

## [Mr. and Mrs. Elias Pederson]

Mr. & Mrs. Elias Pederson

Blue Mounds, Wis.

(Pokerville)

N. Smith

April 8, 1936 [?] 1

History—

Mr. Pederson was born in 1849 south of Arena on the banks of the Wisconsin river in a little house his father had built from driftwood from the salvage of the lumber industry of that period when logs were floated down the river from the northern [pineries?] to saw mills. His father, Nelse Pederson, come to Wisconsin in 1848 from Valdres, Norway. His mother was born at Telemarken, Norway. They were hardy pioneers in Wisconsin. Mr. Pederson's grandfather also come from Norway and Lived in Wisconsin many years. His name was Ivan (i Huset) Pederson. He later resided in North Dakota where he died at the age of 99 years, 6 months and 4 days. To illustrate some of the power of endurance that was found in most of these hardy Norsemen, it is well to relate that on the day before Ivan Pederson's death he had walked to Fargo, a distance of ten miles from his home, and back, making a total of twenty miles that day. His people believed the long walk hastened his death for he was extremely tired when he returned and took his final sleep peacefully several hours later.

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Mr. Pederson recalls in the days before the Civil War, when he, as a child of nine or ten years old, plowed the fields with oxen and assisted his parents with the general farm work. In winter he hauled ties for a rail road, with oxen hitched onto a sleigh.

He wore [high leather?] boots, call ["stuvler?]." 2 2 They were not [a?] laced boot but were, in appearance, much like the rubber boot of today. These boots were copper tipped across the toes, and of course, hand made as there were no shoe factories at that time but many shoe makers by trade.

Mr. Pederson walked the nine miles from his home to the place the tied were delivered as it was usually too cold to ride. During the season he went every day. His father and mother loaded the ties onto the sleigh in the morning and this young boy walked by the side of the oxen, in high spirits and high boots, proud to be of such important assistance to his hard working people. When he reached his destination he would roll the heavy ties from the sleigh and on Saturdays his father would accompany him to pile the ties in order. 3

Mr. Pederson's father told many stories from Valdres, Norway, at that time the people there believed in the mythical Huldre. He said they had wild dances and parties where people invariably fought and often their brawls were ended tragically. The girls always took bandages and were equipped to dress wounds as these fights were certain occur. The men carried knives for stabbing each other. These knives were usually smaller than a table knife; larger and stronger than paring knives (a knife of this sort is to be seen at "Little Norway" or Nissedal. Near Mt. Horeb.) The blade was wrapped with cord from the handle toward the point to the distance one wanted to leave unwrapped to stab at that depth. One night Peter Johnson was leaving his home to attend one of the dances when he was met at his gate by a person, apparently a human being, who would not permit him to pass through the gate of his own yard. Be [coming angry Mr. Pederson pulled the?] [?] from his stabbing knife, unwrapping the entire blade. 4 3 He made a quick move to stab what he believed to be a man, when the form disappeared. He the knew it was a Haldre

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and took warning not to attend the dance that night, which later proved to be a tragic affair as there was a man killed at that dance that very night.

Mrs. Pederson's father, Andrew Weehouse was born Sept. 29, 1829 at Telemarken, Norway. Her mother Bergetta (nee) Thompson was born Dec. 23, 1839 in Norway and died at Pokerville, Dec. 25, 1918.

Mrs. Weehouse came to Wisconsin with her parents in 1845 who settled near Daleyville. When Andrew Weehouse and Bergetta Thompson were married they bought a farm within two miles of Pokerville where their son John Weehouse now resides.

Mrs. Pederson recalls when she, as a young girl, carried butter and eggs to Pokerville to exchange for groceries at the stores there. At one time there was a thriving village in this lead mining district.

Mrs. Pederson's father purchased the farm, where he lived so many years, and that now belongs to his son, from John Adams who lived in that vicinity and who later resided at Black Earth (I wrote about him in McKenzies' story of Black Earth: Mr. Adams was the father of Will and Alva who later became Governors of Colorado) John Adams was a highly respected business man in and around Blue Mounds in the early days.

Pokerville was so named on account of the miners who came to spend their leisure time there playing the game of poker. [they?] [?] 4 It was located on the old Military highway and contained the following places of business: three stores, two hotels, two blacksmith shops, a harness making shop, a wagon factory, a post office, drug store and five saloons. Although Pokerville was a very lively place nearly a century ago it is today a farming community with no trace of its former activity.

Many stories are told of the wild times that were had there but with all the whiskey drinking and gambling no one recalls any brawls of fighting that ended tragically.

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[ ( ?]The miners traded lead ore for drinks and for groceries. The lead was of high percentage and the business people often death with lead ore instead of currency.[ ] ?]

There was also a doctor who lived at Pokerville.