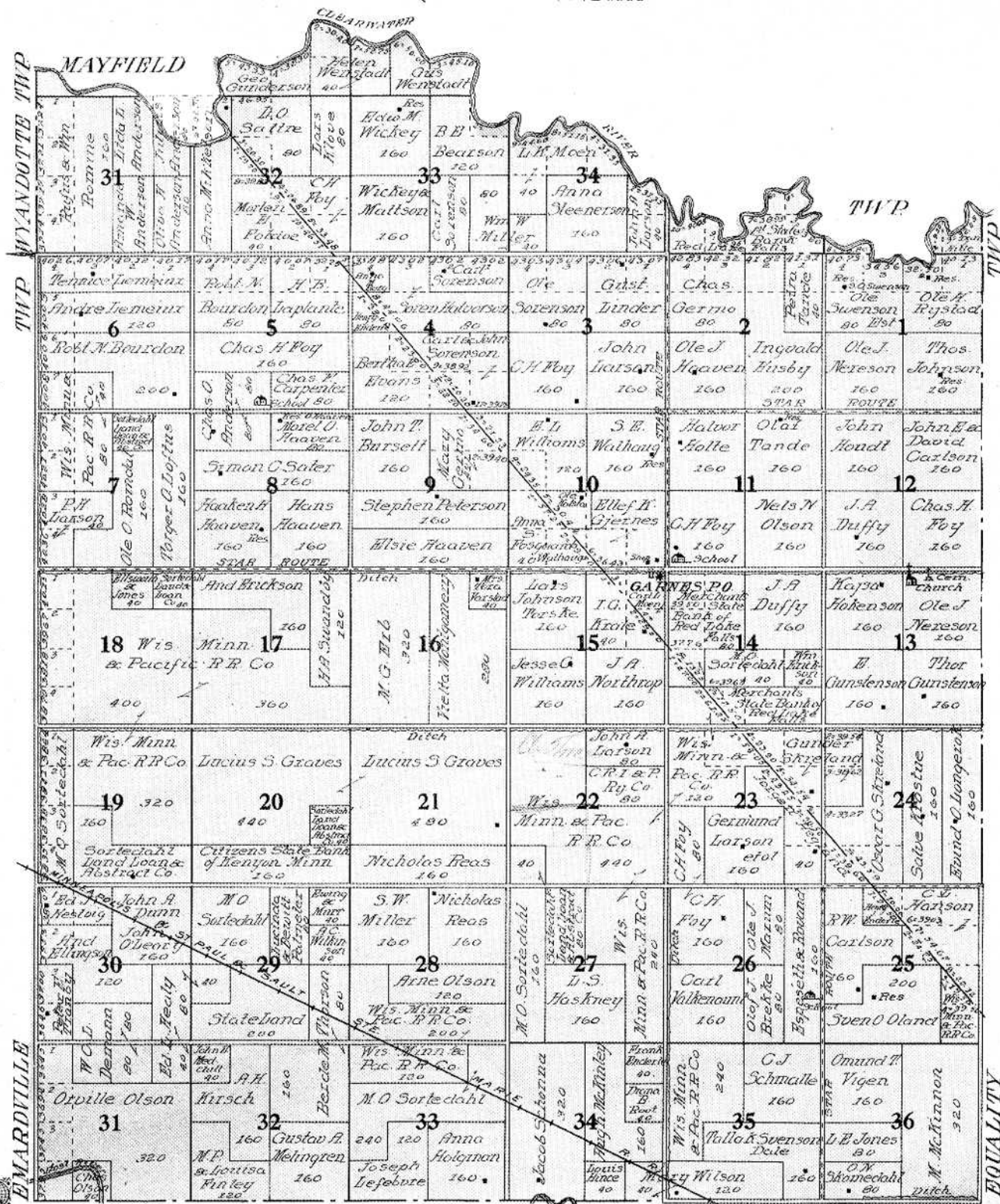


of the 5th P. M.

Scale 1 3/4 inches to 1 mile

## GARNES TOWNSHIP



EMARVILLE

**FOIA CITY**

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# GARNES TOWNSHIP

The territory that is now Garnes township belonged at one time to the Red Lake Chippewa Indians. A reservation line split the township running from the southeast part of the township to the northwest part. The land on the west of this line was opened for settlement in the early eighties, while on the east of the line the land was opened for settlement in 1896.

Clearwater River became the boundary line on the north between the Indian reservation and the township and was at this time noted for its log drives. Many millions of board feet of lumber in the form of logs were floated down the river to saw mills in Crookston. Some logs were also floated down the Red River to Winnipeg. As many as six Wanegans (cooking and sleeping boats) would go down with the log drive some years and many of the early settlers worked as drivers during the spring and summer.

Part of the land had scattered groves of timber on it, mostly poplar with some oak. Many early settlers built their homes as well as other buildings from logs. The rest of the land was more open with scattered groves of poplar, oak and willows. The northwest part of the township along the river was settled mostly by French speaking people. The rest of the township was comprised of mostly Scandinavians with some Irish and Germans. The nearest railroad towns were St. Hilaire, Red Lake Falls and McIntosh. However, soon small stores were established where the settlers could get their groceries and other items of need.

In the fall of the year it was customary for many of the settlers to leave for the harvest fields in North Dakota to earn money to support themselves and their families.

With no roads and only slow methods of transportation available, the new settlers could not venture far to secure their necessary supplies. The first store was built by Egil Skaale, in the SW corner of Sec. 35. No record is available as to when it was built, although it was known to be in the early nineties. In the fall of 1896, E. K.

Gjernes built a store in the SE corner of his homestead in Sec. 10. About 1899 Hughes and Manders built a store across the road from the Gjernes store, where Geo. E. Spong now lives. This store was later operated by L. K. Moen.

Some time during 1897, the Garnes post office was established and E. K. Gjernes appointed post master. Mr. Gjernes operated the store and post office until the store burned in 1903, after which Ole G. Lee served as postmaster until it was moved to the L. K. Moen store. The mail came from Lambert, with Ljot Sigurson as mail carrier. With the coming of the Soo Railroad, mail service then came from Plummer.

E. K. Gjernes homesteaded in Highland township in 1904, but later came back and bought L. K. Moen's store which he operated until 1911 when he moved to Oklee.

About the year 1900, A. Manders built the Cheese Factory, which became a source of income for the settlers as most of them now had cows. Nels and Henry Nelson built a blacksmith shop in 1896. When the village of Plummer came into being, Nels opened a shop in that village and Henry continued in Garnes until he moved to Oklee in 1910.

John Mostrom operated a feed mill for a few years. A Woodmen of the World Lodge was organized, with the second floor of the L. K. Moen Store as headquarters. This hall was used as a meeting place and also for entertainment purposes. When Oklee was established, Garnes faded out of the picture as a trading center. Thom Johnson bought the Cheese Factory building and moved it to his farm in Section one where he operated a store for a while.

Garnes township was named after E. K. Gjernes who was a homesteader in the town and also the builder of the first store in Garnes.

The first birth recorded in the town of Garnes was that of Ellen Marie Swanson, born April 26, 1890, to parents Mr. and Mrs. Gust Swanson.

Ingval Husby owned the first automobile in the town of Garnes. It was a Model T Ford bought in the year of 1914 at a cost of \$450.00.

He also was the first to separate milk, wash clothes and pump water using a gas engine as a source of power.

A petition by Andrew Lemieux and others to organize the Town of Garnes was presented to the board of county commissioners on the fifth day of January, 1898.

The first town meeting to elect town officers for the newly organized township was designated to be held in the town of Garnes on the 25th day of January, 1898, with the following appointed to act as judges of election: E. K. Gjernes, O. N. Skomedahl and Louis Falardeau.

The first town meeting was held in the town of Garnes on the 25th day of January, 1898. The meeting was called to order and Olaf Tande was chosen to preside as moderator of the meeting. Willie Swenson was then chosen to act as Clerk of the meeting.

The judges of election appointed by the county board were E. K. Gjernes, O. N. Skomedahl and Louis Falardeau.

The result of the balloting in this first election was as follows: Supervisors, Gus Iverson, I. Lemieux and Iver Gjeldaker. Town clerk, Olaf Tande. Assessor, Olus Olson. Treasurer, E. K. Gjernes. Justices of the Peace, O. N. Skomedahl and Erick Iverson. Constables, E. Halvorson and Halvor Vellison.

In organizing the board, Gust Iverson was elected to act as chairman. It was also resolved at this meeting that the following places be considered the most public places in the town: At school house No. 210, the post office in Garnes and at school house No. 230.

On motion made, seconded and carried, meeting adjourned.

The members of the present Garnes Town Board are Chairman, Tom Huotari; Clerk, John Kolstoe; Treasurer, Engvald Larson; Supervisors, Ervin Flatgard and Ronald Linder.



Threshing scene. Ed Anderson's rig and Severt Torske on engine.



Among the ranks of Gurnes early settlers may be listed the following: Joe Clearmo, Fred Ethier, Michall Phelon, Osio Paymont, Antoine Paymont, Jorger Lofthus, Mike Madden, Nels Moe, Frank St. Martin, Victor St. Martin, John Mostrom, Joe Junnoe, Joe Marchall, Andre Skorpene, Erick Palmer, Karen Palmer, Julius Hammer, John Dempsey, Iver Belle, Charley Foye, Martin Bergh, O. H. Olson, Camil Belairi, Andrew Lemieux, Alphonse LaComb, Joe Belairi, Octave Lefavre, Ole Haaven, Haakon Haaven, Hans Haaven, Marten Foldoe, Elsie Haaven, Simon Sather, Albert Wangsted, Gust Wangsted, Soren Halvorson, Carl Sorenson, John Sorenson, Sam Warstad, Nels Nereson, Ole Swenson, Thom Johnson, Ole Nereson, Adelor Ethier, Henry Ethier, Ole Haaven, Ingvald Husby, John Larson, John Bammerud, Ole Sorenson, Theo. Torgerson, Gunder Asbjornson, Swen Arveson, Nels Haakonson, Olaf Tande, Knut Gjeldaker, Ole G. Lee, Olaf Gunderson, E. K. Gjernes, Ole Kolstoe, Annie Forsgaard, Swan Walhaug, Elling Halvorson, Gust Linder, Lars Torske, T. G. Quale, Charley Haakonson, Knut Danielson, John Haakonson, Eivind Gunstenson, Thor Gunstenson, K. Haakonson, Salve Krostue, Osov Skreland, O. N. Skomedahl, Jorgen Hegland, P. A. Rustad, Halvor Vettleson, Gunstein Skreland, Eivind Langerak, Gunsten Torgerson, Gust Swanson, Swen Oland, Per Libak, Bernth Olson, Tobias Olson, Taalak Dahle, Andrew Nelson, Egil Skaale, Martin Boraas, Ljot Sigurson, Torge Torgerson, Jim Torgerson, Erick Iverson, Orville Olson, Joe Goulete, Louis Falardeau, John Olson, Mr. Rodri-day.

## GARNES TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICTS

### District 210

Early records show that a petition was filed with the Polk county board of commissioners dated March 28, 1895, requesting that nine sections in the southern part of Township 151 Range 41 be set aside as a School District.

A special school meeting was held at the Gust Swanson place on the 17th day of April, 1895, for the purpose of organizing a school district. Martin Peterson was elected chairman and O. N. Skomedahl clerk. Nothing was accomplished at this meeting. In the northern part of the district resided mostly single men not interested in a school, while the southern part of the district had mostly family men. However, there are no records to show when the school district was organized, or who were elected members to form the first school board.

The first term of school began on July 9, 1895 with Gina M. Lee as teacher. The term of school was for two months, teacher's salary \$30.00 per month.

The first annual school meeting was held at the Gust Swenson home on July 20, 1895. Halvor Vettleson was chosen moderator and O. N. Skomedahl as clerk. Officers elected were Halvor Vettleson director until July 31, 1896; Gust Swenson treasurer until July 31, 1897; O. N. Skomedahl clerk until July 31, 1898.

The following motion was passed: Be it resolved that a school site be designated in the Southeast corner of Sec. 26, township 151 range 41. Be it also resolved that the District be bonded for the sum of \$300.00 payable in ten years for the purpose of building a school house, school to begin upon completion of the school.



Ed and Knute Anderson



Charley Johnson homestead about 1908



School District 11, 1919

At a meeting held on January 10, 1896, a committee of two was elected to find out the cost of building a school house. Martin Peterson and Jorgen Hegland composed this committee. Martin Peterson agreed to give one acre of land as school site free of all costs to the school district. The school house was built by Per Libak and it was used for a church until Salem church was built in 1902. The school district consolidated with Oklee in 1915. Treasurer's Annual Statement as of July 18, 1896: Teachers wages \$93.00. Wood and supplies \$45.65. Paid for new school house \$187.35. Other expenses \$27.71. Cash on hand \$21.90. Total \$375.61. First order issued for school supplies to L. A. Cooler \$25.00, July 5, 1895.

### School District 233

The first meeting on record to organize a school was held at the Joe Belairi home on June 2, 1897. Camil Belairi was chosen chairman, O. H. Olson Clerk, and Andrew Lemieux treasurer. It was decided to have one month of school at the Joe Clearmoe



School District 233

home in Section 32-152-41, school to begin June 14, 1897. Julia Sovick was the teacher at a salary of \$30.00 with 35 pupils in attendance.

The first annual meeting was held at the O. H. Olson home on July 17, 1897. It was then decided to hold three months of school beginning in September. The following sums were also voted. Teachers wages \$30.00. Wood and supplies \$16.00. Books \$20.00. Discussed also was a site for the school. Many meetings were held concerning this topic. In 1899 the school house was built in the SE corner of the SW 1/4 Section 32, 151-41. The farm is now owned by Gust Foldoe.

In the year of 1902 the school house was moved to the south line of Sec. 5, 154-41, now owned by Olga Haaven. In 1914 it was moved to the NE corner of Sec. 5, now owned by Harry Sorenson.

The school burned down in 1938 and was rebuilt the same year. In 1948 the District consolidated with Plummer.

### School District 11

A petition signed by Olaf Tande and others to organize a school district was filed with the county board and approved Nov. 14, 1898. One month of school was held in the summer of 1899 at the Dempsey farm in Section 14. In 1900 school was held at the Eling Halvorsen farm in Sec. 10 with Isabella Reed as the teacher. School was also held in the Woodmen Hall until the school house was built in the SW corner of Sec. 11. It is believed the school house was built in 1903 although early records are not available.

The school house was moved from Garnes to its present site in the year 1913. School District 11 consolidated with the Oklee School district in 1944. Later the school house was bought from the Oklee school district and is now the Garnes town hall.

Following are the pupils attending school in District 11 in 1904: First grade — Lea Ethier, Ernest Ethier, Elvin Bammerud, Segrid Thoreson, Konstance Swenson, Tilley Helly, Regina Hanson, Oscar Drangsholt. Second grade — Max Manders, Agnes Lee, Severt Torske, Hjalmer Haakanson, Bell Iverson, Eva Ethier, Robert Dempsey, Inger Drangsholt, Gunder Drangsholt.

Third grade — Annie Gunderson, Sadie Hughes, Lizzie Dempsey, Eddie Dempsey, Benjamin Iverson, Edvin Iverson, Ole Hanson, Clara Kolstoe.

Fourth grade — Henry Torske, Selmer Swenson, Elmer Moen. Sixth grade — Lothard Haaven, Maude Iverson, Mary Dempsey, Olaf Kolstoe, Lillie Hughes, Gunder Gunstenson, Willie Dempsey.

## SALEM CONGREGATION

Salem Evangelical congregation, in what was then Polk county, was organized January 30, 1895, by Pastor Lunde. The next congregation meeting was held Nov. 2, 1896, at the home of E. K. Gjernes. The following were received as members at this meeting: Iver Gjeldaker and family, E. K. Gjernes, Ole G. Lee and John Lundell.

It was unanimously decided at the organization meeting that the congregation adopt the Symbols of the Norwegian Lutheran Church. The following were charter members: G. Svendsen and family, Simon Sether, Haakon Haaven and family, T. O. Lofthus, Ole O. Raundal, Erik Ericson, Gilbert Evenson, Ole Loiland and family, and T. J. Quale. S. Simonson was elected president, and Ole Rauland secretary. It was decided to ask Rev. Lunde to serve the congregation for one year. The congregation promised to support the work by free-will gifts according to ability.

A committee of three was elected to draw up a constitution and by-laws for the congregation and report at the next meeting. Members of that committee were the following: T. Quale, O. Kolstoe and Iver Gjeldaker. Also a committee was elected to see what could be done as to getting a house of worship. Members of this committee were H. Haaven, T. Quale and G. Lofthus. At this meeting the secretary was instructed to issue a letter of call to Rev. O. Kolstoe.

Rev. Kolstoe accepted the call and began work in Salem congregation as its pastor in 1896. Several congregational meetings were held to consider the place and location for a cemetery and the building of a church. At a meeting March 31, 1898, Rev. Ellestad of the United church was present and was elected chairman. After some discussion it was unanimously



Original Salem church which burned in 1936

decided that the cemetery should be located in the northwest corner of the northeast half of Section 13 in town of Garnes. The congregation extended thanks to Pastor Ellestad and the Mission Committee for the help rendered the congregation.

At a meeting Feb. 12, a committee of seven members was elected to try and gather some money for the building of a church. The committee consisted of the following: O. Svendsen, G. Skreland, E. Byklum, M. Boraas, Syver Maaren, B. A. Wall and I. Gjeldaker. This committee reported on March 1, 1900. At this meeting it was decided to build the church where the cemetery was located.

The church was built in 1902. The man who ought to be mentioned especially in connection with the building of the church is E. K. Gjernes. He helped greatly to get the church built. He donated \$75.00 and spent much time traveling around soliciting money for this undertaking.

At the congregational meeting in 1908, Ole A. Lee and Olaf Tande were received as members. In 1909 Carl Sorenson joined and in 1910 Swan Walhaug was admitted as a member. All of these men are now deceased. T. Kleven was admitted as a member in 1900 and served for many years as secretary, precentor, and also parochial school teacher. He moved from here in 1920.

Rev. Kolstoe served Salem congregation as its pastor, together with Immanuel and Aardal congregations, for 24 years, from 1896 to 1920. He, like so many of the pio-

neer pastors, experienced a great deal of hardships and difficulties. Roads were very poor and it was often difficult for the pastor to make his appointments. Quite often he had to wade through streams of water and walk on foot to get to his congregations. Rev. Kolstoe traveled a good deal. Besides serving his regular call he helped organize congregations in Wanke, Gonvick, Clearbrook, and he also went as far as Bagley preaching the word of God in the early days. His step-son, Villars, who died while yet a young man, was of great assistance to him, especially in his work among the children and young people. Rev. Kolstoe retired in 1920.

A new call had just then been organized, namely the three congregations served by Rev. Kolstoe — Salem, Immanuel and Aardal; and also Zion congregation, Oklee, Lost River congregation and Plummer Lutheran congregation. Pastor Lerohl was called in June, 1920. He accepted the call and was installed as pastor Oct. 3, 1920, by District President Aastad.

The Ladies Aids of Salem congregation worked diligently and faithfully to furnish the old church and finish it inside and out. It took several years to get nice oak pews, an altar, painting and a church bell and to get it finished with nice interior material. Finally the church was complete and very nice. Then, in the early morning or in the night of August 19, 1936, the church burned to the ground. All went up in flames, nothing was saved. How the fire started no one knows. It was a clear night — no thunder or lightning. The origin of the fire will perhaps always remain a mystery.

A meeting was called in the school house in Garnes on August 29th. It was announced that the congregation would get the full amount of the insurance, namely \$3,200.00. The congregation decided unanimously to rebuild the church, the new church to be two feet longer than the old, and with a full basement. A building committee was elected consisting of Swan Walhaug, chairman; Carl Sorenson, T. T. Slettedt, Mikkel Larson and Sig Krostue. A committee to solicit money for the building fund was also elected at this meeting. The following were elected: Thor Gunstenson, Thor Larson and Thor Skreland. A subscription was taken at the meeting and a nice sum of money was subscribed. All agreed to go to work and rebuild the church and the church was rebuilt in a comparatively short time.

The following were members of the congregation almost from its beginning: Salve Krostue, Osov Skreland, Mikkel Larson,



Young Peoples Society before 1912



and Gjermund Larson. C. O. Lindberg served as precentor for many years and Olaf Tande served as secretary of the congregation for about 20 years continuously.

Knut Wetleson, who was the oldest member at the time of his death, remembered the Salem congregation in his will with a gift of \$400.00 toward getting a church bell. Mr. Wetleson was for many years teaching the children in the vacation week day school. He taught in his own congregation and also in a number of neighboring congregations.

May the Lord continue to bless Salem congregation with His rich blessing in Christ.

## SALEM CONGREGATION LADIES AID

In the beginning there were four separate Ladies Aids in the Salem congregation. They were all working for parochial school and to help build and improve the church, besides giving money for mission work. The North Salem Ladies Aid was organized in 1897. Some members of each group of Ladies Aid would hold office for one year while at the present time the officers are elected to serve for one year in order to distribute the work more evenly. Mrs. Ole Kolstoe was president in the beginning of the North Ladies Aid, and later on Mrs. Swan Walhaug was president for the next fourteen years while Mrs. Ole Haaven was secretary-treasurer combined for many years.

A constitution was written for the North Ladies Aid which would serve the same purpose for all the branches. It was written in the Norwegian language as that was the language used more at that time than at present. Some of the contents of the constitution were the extension of God's Kingdom both at home and abroad. That all members be present except for some important reasons.

The South Salem Ladies Aid was organized in 1897. Mrs. Ole Lee was president of the Aid for many years, while Mrs. Havik was secretary and treasurer combined for many years.

The East Ladies Aid was organized in 1898. That Aid grew until it had 51 members. Mrs. T. G. Kleven was the secretary in the beginning while Mrs. M. O. Mathson was president for a number of years. Later on Mrs. Peder Barsness was president for a number of years.

West Garnes Ladies Aid was organized in 1915. Mrs. Wicky was president and Mrs. M. Foldoe was secretary-treasurer. They held office for seven years. The members met once a month in the farm homes, each lady serving a large lunch alone. Ten cents was charged for lunch.

Since the Aid meetings were held in the homes it meant that the house had to be thoroughly cleaned from the attic to the basement. The best of everything had to be put into use, and a lot of good food was prepared. The Ladies Aid was the main topic to be heard in the household for weeks ahead of time. When the women were ready to go to Ladies Aid, they would have to walk or step into lumber wagons or buggies drawn either by horses or oxen. Most of the women in those days would spend their time sewing or knitting while at their meetings. These articles were then sold to raise money for their Aid.

On the 6th day of May, 1937, a business meeting was held at the Salem Church at which time a motion was made and carried that all of the Ladies Aids of the Congrega-

tion consolidate and become one Ladies Aid. The first officers were Mrs. Swan Olson, president; Mrs. Ole Lee, vice president; Mrs. Knute Vake, treasurer; and Mrs. Gustaf Foldoe, secretary. The term of office was limited to one year.

The following have been presidents over the years: Mrs. Ole Lee, Mrs. Ben Larson, Mrs. Osov Skreland, Mrs. Melvin Johnson, Mrs. Oscar Stenberg, Mrs. T. O. Lien, Mrs. John Rosten, Mrs. Oliver Langie, Mrs. Conrad Engebretson, Mrs. Oscar Linder, Mrs. Edwin Walhaug, Mrs. Osmund Hofstad, Mrs. Leonard Johnson, Mrs. Gust Foldoe, Mrs. Gilman Hegland. Some of these have been re-elected for two years and one lady for three years.

## MAGIC OF WHITE MAN'S TOUCH —

Exemplified in the Progress of Garnes  
in Six Years

Since Reclaimed from Redmen.

Garnes township is situated in the southeastern part of Red Lake county and for three years was an independent township, being Town 151, Range 41, but two years ago a strip along the north side containing about 2,800 acres was added, and is now a part of this township.

About twenty-six sections are a part of what is called by the settlers, the "old grant." The remainder of the town was a part of the Red Lake Indian Reservation, a portion of which was opened to settlement in 1896. As the Indians never visited this portion of their domains, it remained for the white man to turn to advantage the natural resources of the country.

The reservation was opened for settlement May 15, 1896. The heavy snows of the previous winter, and abundance of rain in the early spring and up to the day of opening, caused many of the homeseekers to turn back discouraged before they had reached the border of the Indian lands. Most of the people came on foot from the nearest railroad, and the night before the opening many of the small log houses along the line were so full, that standing room was at a premium. Some of the men had tents but on account of the rain and the wet ground, camping out was anything but comfortable.

At 9 o'clock the morning of May 15, the "rush" began; but two hours later all was again quiet, most of the people having departed for Crookston to get filing on the land they had taken.

Through the efforts of E. K. Gjernes a post office was established here the same year, with himself as postmaster. He also carried the weekly mail to and from Lambert. The following spring the government established a carrier route with tri-weekly mail service which was continued until the summer of 1902 when the daily mail was allowed.

The township was organized in January 1898 and three names for it were suggested, viz, Garnes, Clearwater and Prosperity. The county commissioners decided upon Garnes as the post office was called by that name.

The first officers of the new town were G. Swenson, chairman and Olaf Tande, clerk, with Iver Gjeldaker and Isaac Lerniux as supervisors. These served until the spring election, when Louis Falardeau was elected chairman, while the other members of the board were re-elected.

The Modern Woodmen of America organized a camp here in 1899, and have a flourishing lodge at present. They

occupy the hall built by J. D. Hughes above his store in 1899. Mr. Hughes conducted a general mercantile business here for five years, and in the fall of 1901 sold his interests to L. K. Moen, who is now keeping a hotel and restaurant.

Nels Nelson came here in 1897 and engaged in blacksmithing. He has picked up his share of the work in his line and many dollars with it.

The Garnes Cheese factory was built in 1898 by the farmers in the vicinity and later purchased by the firm of Manders and Rogers, who still control it. The supply of milk is about 1,500 pounds per day on an average and yields a trifle over 10 lbs. of cheese to a hundred pounds of milk. The farmers are getting cattle as fast as they can see a way to care for them, and many are preparing tame grass pastures, which will greatly increase the yield as well as the quality of the milk.

Rev. O. Kolstoe, pastor of the Lutheran church, has a fine residence about one mile northwest of the post office, and the congregation has recently built a large church near the cemetery.

There are five road districts and four school districts in the town; but only two school houses. The residents of the north east portion of town recently voted on the site for a new school house soon to be erected, and it is to be located at the southwest corner of section eleven.

The Catholic church is in section thirty-one but has no regular pastor.

The question of drainage has been the one problem which the farmers could not solve to their satisfaction; but last summer the State Drainage Commission solved it satisfactorily, and during the last month contracts have been let for three ditches in Garnes township which will redeem many acres of land now practically worthless. The soil is good, and fruit and vegetables and small grains do well here; though the season is shorter, yet it seems that we have more daylight here than in the country farther south, so the grain ripens fully as fast, considering the time it is put into the ground.

About 70% of the population are Scandinavians. Within a few years these hardy and industrious settlers have made rapid strides toward advancement. Every year additions to their number, by friends and relatives from the "homeland" are made, and the settlement of the land is being gradually extended. We welcome them as good citizens who are doing much for the country of their adoption.

Twenty-five per cent of the settlers are French who moved here from Canada. They are an intelligent class of people who are quick to see their opportunities and take advantage of them. *Gazette* Dec. 28, 1902.

## LIFE ON THE HOMESTEAD

It was sometime in the year 1896 that my father, Martin E. Foldoe, drove with horses from Norman County to Red Lake Falls to file a claim on a quarter section of land in Garnes Township five miles east of Plummer and just east of what was then known as the Garnes swamp.

A log house was erected and the family, father, mother and two little boys, Alfred, four, and Carl, two years old, moved in. Later a summer kitchen was built but it was still a very small house, so small that a trundle bed was built that could be rolled away under our parents' bed in daytime and pulled out at night to give sleeping space to us girls.

The young homesteaders worked hard to glean a living off a piece of raw land. My father grubbed trees and brush by hand and broke up the virgin soil with a walking plow. They managed to raise quite a herd of cattle meaning more hard work, milking cows, feeding calves and fighting hordes of mosquitoes. The men had built big smudges at night to drive the mosquitoes away from the cattle in the barnyard.

Spring came early in 1898, the spring that I arrived on the 9th of March. The Garnes Swamp was filled with water from the melting snow. I've heard tell that when my father drove across the swamp to get the mid-wife, "Old Kari Stryl," the water reached up into the buggy box. Old Kari came to stay for a few days and also brought along her jug of whiskey. Well, regardless, the patient and new arrival managed to survive.

That summer when haying time arrived the young mother had to help in the hay field. What to do with a four-month old baby and two little boys was solved in a way that hardly would be acceptable in present standards of child care. We were taken to an unoccupied bachelors shack located a half mile or so from the hay field, I was pillowed in a rocking chair and the boys were instructed to rotate the chair, not rock it, as that might tip me out.

Some very good and binding friendships were made with some of the fine Scandinavian neighbors to the north. Beyond these farms and extending to the Clearwater River was a French settlement.

When I was about four years old, my father took a load of wheat to Terrebonne to have it ground into flour for the family's winter supply and promised to bring me a little rocking chair. There was a general merchandise store at Terrebonne in those days where one could purchase anything from coffee beans to clothing, milk strainers and grubhoes. Yes, there amongst all the clutter was also a little rocking chair. I waited and waited all day long, for one so young could hardly have any idea how long it would take to make the trip there and back with a team of horses and have a load of wheat ground. I was permitted to stay up until my father returned and when he presented me with the most beautiful little red rocking chair, I'm sure I was the happiest little girl in the world.

When time came for the oldest child to start school, a real problem arose. The school was located near the north end of the district, a distance of three miles, much too far for a small youngster to walk. So for his first year in school, arrangement was made with Rev. Kolstoe and family to board and room Alfred so that he could attend school with the Kolstoe children in the Garnes school. Since there were more children of school age in the southern half of the district than in the north half, Martin Foldoe soon conceived the idea that the school house should be moved. It had not been centrally located in the first place. Before long the matter was discussed amongst the neighbors, put to a vote and the group who wanted to move the school won out. It was moved about one mile south to a new site directly across the road from the Marit Haaven home.

A few years later, the Foldoe family moved north to the present Foldoe farm and since the greatest number of children now came from families living in this part of the district, residents voted again to move the school and it was said by some, "Where Martin Foldoe goes, the school goes too."

The new Foldoe homestead had an enormous amount of rock for I remember my father hauling rocks from the fields and building a stone fence about four feet wide and at least that high all along the north side of the garden. The garden plot was ample, and planted with hardy fruit trees, currant bushes and rhubarb with still enough space for all the vegetables needed for a growing family. The country was over-populated with wolves. One could hear the blood-curdling howl of the wolf packs most any night and they were a menace to humans and livestock.

Doctors lived in the towns and transportation was very difficult, so for such little incidents as a sawed off finger or another crushed in the cream separator, it was "mother" who took charge and used whatever means or remedies at hand. There was one time however, when the fifth Foldoe child was about to be born, that the mid-wife found the case to be beyond her ability. The nearest doctor was at St. Hilaire, a distance of twenty miles or more. There was no telephone and the only means of travel was either by horseback or horse and buggy. A good neighbor rode his horse to St. Hilaire hoping to find the doctor at home and to persuade him to drive the distance by horse and buggy. One can imagine the many agonizing hours spent by the patient and the anxiety of others who were with her.

I think it must take people of great strength, fortitude and faith to survive the rigors of such hardships as had to be endured by many homesteaders.

I recall when our new granary was built. It was customary to have a neighborhood dance when some granary or barn with a hayloft was built. So word was spread that there would be a dance in the new granary on the Foldoe farm. I don't recall the musicians but my father likely furnished the music part of the time as he was a fiddler himself. My first teacher, Miss Lulu Fletcher, from Red Lake Falls was there and I can see her yet doing the two-step with young Tom Norby who was then a bartender in the Plummer saloon. I thought Miss Fletcher was the utmost in class as she daintily held her long skirt a bit off the floor with her left hand as she stepped along so lightly and gracefully to the new dance steps.

By the tenth year my folks felt they had enough of the hard life on this farm and decided to sell and go west.

The family now consisted of three boys and three girls. My mother's brother, Gustave Svenby, who had homesteaded in Emardville had moved to Sedro Woolley, Washington, a year before and wrote glowing letters about his paradise out there. It made fighting mosquitoes seem senseless, so the farm was sold to M. O. Sortedahl, a realtor in Red Lake Falls, and an auction sale was held to dispose of all stock, machinery and household goods. However, the Foldoes didn't go west as planned. My father went to Bagley to see his aging parents before moving so far away and was persuaded to bring his family up to Bagley to live instead.

The following months were sad ones. The family moved from Bagley to Erskine that same fall and after two and a half years of trying to make ends meet as a day laborer, my father decided it would be wise to get on a farm again and purchased a place only two and a half miles north of the old homestead from Octave LeFavre. The family now counted four boys and four girls, a perfect set for a square dance, they

used to say.

My father was to have no more than fifteen years on this farm as he died an untimely death at the age of fifty-six, the result of a run-away accident with his team of horses. Mother lived to the age of eighty-three and passed away in 1953. Seven of the eight children are still living. Alfred of Mentor; Carl of Bagley; Mrs. J. A. Hughes (Belle) of Red Lake Falls; Mrs. Irving Giere of St. Paul; Gust of rural Plummer, still on the Foldoe farm; Joe lives in Seattle, Washington; Mrs. Helmer Linder (Mabel) of Brainerd; Mrs. Dan Nelson (Anne) of California died two years ago.

Contributed by Belle Hughes

## REV. KOLSTOE, A PIONEER PASTOR, AND HIS HORSE, BILL

Bill was a horse, a white pony to be exact. He was a handsome creature with a well formed head which he carried on a sturdy, slightly arched neck. To complete the picture, his white mane was full and luxuriant. In addition, he was nimble and so cute in his ways that his playful nippings at his friends, whether they were horses or people, more often caused amusement than annoyance. When other horses attempted to bite back at him, they generally missed. No matter, minutes later they might well find themselves in a mutual back-scratching routine, friendly as ever! If horses have personalities, and I guess they do, White Bill, as he was generally called, had it in full measure. He was so cunning about his little shenanigans that he remained easy to forgive, no matter what tricks he tried to pull, and remained through it all a thoroughly likeable sort of creature. All this is intended as an introduction so that you may more easily form a picture of this highly acceptable animal, but it hardly provides any clue to another side of White Bill's makeup, that made him the significant participant that he later unwittingly became in bringing the comfort and the guidance of the gospel to isolated pioneers in northwestern Minnesota. And so here, we shall leave White Bill, but not for long.

At about the turn of the century, a considerable part of what is now Polk, Red Lake and Pennington Counties was opened up for homesteading. Many of the settlers were of Scandinavian, Lutheran background and so, my father, Pastor Ole Kolstoe, answered a call from the Home Mission Board of the United Lutheran Church, to go into this area as a pioneer pastor. It was a hard assignment, one that called for gruelling effort merely to travel the sodden wagon tracks that served as roads. The country is flat; a vast lake bottom formed by an earlier extension of what came later to be known as the Lake Agassiz bottom lands. While rainfall is generally moderate in that area, the ground was almost always soggy in the early days from the accumulation of brush and dead grass, which prevented the ground from drying out. This condition caused broad seepage areas which slowly drew the surplus water off into the creeks and rivers. These "swamps" as they were locally called, had among other troublesome features, the bad effect of cutting the higher, more usable land up into irregular strips, each of which became the base for an isolated community during the wet part of the year. This soggy condition encouraged further growth of brush and an accumulation of





**Kolstoe Family.** Standing: Ellen, Martin, Villars, Martha, Severin. Seated: Klara, Rev. Kolstoe, Olaf and Mrs. Meta Kolstoe.

dead grass, which slowed down clearing of the ground for market farming. It limited the settlers to scarcely more than subsistence farming and to its accompanying poverty.

For the minister whose usefulness depended so much on his ability to traverse the wide stretches of near wilderness both summer and winter, the situation was well-nigh catastrophic. With all these obstacles present, the duties of the pastor continued to remain so obvious and compelling that any thought of easing up at any time or at any point of ministerial duties was given short shift. Those people had troubles — all the troubles of which humans are normally heir to, plus a host of other problems caused by pioneering and poverty. No one ever spoke of vacations in those days. To do so would have sounded frivolous, if not downright sinful.

I do not really know which posed the bigger threat to the pioneer pastor; the mud and mosquitoes of summer, or the cold and snow of winter. I recall one winter when the snow began falling very early and accumulated to a depth that made horses absolutely useless for traveling. With that situation before him, Dad promptly contacted a native of Finland who had a good reputation for making skis. With that pair of skis and a Finnish knapsack for carrying his essential belongings, Dad launched out on a cold, winter-long project of attending to his duties. He must have traveled several hundred miles over the frozen wilderness that constituted his parish. Heroic! That word probably never entered Dad's mind. To him it was a way of tending to his pastoral duties. There was no other way, so this was it. The work to which he had dedicated his life was not neglected.

Father needed horses — good horses, that were well-suited to the situation in general and to the soggy roads, in particular. Unfortunately, his ability to judge horse flesh was mediocre and maybe lower than

that. But Dad had a friend, John Larson, who was an old-time horse trader, with all that that implied. I'm not sure whether horse-trading was his vocation, or if it was merely an avocation, but there is no doubt about his being a natural for the business and he was about as sharp as they come. John's sharpness did not consist of merely spotting a profitable horse trade if it came his way. He really understood horses and was particularly fond of the talented ones. He seemed to spot them instinctively; even horses with high potential that had been damaged by mishandling. Dad was fortunate. John considered him to be his friend — maybe a special sort of friend who might need help or even protection at times. By the time John acquired Bill, the horse had already earned a reputation of being balky and rather tricky in general, but John seemed to be all the more sure that in this particular case, Dad and Bill could and would do much for each other. And so, he went on with his sales pitch. Dad, as John do doubt expected, believed every word he said. Dad could never believe that John could stand there and say anything that was intended to be deliberately misleading, not John — he would not, and Dad was sure of it. On the surface, that would seem like a naive attitude to take towards a horse trader. But Father wasn't naive, he knew John Larson from a different aspect than most people, and I haven't the slightest doubt that Father was right and that to think of John Larson as merely another horse trader would be grossly wrong and highly misleading. Let me give you just one instance of the courageously reliable person that dad saw in John Larson, and on which he acted with confidence; as well he might!

John and his brother, Gust, were living together in John's homestead shack. In the spring of the year it became clear that they were about to run short of flour. The

nearest railroad point where flour could be had was St. Hilaire which was twenty slush-filled miles away. In the break-up of the winter roads, this would be a hazardous journey, if not to say, an outright dangerous one, for both horse and rider. John almost casually, as it appeared, put on his hat and jacket, took off on foot, walked for twenty miles through the miserable slush, bought a fifty-pound bag of flour, hoisted it on his back and started back. Not much was said about it on his return. He and Gust didn't need to talk. The episode spoke for itself! Such a man could be relied on in anything that really mattered — father knew it, and those two men knew each other, knew each other well. It took such men to build a pioneer community. The friendship and mutual respect dad and John Larson had for each other rested on a firm foundation and lasted as long as they lived.

How White Bill, dad's horse, came into John's possession, I don't know, but he seemed to be well trained as a cattle pony. Somewhere he got the reputation of being balky and tricky. However, as usual, dad relied on John's judgment and believed his sale's pitch, "That horse is worth thirty dollars if he is worth thirty cents." He knew full well that John knew what he was talking about, and so, he somehow managed to scrape together the thirty dollars and White Bill was his! Dad had finally found a horse on whose good horse sense he could rely, and a new life began for White Bill. Bill promptly set about building himself into a legend — the biggest bog-crossing horse for miles around. Legend has it that, before venturing into a bog, he would figure out a complete strategy for crossing. Once in the swamp, he would walk on his haunches like a snowshoe rabbit! I recall one time when he had gotten a front foot tangled in a slack lower wire. I don't know how much he may have struggled to free himself, but from the time I saw him and hurried across the pasture, he scarcely moved at all. I was pretty young at that time, but I finally managed to get his foot free from the wire, after which White Bill went right on nibbling grass as if to tell me that he had it figured out that way all along. There were other instances too, where his behavior was hard to explain on a simple one-to-one basis, which is generally believed to be the limit of a horse's thinking. He was adroit and resistant to panic. That alone could take him a long way. A lot of people who knew White Bill, would be inclined to reject this as an adequate explanation for all his behavior. Here is an example. A group of the pioneers were discussing the timely question, if the swamp had become crossable yet, after a heavy deluge of rain. A woman in the group spoke up to say: "Yes, I know it is." She explained that she had spoken to Pastor Kolstoe just the day before and he must have crossed the swamp to get there. One of the men then spoke up to ask if the Pastor was driving White Bill. "Yes, he was"; and "did he have his two-wheeled cart?" And the answer again was "Yes." The man said with finality "then your idea about the swamp being crossable isn't worth a nickel." "Because, where those two can cross with that two-wheeled cart, only the devil himself can follow." Not elegantly stated, but there is no doubt about its meaning — White Bill had become a legend in his own lifetime!

If the heavy concentration of attention on Dad, Larson and White Bill should have suggested that these three were all that

were needed to build a pioneer community, or any other sort of community, that would not only have been untrue, but brutally unfair as well. A community is a joint creation of many diverse individuals, each with his own contribution. But one of the limitations of language is that words will not permit such bits to be put together meaningfully into a story. The description of any small representative group would probably be equally valid. The reason for the selection in this story was mostly my own personal convenience. I happened to know more about these persons and these episodes than I did of others. The fact that heroic people and heroic episodes were used, was not accidental. These were heroic times, and that too was not accidental. All the fainthearted people were quickly driven out by hardships, mud and mosquitoes, and the get-rich-quick dreamers followed soon afterwards. Those who remained were the men and women alike, who, like Dad and John, had the fortitude and ingenuity to meet and overcome crises and even dangers at times; and so, a successful pioneer group has an unusually large proportion of heroic people. The same could be said for mutually helpful, group-spirited people. For this reason, while I am talking about a very few people, I would like to have the readers think in terms of many people to whom these characterizations would apply, more or less. And so, we will probably have to let John Larson continue to do service as a representative of the people who made up our pioneer group. Perhaps you are curious to know how things went with John after he had weathered his pioneering.

To everyone's surprise, including his son, John Larson married. A fine young woman came over directly from Sweden to seek her fortune in the new world. She found it easy to admire and later to love a man like John Larson. The change in John was in some ways astonishing. He surprised the neighborhood by selling every horse on the place and buying a couple of yokes of oxen. He cleared land, broke sod and bought still more land. Within a few years, he was probably the wealthiest farmer in the whole community. In addition, he and his young, ambitious wife built up a fine dairy herd and raised a family of four husky boys.

At this point in our story, John's four sons had grown to young manhood, the tractor had come in to dominate the farm scene and John's yen for conquering new situations had probably ebbed some and so, John turned the farm over to the boys and retired from active farming. There were plenty of fruits from his earlier labors to live on. But the easy life didn't quite suit him. Well, you probably guessed it — in a small way, John started trading horses all over again!

As for father, his old age was saddened by the loss of mother's companionship. He never quite recovered from the loss, although his health was good and he lived well into his eighties. His loneliness was further complicated by relative poverty. He had given so much and had retained so very little for himself. His retirement came in the depression years of the thirties and pension provisions for ministers were pathetically small. Dad had lived a rich life, but the closing chapter was outwardly tragically barren. Mere money alone would hardly have solved his problem. There was here an injustice where it is hard to know just where to put the blame, if blame there was.

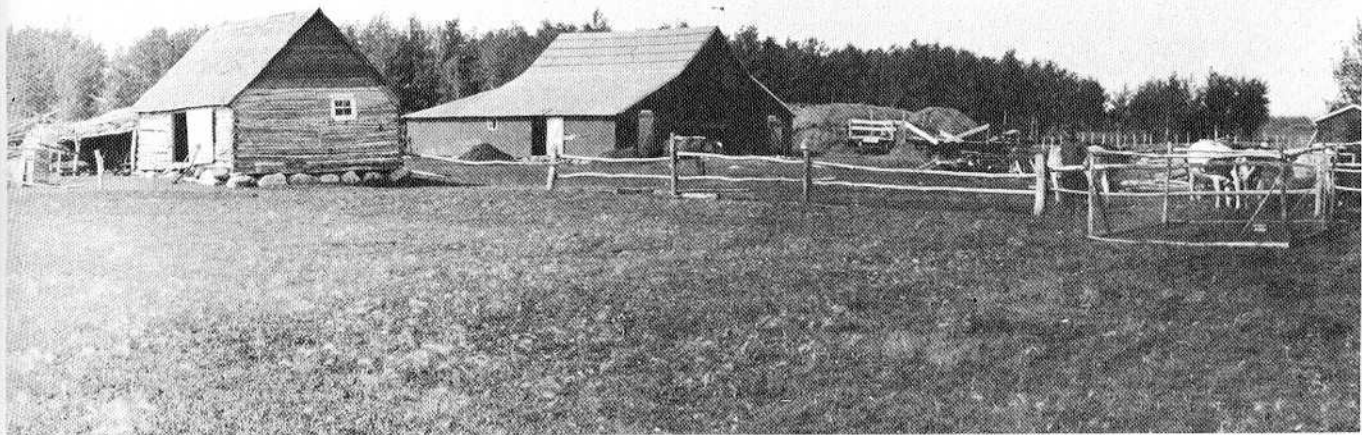
We have already such an inevitable injustice showing up right in this story. In an attempt to present as vivid a picture as possible of the people and of the heroic episodes of pioneering in this area, we are denying special mention to so very many people who have richly deserved such mention. The means of giving full recognition to all would call for some sort of expedience which would be fantastically unrealistic, such as procuring a huge canvas, big enough to show all those worthy people clearly. In addition to showing all their portraits clearly, the artist must also by some means have been able to make their inner characters and personalities shine through so as to show what sort of people they really were. Medieval artists would have used halos for this purpose, but that probably would not have worked. There would have been halos enough to blur up the whole picture. I have no notion that any such picture will ever be painted, although I wish it could.

But while we are in an imaginative mood, let us see what other things we would want to include in our magic picture. We would

want the cores of the persons' characters to show their very souls, if you please. This would tell us if anyone was a true pioneer or a fake hero. I would want a special place of honor for the women who, in addition to all the other hazards of pioneering, had in a special way the health and welfare of their children to worry about. The stress on them would likely be greater than on the men. I would also want the singular freedom from any evidence of bravado, in the phenomenal success of Dad and Bill in crossing "impassable" swamps to somehow show in the picture. It was probably not a thing in itself, but more nearly an expression of a firm devotion on Dad's part, to the sacredness of his ministry, and on Bill's part, the response of a willing, competent horse to the gentleness of his driver. I believe it was so understood by the people with whom Father was working. White Bill's unstinted contribution, no doubt, added something to the inner confidence of these sturdy pioneers which was necessary in converting a wilderness into a proper habitation for man, with God and His church still holding a central position in the picture.

Naturally, I would want Dad in there, preferably wearing his long-length Mackintosh raincoat, perhaps spattered with mud and work-stained. He wore it a long time — it almost became a vestment of his office. John would be there and with him as many more of those worthy pioneers as could be crowded on a single canvas. Then to complete it, somewhere in the background there would be a frieze of soft clouds. White Bill would be there, his beautiful head resting on a pillow of clouds. He has richly deserved his rest and place of honor. He labored long and well! Much of what he gave was given unwittingly. White Bill could have little or no understanding of the plan and ultimate purpose of the efforts in which he was engaged jointly with Dad. But God could use them, and He did! White Bill, in response to the kindness of a gentle driver, gave us all that he had, he stinted on nothing and so, who are we to say that his unwitting contributions were less pleasing in the sight of God than any of the more carefully contrived services that you or I might have had to offer. John Larson said "that horse is worth thirty dollars, if he is worth thirty cents!" John was right!!

Contributed by Dr. Olaf Kolstoe



Warstad farmstead about 1920