

Biography of Mrs. Sevardt Skagen

--Gladys Simpson

May 31, 1926

The parents of the pioneer were Ole Olson and Givie Thorsen. The pioneer's maiden name was Margarite Olson.

She was born in the year 1845, in Gal, Helingdal, Norway. Her father was a farmer. There were five children in the family, four girls and one boy.

When Margarite Olson came to America, she was twenty-four years of age. This was in the year 1881. Minnesota is where she spent the first three years that she was in the United States. She was then married to Sevardt Skagen, and they moved to North Dakota to take up land.

When they first came here, they bought one quarter of land which was situated in Washburn Township, Griggs County.

The first house that they lived in was built of sod, and it was ten by twelve feet in size. Later they built a log house twelve feet square.

All traveling was done with oxen, and they did not have the farm machinery that people do now. They hauled fuel from the valley, as there was no railroad running through here to bring coal.

Their only neighbor was S. O. Homme. He lived one-fourth of a mile east of where Skagens lived. At that time there was no trace of Cooperstown. The only town there was for them to go to was a place called Mardell, situated on the land now owned by Nels Arneson. This town consisted of a store and a postoffice.

They lived in the log house for eight years, and they then built a larger house of lumber in the year 1892. A large grove of trees was planted on the place by Mr. Skagen, though he never lived to see them fully grown.

They raised a family of five girls, Bertha (Mrs. G. Simpson), Gena, Lena (Mrs. J. Auren), Julia and Gunhild. All of these are now dead except Mrs. Auren and Mrs. Skagen, who is also living.

Mrs. Skagen is now seventy-one years of age and she still lives on the same farm, four miles east of Cooperstown.