

Albert I. Monson

From interview by Hannah Lende

Albert I. Monson was born in Alamokee Co., Hanover township, Iowa, May 6, 1867. His parents were Even and Ingebor Monson. There were five boys and two girls in the family. In 1878 they left Iowa and went to Montevideo, Minn. by covered wagon. Here they lived for two years when they started for Dakota territory, 1881. The covered wagon was pulled by horses to Tower City, where they traded the horses for a yoke of oxen. A company of two other wagons followed the Monsons-- John Arneson and Thor Halverson. The children walked behind chasing the stock.

The party arrived in Dakota territory Oct., 1881 after a six weeks journey. Even Monson and Arneson had been to Dakota in the spring of 1881. Even Monson had taken a homestead on section 6, Greenview township, Steele county and Arneson helped him build a shanty. The shanty was 14' by 16' and made from logs, with bark and sod for roof. A barn was built to last through the winter, for the stock. This was done when they came in October. They all got busy atacking up wood etc. to prepare for winter. Albert worked on the farm for George Barnard for two weeks in November. In the middle of November with his father, Osund Opheim, and John Arneson, he went to Valley City for provisions for the winter. The trip took them four and one-half days, the men sleeping outside under the wagon and by haystacks every night. On their way back they were in the midst of a prairie fire. To save themselves they lit the prairie and followed the fire. That's one time Albert was afraid.

The spring of 1883 the Monsons broke up their land for

farming. The first two years they broke it with cattle. The same year Albert worked in Mayville for James Knutson through haying, plowing, and threshing for five months. He came back just before Christmas. In March, 1883 he went back to work for Knutson again and stayed there til the middle of November when he went back on the farm to help his folks.

During the first years here, the Monsons and the whole neighborhood would gather at the different homes for dances. They were held once every week and sometimes twice a week. The neighbors would walk as far as seven miles to a dance. They were held in the homes of John Torfin, John Qualey, John Arneson, Ole Ejugstad, Matt Hilstad, and other homes. The fiddlers were usually Gilbert Olson and Osmund Windlass, the latter living at Goose river.

The crops were good until 1888 when there was a frost and froze all the crops. The same year Albert started farming on his own in section 3, Washburn township.

June 24, 1890 he was married to Mathilda Qualey by Rev. Larson at John E. Qualey's place. Albert lived on his farm until 1896 when he traded his farm for a livery barn in Cooperstown. After owning the livery barn a little over two years he traded it for another farm in Lenora township.

In 1898 Mr. Monson worked for Ford and Lukken, dealers in machinery at ^{Cooperstown} ~~Minneapolis~~, W. Dak. until the spring of 1899 when he started in the machine business of his own. In the spring of 1900 he sold his interests in the machinery to Julius Brua and went into the butcher business for one year. In the spring of 1901 he went ^{to} ~~back~~ to his homestead in Washburn township.

In 191~~5~~ Mr. Monson moved to Cooperstown when he was elected sheriff and held that position four years and then went back to his farm.

In the spring of 1919 Mr. Monson built a new barn. A flood came the same spring and drove the pigs and cattle out of their sheds. The whole valley was flooded. People and cattle were forced to move to higher land.

Six children were born to this marriage- Myrtle, 1891, Elmer, 1893, Lillian (Mrs. Ed. Balkan), 1895, Elma, 1898, Mrs. Henry Hanson, 1900, and Melfred, 1907.