

## Charter Member of Concordia

# OTTO AUGUSTUS CHRISTIANSON

One of the well known farmers of Oakport township, Clay County, who is deserving of the success he has achieved is Otto Augustus Christianson. He was born in Clinton County, Iowa, on the site of the present city of Clinton, July 29, 1851, a son of Abraham and Catherine (Anderson) Christianson, both natives of Norway. In 1840, the mother went to France as a nurse, later returning to Norway, but in a short time started to America, single. On the same ship was Abraham Christianson. They made the long voyage to New Orleans, then up the Mississippi to St. Louis, Missouri, where they were married by a German Lutheran minister through an interpreter and then came on north to Clinton, Iowa, having made the entire trip from Norway by water. This was in the year 1844. They took up a homestead of eighty acres in Iowa, which farm is now the site of the Sunnyside Nurseries at Lyons, a suburb of Clinton. The place was cleared and improved by the father of the subject of this sketch and there he carried on farming until about 1855, when he removed to Houston county, Minnesota, where he pre-empted a large farm, on which he spent the rest of his life. The place is now known as the Bjornstad farm. After his death his widow remarried and located at Fulton, Illinois, across the Mississippi river from Clinton, Iowa and there her death occurred. The father of the subject of this sketch was twice married before his marriage to Catherine Anderson. By his first marriage a daughter, Anna, was born. The following children were by his second marriage, Caroline, Katherine, Charles, who was a miner in Colorado and who served in the Civil War in a regiment from that state, and Matilda. By his third marriage, two children were born, namely: Amy Josephine, who died in infancy, and Otto Augustus, the subject of this sketch.

Otto Christianson grew up on the farm and received his early education in the early -day schools of Houston county, studying for a time in the Houston high school and later, a student in the Caledonia Academy. As a boy and young man he worked out as a farm hand, also on steamboats on the Mississippi river and on railroads. In 1874 he came to Moorhead and presently took a position in a warehouse of the firm of Barnes & Tenny at Glyndon, and later worked in the store operated by this firm, remaining with the firm about nine months. During the following winter Mr. Christianson taught school in Moland township, in fact, taught two schools alternately, at the same time. He then followed various occupations until the next winter. He again taught school. He had clerks for a short time in the store of James Sharpe, who was one of the first merchants in Moorhead. In the spring of 1876 Mr. Christianson took up a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres in Oakport township and there he has made his home, developing a fine farm from the wild prairie, being one of the early pioneers in that locality. Mr. Christianson has added to his original farm until he now has a farm of five hundred and forty acres, all well improved and under a high state of cultivation. He has erected a splendid group of buildings on his land and has been very successful as a general farmer and stock raiser. He is a stockholder in the Farmers' Elevator Company at Moorhead, which he helped organize.

In 1878 Otto A. Christianson was married to Mina K. Juve, a daughter of Ole Juve, a pioneer settler of Kragnes township, Clay county, who located there about 1877. To that union three children were born, Anna Josephine (deceased), Oscar A. and Milton (deceased). Mr. Christianson married for his second wife, Andria Nelson, who was born in Denmark, a daughter of Ebbe Nelson, who lived and died in Denmark. To this second union eight children were born, all living at this writing, and named as follows: Ruth Mina, Daniel, who is a soldier in the Eighteenth Infantry, regular army of the United States and at this writing (1917) is with the Pershing expeditionary force in France; Lillian, John, who is at this writing a member of the Third Regiment, Minnesota National Guard, and is stationed at Ft. Adams; Clara, Milton and Catherine.

Mr. Christianson has always been active in the affairs of Oakport township. He helped organize the township and was a member of the first township board: in fact, has been a member of the board most of the time since the township was first organized, being still on the same. He was formerly township assessor. He helped organize the first Sunday school, also the first church in his community, known as the Concordia Lutheran church, and later helped build the present edifice for this congregation.