

# Oscar Nierenberg

By Hannah Lunde

Oscar Nierenberg was born in Ashpan, Wisconsin, Mar 18, 1863. When he was eight years old when he went with his folks to Sibley Co., Minn. Oscar's father died there in 1876. Here they farmed for about ten years when they moved to Ottertail Co., Minn. Oscar at times worked out at different jobs in the summer at Casselton N. Dak. and surrounding places.

In 1884, with his two brothers, Ed. and Theodor, Oscar came by train to Cooperstown, N. Dak. All he could see on his way up was prairie except here and there a sod house and barn. Things picked up rapidly and the settlers worked for R.C. Cooper. He worked for Cooper seven years. During that time Oscar remembers a little incident which happened while on the ranch. Horace Houghton was going to butcher a "critter". He took the gun to shoot the critter and shot one ear off. His brother John says, "You can't shoot, give it to me." John shot the other ear off.

At one time in 1884 a dance was held in the courthouse at Cooperstown. In those days there were very few women around the territory. Thirty men and three women attended the dance. The first band was organized in 1884, comprised of P. A. Melgard, Mr. Stevens, and Pete Nelson.



From 1884 to 1892 the country was full of wild geese, they covered a stretch of fifteen and twenty acres, and the land looked like a huge snowbank. At night it was impossible for people to sleep, they would make so much noise.

At this time, Dakota was noted for prairie fires. In 1885 a fire swept through the territory at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and burned up Sanborn completely.

In 1885 Oscar Nierenberg worked a short time for Sam Langford Sr. Mr. Langford and he hauled the stones for the foundation for the first drug store in Cooperstown belonging to Dr. Newell. The same year, with a span of horses and a plow he broke a place for a tree claim on the north half of section 26, Cooperstown township. He also hauled stones and dug a cellar for a Mr. Adams in 1885, for living quarters, where the State Bank building now stands.

In 1887, while working for Cooper, Oscar and the men were going to butcher a "critter." John Houghton shot at it with his revolver, the critter broke loose, and mad and ugly ran in the pasture. It was noon when six men started after it, and it was sundown when they got it.

In 1889, Charlie, Wilmot, and Horace Houghton, Ed and Oscar Nierenberg, with horses and two spring wagons, went antelope hunting out west



They went towards the Jim River. Many places they could see flocks of them, but were unable to catch one. The men's jackets were lined with red and by turning these jackets inside out the antelope would get scared. They were within a half mile of a flock of ten. Ed's shooter was a double barreled shotgun. He shot at them and Horace Houghton says, "You are doing well, I can hear them squeak. The whole flock disappeared. The next morning they went out and saw many antelope, shot at them, and got none. That night they stayed at a place where Mr Henry now is and slept in a school house. The men hated to go home without any antelope, and thought of butchering a dog and pretend it was an antelope, but decided it was best not to do so. If the guns had been better in those days, they may have brought home a few antelope.

In 1891, Oscar Nierenberg was married to Miss Hattie Mielke, in Ottertail Co., Minn. They were married by Rev Albrecht. The first year of his married life he worked out <sup>etc</sup> threshing. In 1892 he took his homestead and built a lumber shanty on Sec 8, Cooperstown Township. From 1891 until six years ago the crops were good. Many of the people who came to N. Dak in



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the early eighties had gone back to where they came from about 1888, and now have nothing. Those who stayed and endured the hardship are now well to do.

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