically. And then came the Marsh Harvester which elevated the grain from platform by means of rollers and apron, while two men received the grain as it came, each tying his portion alternately and thereupon flinging the bundle to the ground. Now the modern grain self-binder has replaced all former methods of harvesting.

Father used a Manny Reaper to cut hay with but used a grass-sickle instead of the one for grain. It was heavy as “all get out”. Father mowed for many of the neighbors besides his own mowing. Once I was to carry lunch to him when he mowed east of “Store Hauen”. I was a very diminutive person and extremely young at the time and could scarcely make myself seen above the tall prairie grass growing there, but father eyed me in time to stop the mower before I had ambled into its path. He had his lunch and I my ride as he hoisted me into the lofty Manny Reaper seat and made me believe I managed the outfit by my holding tight the loose ends of the lines. The Manny Reaper cut a swath of five feet, the first mower four feet, being unwieldy at that.

Father plowed with a 14 inch stirring plow drawn by our black geldings Charley and Frank. He at first used a single shovel plow in the corn and hitched up Charlie to pull it for him, and covered about two acres a day. What weeds were missed by the plow were pulled up by the roots by hand. Tended also some beans, potatoes, and sugar cane. After a year or two a double shovel plow was bought at Nevada. The big riding cultivator next in succession was bought within the span of my own memory. Father had hauled a gopher cultivator with him from Illinois, but didn't use it here in Iowa, but soon sold it to Haakon Vespestad who lived east of Chr. Logan near Long Dick Creek. Paid \$36.00 for the gopher in the first place. The riding cultivator was mostly operated by Lewis, though Peter and I also had sessions with it. By the way, a Mr. Keefe hard by the Vespestads warned father over and over again not to buy any wet land. Whatever the reason, one thing was sure: He had land to sell himself.

As to wagons father said that he came to Iowa in a patent skein wagon with screw nut. Other wagons largely used were the lynch-pin variety. Endre Tjernagel had “ler vogno”, equipped with leather washers. While other wagons made their noises, Endre came padding along quietly without rousing anybody's attention. The improved thimble skein was used on the Bain wagon which was supposed to be a very strong and durable vehicle. The price was \$110.00 with spring seat and 8 in. top box. There was a six inch top box on father's wagon. that took him to Iowa. New Bain was bought later at Nevada for, or by,

Peter. The Mitchell wagon was an early wagon, too, and could be had at Nevada. Speaking of Peter, it may be interpolated here that father never bought a self-binder and that it remained for Peter when he rented the farm, to buy a Champion Self-binder.

As to other implements, father said that the first drags were of wood and consisted of one section only. Father made a tiny drag that one horse pulled between the corn rows. He got through the corn quicker than with a plow and it left the ground smoother and cleaner. This was in Illinois and Anfin Krabbatveit laughed at him, but the idea was a good one. When they got the gopher (plow) it straddled the row and it could be adjusted so as not to cover the corn just peeping up, or to work soil nearer the hills when it grew taller. The gopher was early and so were single and double shovel plows. Father doesn't remember seeing any cultivators in Illinois before he left in 1864.

Early hay rakes lay flat on the ground and were comb-like in appearance both front and rear. They were controlled by a hand-lever fastened to a frame whereby the operator could lower the teeth of the comb into the ground causing it to tip over and, dumping the hay, catching hold as a rake again on the other side of windrow. The windrows could also be made into proper sized heaps for cocks by this unique rake. The machine worked with a minimum of bother and cleaned up the hay nicely on level ground, especially if the operator knew how to handle the lever to a nicety. With a tractable team and with lines over his shoulder the hands of the driver could manipulate both driving and proper leverage without trouble. Steel rakes on wheels came next; some had their lifting power installed in front, others behind. Wild hay was generally allowed to dry before raked up, otherwise there would be dust in the mow. Oftener than not, hay was set up in cocks before hauling. Say the cut hay was usually cocked at once, but was scattered again till dry enough for the final cocking, and, subsequent hauling. When hay was made on the prairie there was great to do in keeping the cattle from charging into the cocks to exercise their horns or playing bovine pranks generally. Sometimes the animals found themselves spending the night by preference midst an army of cocks, hence extreme watchfulness by the haymaker was required. Derricks of hay forks were used on the meadow in putting up stacks, but came later. There were some expert pitchers and loaders, both as applied to the stacks and the loading on racks. Nevertheless, some rack loads slid off. Peter had some such experience, and came near being seriously hurt. Side-delivery rakes came at about the same time as the hay-loader and slings.

Previous to the planting of corn the ground was prepared with plow and drag. Among the more forward looking farmers, by the way, were John and Aave Rosdal, Store Nils, and Per and Nils Hansen. They had come over on the "sloop", had settled at first in New York and upon coming to Illinois were quite progressive and yankeefied. – The seed-bed being smoothed out to the satisfaction of the owner a marker with three or four runners worn smooth by the ground was whisked over the field first in one direction and then straight crosswise. Then came boy or girl droppers with three or four kernels of corn preparatory to each dropping at the intersections formed by the marker. In dropping the

corn it was best to go in the direction of the first marking, not the second. Grown-ups followed up the droppers and covered with earth the hill with one pull of the hoe and stepped upon it for packing as the next hill in turn was hoed over. There were many odd happenings occurring between droppers and hoers, some jolly ones, some almost sad, and some quite ludicrous. Some owners dragged the ground after planting, others didn't, since they were fearful the hills might be too much disturbed, even to the extent of uncovering the corn kernels. Nor was the seed always made to lodge in moist ground, as usually with the later machine planter; hence the more successful dragging afterwards. Two hand planters linked together were sometimes used by one man, but, of course, never for replanting where scattered hills might be out. Some rolled the ground after planting with great log rollers which was good for the corn, but invited also the prompt appearance of weeds. Dust was raised the more readily by high winds on rolled ground than otherwise. For some reason or other the old wooden roller gradually went out of style. And not a great deal of rolling has been done since then by the majority of farmers.

When the first Keystone corn planters showed up we borrowed one from Jonas Ponsnes and Lewis planted biggest part of field east of dwelling in a great rush of speed. The planter was to have been returned at a set time, but Lewis dared risk Jonas's displeasure, kept it over the stipulated span and finished the job. I can still see faithful Fly's head bobbing up and down as she and another horse pulled the planter back and forth on "Store Hauen" and urged to a rapid pace by the driver to make the finish. Peter handled the dropping lever and was hard put to it, high speed and all, to hit the cross markings.

Father doesn't remember personally having operated a corn planter. This work seems to have been turned over to Lewis when we began the use of this implement. Father dropped some at first, he thinks, but Peter was quite promptly installed as the official manipulator of the dropping lever. Unbelievable as it may sound, I, too, was put to this job later. When the check-rower came cross marking was dispensed with, and one man was able to plant the corn without assistance.

Enough stone was found on the 40 with which to build our large stone cellar. Old man Lund did the blasting to reduce the larger stones to workable proportions. To make the 10 inch hole required he used bolts of fine steel, and water, and pounded till the hole was there. He poured the necessary amount of powder into bottom of hole, then took long iron pin sharpened toward point and set it in the powder, whereupon he tamped brick dust around it, removed so the Tin, poured another dose of powder into the tiny hole, connected the fuse with it, applied a match to fuse and then ran some 8 or 10 rods away to safety. One stone that peeped ever so innocently out of the ground proved to be of very sizable proportions before finally blasted out, the cost of which was \$10.00. Whether mistakenly or not they named the stone blue granite. The two whitish stones originally placed near road south of the house were from the hill in N.W. part of 40. These stones are now placed north of the house. There were several stones in the meadow and near the

big pond (Store Paaen). There were also a number of stones on the low land north of the pond on the original Meltvedt farm later bought by father. The east part of the farm as well as the original north 80 contained gravel and smaller stones in places, but scarcely any big ones.

Andreas Knutson Meltvedt paid \$1.00 an acre for 80 running lengthwise adjoining our farm on the north. The land was so low that he hesitated to build his dug-out on it and received permission to build it in the N.W. corner of our E. 80 where there was a suitable knoll, There were scarcely any boards used in the dug-out except on the roof. They had a straw stable for the little livestock they had. They cultivated the knolls for the limited amount of feed they were able to produce. Plenty of prairie hay. Andreas made good use of his scythe and later father helped do the mowing with his Manny Reaper attachment. There was particularly excellent prairie hay to the north and east of "Store Paaen".

We visited a lot back and forth. Some of my fondest memories hark back to this period. Andreas had a cheery temperament and made everybody happy with his jolly mien and frequent guffaws. "What are you good for?" he would shout to us children and would add his own homespun saying: "De bare paa vatten aa ve, aa stikker aa straa". ("They carry water and wood, and sticks and straw".) Katrina, his wife, was an exceptionally understanding person and knew how to be of loving service to her own as well as to others. Like her husband she was always kind and considerate. Like ourselves they had eggs, milk, butter, vegetables, flour and meat - what more do you want? There were cookies and fried cakes, too. And who said there wasn't some coffee, for the elders, Father has often spoken of those halcyon days of yore with Andreas, Sivert, Nils and Anders in the background. How much happier are the rich in their commodious houses than were we in our primitive abodes, he would say. They had sufficient food so as to meet their modest needs, and their beds were good enough to invite to sound sleep. Above all, they were thankful to God for what they had.

Andreas bought the 40 further east by the road some ten years after we came to Iowa, as father remembers, and he, father, had also bought the east 80 at some such time, presumably somewhat earlier. The price was low, \$3.00 an acre, caused by the fact that, according to Mr. Sweany, who seems to have made the deal, the land had been sold at Sheriff's sale and might not attain to a perfectly secure title for, say, 16 years. No claimants were ever heard of, however.

Father related that wolves did not abound at first, but swarmed in as the settlement grew, apace. however, wolves were heard of more generally a little further south, by Starvation Hollow, and thereabouts. A wolf eyed Larsina through the window in their log-cabin quite early. There were plenty of muskrats; and minks were known to catch chickens by the neck to suck their blood and then discard them. Skunks had more sense of economy and consumed the whole hen, also eggs. Other animals there were, but they caused no great devastations, except it be the field squirrel. There were some rattlesnakes, but hardly as many as Endre Tjernagel would have us believe when at haying time he

pitched rattle snakes into the load to Julia who was loading for him. This according to Uncle Nils who might have stretched it a little, but who certainly had experienced some most disagreeable encounters with “creepers”. None of us youngsters saw rattlesnakes on the prairie, but we saw plenty of bull snakes and the so-called grass snake. We dreaded even these. Pete saw a great snake coiled like a ball by “Springa Hauen”, but dared not go near to investigate. Oscar Henderson related having seen a mammoth coiled snake near the woods by the river.

As to horses, father said that he had exchanged Frank for a gray mare owned by Dr. Cochrane who lived on the place since taken over by Hans Pederson. The mare was called Nellie and was later sold to Nils, and also a colt of hers (grown-up), for \$230.00. Nils was very prompt in his payments both of interest and the regular instalments. This same Nellie had yet produced another colt for us and was he big: We grieved when father sold him to a horse-buyer for something over \$100.00. This sum helped pay a considerable part of the indebtedness on the east 80. Father felt quite sure that our beloved Fanny that died on us, was bought as a colt from Knut Phillops. Raised colts from her and other mares and sold some, one fine boy team being among them. It was always heartbreaking for us boys to see them as they were led away for good. Fly and Flora, mares of especial intimacy among us boys, were bought from Thomas Tunge. The price was around \$250.00 for the two. Fly left a great legacy of colts, but was sold to Lars Omundson later. Nellie and Fanny were outstanding in the line of her progeny and they, in turn, had numerous descendants. Our present Nellie is the granddaughter of Fly. (I remember now she had to be shot because of poll evil. The fool rendering plant man put five bullets into her devoted head before she fell. What sorrow!) No progeny from Flora was left on the farm, if I remember rightly. She was a shiny black, with beautiful mane, and lovable disposition, and entirely safe for youngsters to ride or handle in whatsoever way. Sweany was treated by inserting long horse hairs through skin by means of incisions and, on moving these in and out, back and forth, festering was started and finally life came back to the affected parts. Too much and too heavy pulling caused this condition and pressed out the life of the flesh so that it started to wither and die.

As to cows of the near pedigree order father bought, some 70 years ago, a line cow from a drove of cattle being driven from Marshalltown to western points. She was all Durham except for 1/16 Devonshire. Price about \$45. We received a slight sum back from the drove owners on their trading her for three of our cows. Two milk pails could stand nicely side by side on her hips and one very comfortably in front. (Bojedne, paa Norsk.) She was a large cow and well built, and gave a fair amount of milk. We called her “Storabaso” (“Big bossy”). Her progeny was numbered in dozens. One of the heifers among her descendants turned out to be the largest cow I have ever seen. Her udder was enormous and her milk output unusually great. Father was bid an exceptionally high price when she was dry, by the butchers, and made the mistake of selling her. She would, no doubt, have mothered many fine milkers.

Father tells about the clothes they used in earlier day, saying that mother sewed by hand the shirts, suits and dresses required for the family. Hickory shirts were in vogue; and calico and gingham dresses. One dollar and less for a ten yard calico dress; even as low as five cents per yard. Sewed by hand one day was spent in making it. "Twill" cloth, blue denim, was bought and made into jackets and pants for the boys, and sometimes into dresses for little girls. Kentucky jean cloth was bought and made into suits for school or Sunday-go-to-meeting wear. price about 50¢ per yard. Grown-ups used the material, too, and often home-made at that. Shoes of split leather; both for men and women, were rather coarse and heavy, but lasted much longer than shoes do now. Father had "leist aa sydel aa pinnar aa greier" (last and awl and pegs and such fixings) and repaired many a shoe himself. Copper toes on boys' boots were common and made the little fellows proud. "Yes, I see you have new boots", said Wiester as I sat down near him with legs crossed and boots well displayed. Hadn't, however, intended to make any display, and felt rather hurt by his remark. A few around here used wooden shoes, especially in the winter. They were 50¢ a pair, but the price rose some later. Jacob Charlson Grove made excellent, well-formed wooden shoes. Eyvind Riveland who lived a ways north-east of us on the prairie was an early shoemaker. Oien, who married Dorthea Lie-Phillops, was the first shoemaker in Story City. Price of shoes then was around \$1.50 per pair for grown-ups and about \$1.00 for children.

When they butchered, father says that while butchering all available boilers were busy on the stove heating water so that there would be no delay in having the necessary barrels properly filled in which to douse the swine. The temperature had to be just right in those barrels, otherwise the bristles would not readily let go their hold. And they were to be scraped off with a hoe or scythe and not be cut off, leaving roots in skin. A knife was used to clear off stray bristles defying removal. The hog, if we have to repeat it, was to be soused up and down just so long and no longer than it took the stubborn bristles to yield. If too long, they took on a new hold and hung on for good. The butchering for market was done in winter, the insides removed, and carcasses hung up and frozen. No deliveries otherwise. One year during the Civil War the price went pretty high, possibly up to 15¢, if his brother's memory is not at fault. Five cents was considered a fair price. In 1861, just before the war, the price was as low as \$2.50 for dressed pork. Once, after the war, father sold pork for \$1.95. They took good care of the innards those days, for father remembers that a neighbor woman came and helped clean guts for the fats. Nils Peterson always came to help father butcher for the family, usually a hog and cow, Everything was done to a T and up to snuff; and there was much visiting and jovial talk between the participants. We children hung around, of course, but never do I remember hearing them indulge in improper, thoughtless speech. A few strong expressions, that was all. They had both taken to heart the Scriptural injunction to bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Nils would usually swing the ax that felled the cow slaughtered, but once his aim went wrong because of a slip on some ice, and the ax went wild and

grazed father's temple who stood by steadying the animal. Some tense moments followed wherein thankfulness to God for standing by was uppermost in their minds.

Note:

That this story should be mimeographed and distributed was the idea of Dr. Neelak S. Tjernagel, son of Rev. Henry Tjernagel and grandson of Ole Andreas Larson Tjernagel. Neelak was in possession of the manuscript in the handwriting of Nehemias Tjernagel.

The cutting of the stencils and the mimeographing was done by Rev. Adolph M. Harstad whose wife, Martha Karina, is a daughter of Peter Tjernagel and granddaughter of Ole Andreas Larson Tjernagel.

The date is the month of September, 1976.