

[My Forefathers in La Crosse County]

TITLE - MY FOREFATHERS IN LA CROSSE COUNTY

NAME - EDNA SOLBERG

AGE - FOURTEEN

SCHOOL - HOLMEN HIGH SCHOOL

ADDRESS - HOLMEN, WISCONSIN

SIGNATURES

Even C. Solberg

Mrs. R. D. Sandman

AV

O a beautiful day i the summer of 1841 a small vessel at sail from Oslo, Norway, carrying with it families who were going to build the country which today is the greatest and most advanced country in the world, America. Little they thought that some day our country would be the leader of the world.

Among the occupants of this vessel there was one family of three whose names were Johnson, and like all the older Norwegians they had more than one name, also being called, Stoen. The Norwegians had a peculiar custom of naming the sons the Christian names of their fathers, adding son, as for instance if the father's name was John, the son's name, would be "Johnson." They would also get their names by living on a farm or

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home where another family had lived. All farms were called by certain names of the former owner.

The ships were very different from what they are today. They were sailing day after day and it was a very happy party that [stood?] on board and watched the beautiful New York Harbour come into sight. It was not so busy in those days as it is now.

AV

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Johnsons are my great grandparents.

Coming to America they travelled by oxen to La Crosse County and made their home on the farm that their daughter and son-in-law own.

When my great grandparents arrived here there were only three houses in La Crosse and thinking that that place would never be a city they came to this site in Long Coulee, one and one-half miles north of the present village of Holmen. Lars Olstad came with them from Norway and settled about a mile from them.

Of course there were no homes for the pioneers and many were the nights that they slept under the beautiful starlit skies with only God's protecting hand over them, but they were strong in faith and knew that the Almighty Father would care for them. The first home that they built was a small one-roomed log cabin. Nevertheless it was a home, and what more could a family of hardy pioneers wish?

They got their food by hunting and fishing. The woods were full of game and the waters full of fish.

There were many Indians around here and later my great 3 grandfather related the story that one day, several years after their settling, a woman by the name of Mrs. Kjos was going to a neighbors living about three miles away. She got to the neighbors and on her

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journey back she became lost. She did not know what to do but a group of Indians came and she made motions to them explaining that she was lost. They motioned back that she follow them. She followed them and was taken safely home. This little incident shows how most of the Indians were friends of the white man.

Another story relates how one time word was received that a band of dangerous Indians was coming here. By great grandfather and another man went ahead to meet them. The other man wanted to shoot but my great grandfather said, "No, they perhaps are friendly." The Indians came up to them and they found the Indians to be friendly, only wishing to trade articles for food.

My great grandfather at first had to carry provisions from La Crosse to his home on his back. Lars Olstad, who is living today at the age of ninety-three, tells now at one time my great grandfather carried as much as one hundred pounds of flour on his back from La Crosse. 4 When my great grandfather came they found a log cabin on a farm now known as the Garret Hemma farm, that was evidently built by a white man but no traces of him could be found. The name of this man and his reasons for vacating the place are unknown but it was supposed by these settlers that this man was either massacred or forced to move by the Indians.

The first white children to be born in this part of the country were my great grandparents' daughter, Mrs. Andrew Nelson and Thersa Kjos.

For many years they had no church or minister but the first minister was a Lutheran by the name of Mr. Frick. He went among the homes preaching the word of God to the people who for many years had not heard a minister speak.

If our ancestors had seen the modern inventions and improvements such as aeroplane, telephone, electric lights and automobiles they would have marveled at the [wonders?] of today. We can thank our ancestors, one and all, for what we and our country are. [?]

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Title: My Forefathers in La Crosse County.

Name: Edna Solberg.

Age: 14 years.

School: Holmen High School.

Address: Holmen, Wisconsin.

SIGNATURES [Even C. Solberg?] [Mrs. ??]

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