

father and mother are members of the Norwegian Lutheran church at Aspelund, and in the affairs of this church society they take a deep and active interest, the former being trustee of the congregation at this time. The father found time in the development of his farm to devote some of his efforts to the educational and civic interests of the community. For twenty-nine or thirty years he has been a clerk of the school district and for many years he was a member of the township board.

Ole Nystevold spent his boyhood on the old home place where he was born, and there in his youth and early manhood, contributed his industry to the development of his father's holding. He attended the local public schools, and there acquired his formal education. When he arrived at manhood, he decided to leave his father's roof and seek his place in the world of work in other places than on the soil. Accordingly he went to Twin Valley, where he learned the carpenter trade, and he prospered in his undertaking. He extended his operations until he took up contracting. He owns his comfortable home here in the village of Twin Valley, and on the same tract on which his home stands, he has his well-appointed workshop.

Mr. Nystevold married Mina Aasgaard, who was born in Minnesota, a daughter of Martinus and Maria Aasgaard. To this union have been born the following children: Gladys, Miles and Orwin. Mr. and Mrs. Nystevold are devoted members of the Norwegian Lutheran church at Twin Valley, and they are very active in the church work of the local congregation and in all movements for the common welfare of the community in which they live.

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#### HENRY BENSON.

Henry Benson, a retired farmer living in Twin Valley, who formerly owned one of the finest farms in Fossum township, this county, and one of the first settlers of the same township, was born at Christiania, Norway, on August 15, 1844, a son of Bernt and Martina Bjerke, both natives of the vicinity of Christiania, where they remained until their deaths, the father being a laborer. Bernt Bjerke was married twice; by his first wife, the mother of Henry Benson, he had six children, namely: Henry, Nils Christian, Mary, Stina Matilda, John Albert and Martine. He married Karen Stabek, and to the second union were born five children, as follow: Anna, Carl, Nettie, Hannah and Julia.

Henry Benson spent his early youth in his father's home in Christiania, where he received his early education in the common schools. After working for some time as a hostler for a baron, he decided when he was nineteen years of age to come to America; accordingly, in 1864 he came to the New World and went directly to Chatfield, Minnesota, where he remained one month. At this time he joined an uncle and went to Faribault, this state, and remained there about a year trying to learn to be a blacksmith, but since he did not like the trade he gave it up. Until 1871 he worked at rafting on the Mississippi in the summer time and in the pineries during the winter. At the beginning of the following year he returned to Faribault and was there married on February 15, 1872.

Feeling that he could achieve his aims in coming to America best in farming, Mr. Benson, in the year of his marriage yoked a team of oxen to a covered wagon into which he loaded his household goods, and with his bride went northward on May 22, 1872, to seek a home. Mr. and Mrs. Benson were accompanied by George Johnson, whose biography appears elsewhere in this volume, and Mr. Johnson's two brothers, John Jensen and Jens Morland. After a journey of about three weeks the party reached what is now Fossum township, Norman county, arriving there on June 14. Mr. Benson immediately took as a homestead the northeast quarter of section 28, Fossum township, and his companions took either homesteads or pre-emptions. The land there at that time was wild, for this party were the first settlers in what is now Fossum township.

Immediately Mr. Benson began industriously to improve his holding until it was considered one of the finest places in the township when he sold it in 1913. He erected excellent buildings on the homestead and set out a grove of evergreen and box-elder trees. In addition to this he brought his farm by judicious agriculture up to a high state of cultivation, carrying on general farming. Later he made a most valuable acquisition to his holding when he bought a timbered tract of some forty acres. At this time Mr. Benson has retired, living in Twin Valley, Wild Rice township, where he is getting his long merited rest from his arduous labors on his farm.

On February 15, 1872, Mr. Benson was united in marriage to Oleana Sanders, born in Norway on May 10, 1846, the daughter of Ole and Martha (Sanders) Sanders and to this union the following children were born: Bernt Otto, born on December 20, 1872; Ida Marie, February 9, 1874; died September 4, 1887; Mina Gustava, May 30, 1875, died January 26, 1894; Carl Frederick, October 24, 1876; John Albert, March 23, 1878, died June 6, 1878; Ida Maria, May 11, 1879; Hannah, November 19, 1880; Stina

Mathilde and Alletta Josephine, twins, June 20, 1882; Tina Helena, March 15, 1884; John Alfred, June 24, 1886, and Ellen Naomie, February 15, 1888. The Benson family are consistent and conscientious members of the Lutheran church, in the affairs of which they have always taken a keen and active interest, Mr. Benson helping to organize the first church in Fossum township, the Wild Rice Lutheran church of which he was the first secretary.

Not only has Henry Benson been a thrifty, industrious and successful farmer, but he has been an invaluable agent in the organization and in the civil administration of the community in which he has lived. Fossum township, as it is today, is not the Fossum township of the early days, for it then included what are now the four townships in the southeast corner of Norman county. When the time came to organize the township with its present boundaries, Mr. Benson was one of the guiding spirits in the undertaking, and later his neighbors conferred upon him several local offices of trust, for he was made a member of the first township board as assessor, justice of the peace and township clerk, holding all three offices at once, and the last named office for thirty years. He was one of the organizers of Flom Fire Insurance Company and was treasurer of the same for twenty-two years. He has always held the educational progress of the community one of its precious assets, having helped to organize the eleventh school district of which he was made first school clerk, serving the community in that capacity for at least twenty years.

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#### CLAUS ENGUM.

Claus Engum, proprietor of a fine farm of two hundred acres in Skree township, Clay county, and a well-known and substantial farmer of that neighborhood, is a native of the kingdom of Norway, but has been a resident of this country and of Minnesota since 1891. He was born on October 27, 1867, son of Ole and Gori (Groneng) Engum, also natives of Norway, farming people, who spent all their lives in their native land and who were the parents of nine children, of whom the subject of this sketch was the seventh in order of birth, the others being as follow: Peter, who is still living in Norway; Guttofrm, a resident of Faribault county, this state; John, also of Fairbault county; Ole, deceased; and Andres, Carrie, Sinva and Gori, who are still residing in their native land.