

Charter Member of Concordia

TORGRIM O. MORKEN

Torgrim O. Morken, a prominent character in Morken township and Clay county, where his industry, thrift and general spirit have made him many friends. He was born in Telemarken, Moland, Norway, in 1846, and is the son of a farmer, who came to the United States in 1867, settling in Houston county, Minnesota, where he died.

Torgrim O. Morken, who was the second child in a family of five children, grew to manhood in Norway, where he profited as best he could from the limited schooling his parents were able to give him. While still a boy, he began for himself, at the age of fifteen years accompanying his parents, however, to this' country in 1867, and for a time spent the summers at home and worked in the Wisconsin woods in the winter. One year he was employed in the Lake Superior iron mines and for some months was in the employ of the Southern Minnesota Railroad. He has been in many parts of Minnesota, and was employed for quite a period on steamboats principally between Winona and La Crosse.

Mr. Morken came to Clay county in 1875, to take his present farm. He was the first homesteader in Morken township and had the pick of the situation. Putting up a log hut, he occupied it for some time with A. O. Kragness, who had taken an adjoining homestead, and the two kept house together for some time. Mr. Morken gradually improved his place, though he had little with which to begin, and his progress was at first slow. His first fifty acres he brock with a yoke of steers and for two years oxen were his sole dependence.

Mr. Morken was married in 1878 to Miss Augusta Kassenborg. She was born in Houston county, Minnesota, where her father was engaged in farming. He has since come into Clay county. Born in Norway, he is a man of much character and determination.

Mr. and Mrs. Morken have a family of children as follows: Andrew, Gilbert, Salve, Martin, John, Obert, Tilda and Trina, all of whom were born on the farm.

Mr. Morken had to contend against floods in his first settlement in the county, and for a number of years the ground was so poorly drained that eight or ten bushels to the acre was regarded as a very good yield. Now wide and deep ditches carry off the surplus surface water, and the land has come to its true value as grain land. The farmers who persisted have become wealthy.

Mr. Morken had a difficult path to follow. His health failed, and for a time he had to leave home. He stuck to it, however, and now owns a fine and fertile farm of one hundred and sixty acres, well improved and in fine condition, with good buildings and all machinery the place requires.

Mr. Morken went back to Norway in 1883, visited his old home, and renewed the friendships of the long ago. Returning, he visited Sweden, Denmark, Holland and came slowly home to the United States. His health was greatly improved by the voyage, which was his principal reason for the journey. On his farm he has devoted himself very largely to grain farming. Of late years his wheat has run from eighteen to twenty-five bushels to the acre.

Mr. Morken is a Republican, and was the first town clerk of Morken township, which bears his name. He was treasurer many years and was also supervisor. He has been school clerk for a long time.