

Name Ruth Dyson
Subject History II Essay
Date May 1927
Teacher Mrs. Porterwill
Standing _____

Examination Booklet

Cooperstown High School
Cooperstown, N. D.

W. M. WELCH MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 1516 ORLEANS STREET, CHICAGO

by the county officials to lay out the first road from the Willow region to Cooperstown. They followed the ridges and higher ground all the way, necessarily paying very little attention to section lines. There were several ~~streams~~ and creeks which had to be forded.

When Mr Johnson came to Briggs County there were no townships. The land was laid out into sections but the sections were undivided. He was one of the leaders in the movement to organize the region around Willow Lake into a township. It was organized on March, 15, 1887, one of the first in the county.

the authorities refused him because of his youth. However disappointed but undaunted he put on his fathers big overcoat and tried again. This time he was admitted. He served faithfully until the end of the war and was honorably discharged in August 1865.

After the war he served as apprentice to his uncle in order to learn the carpenter's trade.

In September 1871 he married Esther L. Smith at Brownville Me. About this time many people were migrating west. He got the western fever as many others had. In the spring of 1876 he came west with two other men one of whom was part owner of a large tract of Red

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River valley land in the Dakota territory. they got off the train at Fargo and purchased oxen, plows, lumber and provisions. With these supplies they drove overland forty miles to Traill county. They built a small house with the lumber they had brought. This served as their home while they broke the land.

their nearest neighbors were ~~six~~ miles away. they were twelve miles from a Hudson Bay Trading Post called Caledonia. The trading post included one store, a blacksmith shop, a flour mill, saloons and a hotel (a Black Hills to Winnipeg stage station)

1876 was the year of the big

Custer Massacre on the Little
Bighorn in Montana. Rumors
of the dreaded Sioux were spreading
all over the northwest.

One day when Justin Safford,
one of the men with Mr Johnson, was
out plowing he turned around to find
an Indian, carrying a gun, following
him in the furrow. He dropped
the plow handles and ran to the
house where he found the yard
and a neighboring grove of trees
filled with Indians. That nite the
Indians had a pow wow around
their camp fire. The young men
supposed it was a war dance
and that their doom was close
at hand. In order to keep the Indians
in a good humor they gave them

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all of their provisions and went to the trading post for more.

The next day one of the Indians stepped up to the men, shook hands with them and said goodbye.

He went away chuckling to himself because the young men had been so frightened. Later it was discovered that these were friendly Chippewa Indians from the reservation in Minnesota.

They were on their way to Devils Lake to visit the Sioux.

When the breaking contract was completed Mr. Johnson returned to Maine and in 1879 he brought his wife and two small daughters with him to Dakota. He bought a lot on 13th Street in Fargo and built

a small home. Targo was growing rapidly and as a contractor and builder he was very busy. In 1882 his home was broken up by the death of his wife. The following spring he sold his Targo property and leaving his children with his brother's family he started for Gugg County. He and two other men made the trip with a team of horses and a wagon. There was no bridge across the Shyense river and the water was high. The men drove up the river until they came to a place where there was a small boat. With the boat and a long rope they were able to get the horses across

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one at a time. then they pulled the wagon over. When the wagon was only about halfway across it suddenly dived forward and disappeared under the water. However the men managed to pull it out right side up.

They went up near Willow Lake and took up squatters rights on unsurveyed government land. In 1884 the land was surveyed and Mr Johnson's claim was found to be in section 2, township 14 N north of range 60 west. Immediately after locating his claim he built a log store and home combined. The logs for the building were hauled from Willow Lake. He hired some breaking done on his

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land and plowed a furrow around it. After farming the land for a year or two himself he rented it for a share of the crop and devoted his time entirely to the store. The wood they used for fuel was hauled from along the Shuyenne river. The railroad came to Coopers town in 1883 so he was able to get supplies for his store there. Serious trouble was often experienced in hauling provisions. When the water was unusually high it sometimes took as many as ten or twelve horses to pull an ordinary wagon through the fords of the slews and streams.

Ezra Hagerty, C. S. Hamilton and Mr Johnson were appointed

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The small log store was replaced in a few years by a larger frame structure and soon after Mr Johnson built a frame house also. At one time the Lawrence Brothers were Mr. Johnson's store. They sold their share to Charles Miller of Larp. E. S. Hamilton who had a nearby claim worked in the store when he was not busy on his claim.

Mr Johnson built a small frame schoolhouse so that his own and the other settlers children might go to school. School was only held during the warm months.

Through the efforts of Mr Johnson and LeForest Conant a cheese factory was started on Mr Johnson's farm.

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So this the farmers brought
their milk and cream instead
of bringing it to the railroad
at Cooperstown. The cheese
factory was a success until
the people started to leave the
country because of the repeated
crop failures.

There were several men who
used Mr Johnson's home as
their headquarters when they
weren't working on their claims
and many people traveling
through the country stopped
at his claims over nite.

Mr Johnson hired a man to
haul his grain to Cooperstown for
him. This man would start in
the evening driving a yoke of oxen.

He would drive all night and in the morning arrive in town with his grain. At nite he would start back again. Mr Johnson used to buy the settlers grain or take it in exchange for groceries. He also kept some of it in his warehouse and sold it in the spring for seed.

In October 1895 he married Cora E. Hagerty the daughter of one of the other new settlers in Willow Township. He brought his two daughters and they lived at Willow until 1898.

Joseph Buckleit was their nearest neighbor. Ben Kuhns, Herbert Safford, Ezra Hagerty, Andrew Hutson, E. S. Hamilton, George Pratt, Mr. Ellis,

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Sylvester Flick, Paul Flick, Mrs. Root and Mrs. Ruth were some of the people who lived near them and traded at their store.

Around 1897 there were several crop failures in succession. Many people left Willow Township. Many people too were unable to pay their debts in the store so Mr. Johnson was forced to discontinue his business and go to Cooperstown. In Cooperstown he took up his contracting work again. He also did some work in Mayville a town which at that time was growing very rapidly.

Finally he and Erik Erickson started a store in Cooperstown.

After a time they took Berg Brothers into their firm and built the building which is now occupied by Albert Larson and Co. Then Charles Johnson sold his share to Albert Larson and ran a small furniture store. At this time he was also county judge.

On October 25, 1899 his life was brought to a sudden end by pneumonia. He left five small children besides his wife and one married daughter.