

of effort to the improvement and cultivation of his father's holding. In the year just mentioned, he decided to begin for himself and bought two hundred and forty acres of bare prairie land in Anthony township, Norman county. The raw condition of his holding made it necessary for him to work long and arduously to get it under cultivation, but he succeeded so well and so prospered that he was enabled not only to erect on his farm fine, modern farm buildings, but also to extend his acreage until now he is the owner of four hundred acres of fine land on which he carries on general farming.

On October 28, 1898, Mr. Gilbertson was united in marriage to Inga Kittelson, who was born in Norway, the daughter of Johanas and Gunheld Kittelson, who emigrated from the land of their nativity and settled in Norman county. To this union have been born seven children, namely: Oliver, Clarence, Ida, Selmer, Bennie, Mabel and Tilla, all of whom are living. Mr. Gilbertson, who is kept very busy in superintending his large farming interests, has devoted much of his time to the common civil and business activities of the community, having served on the Anthony township board for some years and having helped to organize the creamery at Halstad. He and his family are consistent and conscientious members of the Lutheran church, in the affairs of which they have a deep and abiding interest. Any movement for the betterment of the common interests of his community receives his heartiest and most zealous co-operation.

NELS O. MOEN.

Nels O. Moen, a well-known and substantial farmer of Waukon township, Norman county, where he now owns and operates a fine farm of three hundred and ninety-nine acres and where he was an early settler who helped to organize the religious, civil, educational and co-operative business interests of the community, was born in Norway, March 29, 1853, a son of Andreas Olson and Mary (Haugen) Moen. Both the father and mother were natives of Norway, from which they came to America in 1862 and settled in Colfax township, Dunn county, Wisconsin, where they spent the rest of their days, well-known pioneers of that section. When the family arrived in Colfax township, Dunn county, the father took a homestead. This family with that of Ole Running were the first settlers of the township, and the nearest neighbor to the Moens was at first seven miles away.

Andreas Olson Moen was very active in the early history of Colfax township, for he helped to organize the township and the school district. He and his family were very zealous members of the Lutheran denomination, the father helping to organize the first church of the community, the Norwegian Lutheran Synod church. Andreas and Mary Moen were the parents of ten children and the eight who grew to maturity are as follow: Ole and Martha, deceased; Oli, Betsie, Ingeborg, deceased; Nels O., the subject of this review; Anna and Ida, deceased.

Nels O. Moen was only nine years of age when he first trod upon American soil in 1862, when he accompanied his parents to this country, hence he received little or no formal education in the land of his birth. After the family had settled in Wisconsin and the school district was organized, largely due to the efforts of Andreas Moen, the father of the subject of this sketch, Nels O. seized the opportunity to learn the English language along with a few other fundamentals of an elementary education. The greater part of his time was spent in working on his father's holding, to the development of which the entire family bent their efforts. Here it was then that he acquired excellent training which he found invaluable when he, too, became a pioneer of Norman county, Minnesota. In 1878 he decided to leave the parental roof and settle in Norman county. He had his own team and wagon, and, in company with Ole Wall, he set out from Menomonie, Wisconsin, and in two weeks arrived at Twin Valley, Norman county. Ole Wall was a blacksmith, whom Mr. Moen hauled, with his outfit, as far as Twin Valley, where the former employed someone else to take him the remainder of his journey to Ada and there he set up his place of business, the first blacksmith in the village. In the same summer Mr. Moen homesteaded a quarter section in Waukon township and began breaking the tough prairie soil. Finding that he could trade his team of horses for yokes of oxen and a breaking plow, he made the exchange which proved very beneficial to him. Those early years of his life on his farm were not altogether pleasant, because methods of transportation were clumsy and living conditions primitive, but Mr. Moen saw in the future, where then lay an expanse of the unbroken, virgin prairie, a fine, well-improved farm, with excellent buildings and groves. This has all been realized. The original homestead has grown to a tract of three hundred ninety-nine acres, well equipped with substantial farm buildings and grove and in a high state of cultivation. In addition to this tract, he has thirteen acres of timber land in Fossum township, Norman county. Mr. Moen carries on very successfully general farming operations and he also raises Shorthorn cattle.

On February 12, 1886, Mr. Moen married Annie Osleson, who was born in Norway, daughter of Osle Bjella, and to their union the following children were born: Matilda, deceased; Ida, Alfred, Oscar, Ingvald, Ole, Clara, Celius, Mabel, deceased, and Clarence and Lillian. Mr. and Mrs. Moen are devoted members of the Norwegian Lutheran church, both being very active in the church work of that denomination in the neighborhood. The former helped to organize the first church of the community, the St. Peter Lutheran church, in Strand township.

By virtue of his being one of the earliest settlers in these parts. Mr. Moen has been enabled to see the startling development of the country from a prairie wilderness to a garden spot with all the appurtenances of civilization, and he has played no small part in bringing the community up to its present status. He was one of the organizers of Waukon township, and in the old days before roads were laid out, he served the community in the capacity of path master. Every time that Mr. Moen reflects that he has three hundred and ninety-nine acres instead of four hundred, his heart undoubtedly swells with gratification, because of the whereabouts of that missing acre. He dedicated that acre to the educational interests of the vicinity, for when he helped to organize the school district, he donated the acre as a site for a school building. Being always interested in the educational progress of the community, he rendered valuable service during his long tenure of office as treasurer of the school district. He was first treasurer and was a member of the first board. The co-operative business interests of the township came in for a part of his attention. He helped to organize the creamery at Waukon, has been director of the same at different times and is now on the board. He also helped to organize the Waukon Mercantile Company.

PETER I. STIEN.

The late Peter I. Stien, a pioneer blacksmith, wagon maker and boat builder of Flom township, Norman county, where his handiwork was a valuable aid to the early settlers of that section, was born in Norway, January 9, 1838, and died here on the home place, May 26, 1906, at the age of sixty-eight years. Until he was thirty years old, he lived in his native land, where he learned his trade and acquired the formal education which the time and place of his residence afforded. It was in 1868 that he bade his native land farewell and he landed on the hospitable shores of America in the same year.