

ABOVE THE SIOUX LINE

The Walker Farm history begins in 1857, July 13 on the S.W. 1/4 and July 14 on the 60 acres in the S.E. 1/4 when the U.S. conveyed title to Wade Wellman on the 160 acres. He probably discovered the joys of farming in the Moland Mud and proceeded to get deeper in debt each year until there was \$450 dollars owed in 1862. A Sheriff's sale was held to settle the foreclosure. Isaac Spaulding, one of the mortgagors bought it. He sold it in 1874 to Harlow Chapin who owned the S.E. 1/4, having acquired it in 1857 from Truman McNall for the sum of \$172.

In 1874 both farms were mortgaged to John Haack & John Friedrich. for \$2880. They got the farms back, after which they were sold to Guttorm Pederson & Edward Otterness alias Larson. In 1877 they owed mortgages of \$3600, on the farms. The west 160 was inherited by L.G. Otterness from Guttorm Pederson & the east 160 Edward O. sold to Eddie & Lawrence Otterness, who seemed to get a buy, with only a \$800. mortgage.

L.G. Lars Otter-ness got control of the west 160 acres in 1910. He must have felt he was on top of the world because that was the year, he decided to build a new house and barn. He hired John Benson to build both the house and the barn, very large buildings, built with very good materials. John Benson was famous for his use of many nails when he built, which is still noticeable today when one attempts to remove any board or trim. He did build houses which withstood direct hits of tornadoes (the Gerald Schwake home), so maybe it paid off. They didn't spare any expense, even installing electric wiring, plus a bathroom (without a toilet stool). This farm was one of the first in the area with most modern conveniences. A supply tank in the attic provided water pressure for the plumbing system, with the downside being a hand pump in the basement to fill it with cistern water. The farm building site wasn't located on very high ground, so they hauled a huge amount of fill around the house from the higher ground. It should have been built farther east on that higher ground.

They built an addition to the square house, which served as the kitchen and servant's quarters. This part of the house incorporated the largest cistern for rainwater which I have ever seen in a residence. The foundations were poured cement in a trench dug to the depth they wanted, with the basement floor poured to empty into the drains. Above the poured cement they built a block wall, lined with brick, adding an air space to help insulate the wall. This was built to the height they wanted the basement, which extended under the porches.

The barn was an excellent design for that time, having a huge haymow, where the depth of the hay packed the bottom layers of hay as compactly as bales would be. They actually had to saw the hay loose if it was stored when too damp. The barn yard would have been much better drained if it were built 100 yards farther east. The building site at the centre of the 160 acres, when everything was hauled by horses, was a big advantage because of the short hauling distances. They dug a large septic tank next to the barn; this was too far from the house to be used for an indoor toilet; however, Lars did build the ultimate in outhouses, with a huge cement pit which never did get filled up. If all three holes were used continuously, it would take many years to fill it. He challenged the young bucks in the neighbourhood to try and tip it over on Halloween, which they never did manage to do, because it was bolted to the cement foundation.

The grove was planted at this time too, with Carl Otterness helping his father. It consisted mostly of elm trees, some ash, soft maple, willow, and pine all placed in neat rows. The Walkers tried tapping the maples, Olava boiled the sap down to syrup which wasn't very tasty, so John never tried that again.

Carl Otterness was famous for falling all the way down through the openings left for the chimney from the attic to the basement. He must have lived a charmed life. He was the same Carl who eventually was in partnership with the Walker Bros. Construction business, later running the Dew Drop Inn in Kenyon, together with his wife, who was an excellent cook. In 1914 Lars sold the farm to William Drake. Probably they were somewhat burned out from the huge amount of work, with all the building they did, probably deciding to cash in on it, because the mortgage was now up to it must have been a difficult time for the Otternesses, because it's difficult to leave an old farm, to say nothing about leaving a newly built farm. Some of our sentimental attachment to the farm is contained in the book title, which I will explain when I get to that part of the story. Bill and family moved in from western MN. In a short while they missed

their old community, so they decided to move back. His brother, who was a banker in Radcliff, IA was a friend of John Walker. He had financed an expansion farm for John without any signed papers, just on his word. This second farm was some distance from the home farm, which caused John to feel it was a dangerous situation for his family to be out on the road so much. The Walker family had lived on this same farm, between Radcliff and Garden City, IA since 1899, where Clarence, Theodore, Charlotte, Orven and Ordella were born. Nellie, Henry, and Hattie were born on a farm John rented north of Radcliff. They moved to that farm in 1892, from IL, where Clara was born. John worked in a factory during the short time they lived there.

1915, The land prices in Iowa were very good at this time, just when John was looking for a better location, with the right specifications, to move to. Drake (the banker) told John about his brother's farm in MN. He was very interested, as land was selling much better in IA than MN. He also had four sons to help. This farm had another 80 acres on the west side of the road plus the home 160 acres. The oldest Walker daughter, Clara, had moved to the Farmington area, where her husband had rented a farm. This must have been another consideration. The next year Clara and Martin purchased the 80-acre farm across the road from the Drake property, adjoining the 80 acres west of the road on the north side.

John along with some other friends and his brother-in law, Cornelius Nelson came to MN to check out the farms which Sorteberg, R.E. Agent had for sale. The night they stayed in Kenyon there was a storm with a huge amount of rain, so the next day they believed it was the perfect chance to see how well this land could stand heavy rains. They found water standing all over the farm. They could hardly believe their eyes when they found how quickly the rain disappeared, the ground absorbing all the water in a short time, leaving no puddles standing around. Sorteberg's wife always called him the Foxy Grandpa, which seemed a good name for him in this case, because he didn't mention the fact they had been going through a bad drought, allowing the soil to absorb lots of water. Another heavy rain would have made a slough out of most of the farm, which parts of it were often. Duck hunters considered the area north of the buildings, about the best pond in the area. Another thing John looked for was land that sloped to the south. This land had 12 feet of fall from north to the south. Coming from Norway this was an important consideration, where they needed all the sunshine the land could absorb. He also found this land was the best type of land to drain with tile, because it has a layer of gravel, right at tile depth, plus very few rocks, covered with good black soil.

He also wanted to move where they had mid-week prayer services. Right here was the Hauge Church, in the Hauge synod, just his kind of place of worship, with Norwegian language being used at that time.

After prayerful consideration, plus a price of only \$25,600. John became the new owner on Aug. 18, 1915 of 240 acres of the Lars Otterness farm. Olava's (Mrs. John Walker's) brother Cornelius Nelson bought the east 160 acres from Eddie & Lawrence Otterness in Mar. 1916 for \$16,000 and sold the west 60 acres of that to John the same day. Cornelius was very close to his sister, now they lived only 3/4 of a mile across the field from each other. His widow, Bertha, lived in Kenyon for many years after Homer Clark bought the farm. She eventually visited Norway, just before the Nazi occupation. She passed away there before she could return home.

When the time came to move, in late Feb. of 1916, everyone had to work with all the preparations. Even the hay had to be baled to load on the train, all the animals, furniture, machinery, feed etc. were loaded on railroad cars. John and sons, Henry, Clarence, Ted, and Cornelius Nelson rode on the train with the animals, as they had to be fed and milked on train sidings along the way. Clarence received a bad injury to his neck when something shook loose and dropped on him. He suffered from that the rest of his life. It developed into a tumour, which was removed many years later.

The rest of the family travelled on a passenger train, arriving in Kenyon on Mar. 2, 1916. Martin Stolee met the train with a sleigh pulled by a team of horses. The ditches were covered with snow so Martin couldn't tell where the road was at the Schuster corner. They went into the ditch. The passengers, Olava Walker, Hattie, Charlotte, Orven, Ordella and Aunt Bertha Nelson became very frightened. However, the bank wasn't steep, so they were able to drive out of the ditch. Nellie and Clara were married by this time, so they didn't move to the farm. Nellie and Chris Stolee were living in Iowa, while Clara and Martin Stolee lived at Farmington, until they moved to the farm across the road.

The first thing Ordella remembers of the new house was the furnace draft control, which she found out the hard way, was not to be played with. Some of Orven's first memories of the house were the times they ran around the edge of the roof after climbing out the attic windows. Evidently, they didn't stumble very often, or talk about it until we were too old to try it. Ted was probably the most adventuresome one in the family, because once when the barn had no hay in it, he travelled the length of the barn, hanging by the hay carrier track, hand over hand. He barely made it back, getting almost too tired on the return trip. Ted wasn't quite as lucky on another occasion, when he fell down the hay chute during a scuffle.

The house was only 5 years old at the time, containing many new innovations such as concealed wiring, push button light switches (which work to this day), ornate light fixtures, leaded cut glass windows, heating ducts to most rooms, running water, if the children ran to the basement to pump it up by hand, the remote draft control, concealed sliding doors, bedroom closets, a bath tub and back plastering in all exterior walls. The power to run the lights consisted of a small engine driven generator in the house basement, usually run on Mondays to run the washing machine. It was run until the bank of glass encased batteries were charged to run the lights for the coming week.

The children of school age began classes at Dist. 159, across from the Helland farm. They immediately came down with chicken pox, which was passed on to the whole school. This didn't make the "Iowa kids" very popular with the other mothers! The walk to school was a mile & 1/3. All eight grades were in the one room school, which for many children at that time was all the schooling they received. Many of the boys were needed to help at home in the upper grades, causing them to miss many classes. Even though they had excellent teachers, many boys had a difficult time going on to high school.

The transfer of the contents of all the railroad cars was done by horse and wagon, also herding the animals to the farm was done on horseback. Farmers thought nothing of having neighbours' herds cross their farms. For many years there was a cow lane across the home farm to accommodate a neighbour, who had a farm on each side of the Walker farm. It was a good time to have many boys to get all the work done. They all knew how to work, including the girls who had to get things ready in the house, as well as preparing meals for everyone who worked. When the moving was completed, the entire family discovered how much work was needed for everyday chores. Most of the chores were very labour intensive, even the upper story of the chicken house was used to house clucky hens, which were busy hatching eggs in nests along each side of the room. There was an outside stairway where Olava usually had to carry all the feed and more clucky hens up each day. The children usually took care of the single tin brooder houses which were placed out in the grove, where each hen was fed individually to take care of her brood of chicks. They eventually used an incubator, which was heated by a kerosene lamp, producing only enough heat to maintain the necessary temperature when the incubator was in a warm place. The house was usually the warm place where this incubating had to be done. Another source of chicks was mail orders, which arrived at the post office. They even took care of the chicks until the farmers got to town to pick them up, probably the noisiest mail to ever arrive in town.

Most of the field work was done by horses at this time, many horses meant much work of feeding, cleaning, harnessing, and grooming them. One special horse was named Billy, who was used to pull the one-horse buggy. On one occasion when Hattie and Ordella were returning from the town hall, where they rolled bandages during World War I, Billy just gave up, sinking down in the ditch. He was able to walk home after resting awhile. The girls had to walk too, which helped him get home, where he lived for a few more weeks. After he died, he provided a large robe, which served to keep the family warm in the sleighs, or later on for keeping the cars warm by placing it over the hood, lasting about 25 years. Two of the horses were electrocuted by the fence in the north grove at one time during a severe thunderstorm.

Hogs were another cause of hard work at this time when much of their feed consisted of slop made from ground grain and skim milk. The skim milk was produced by turning the crank on the separator by hand at the exact speed to keep the small weight on the handle from dropping down. Getting the milk to the separator was no small job either, because it all had to be squirted into the pail by hand, another chore for anyone who wasn't working at something else. Feeding the cows that produced the milk, was accomplished by tugging at the long hay in the haymow, so it could be dragged to the chutes, where it dropped to the feeding alley, from where it had to be distributed to the cows. Feeding silage was another heavy form of work, especially in the winter when it had to be chopped off the silo walls, where it froze

solid. The barn was set up to make the feeding of ground grain easy, storage bins above the feed bins made it easy to get the feed. The only problem was getting the feed to the second floor, where there was a burr mill to grind it. The bedding of the cows was done by carrying straw on pitchforks from the stacks where the threshing machine blew the straw. In the winter ice formed on the top making even more work. It occasionally toppled over on animals who were digging around the bottom, cleaning up the chaff and grain. The straw pile was the closest thing to a hill on the farm, so usually the snow would drift along a side, making it possible to slide down on sleds or skis.

The buildings on the farm included the old house, an old barn west of the new barn, a pump house by the windmill, a smoke house east of the granary, a car shed built on the side of the chicken house, a machine shed, with an attached chicken house, east of the barn and a pig house west of the barn.

Before long it was obvious that the farm needed lots of tile, which wasn't much of a problem for John, who was used to tiling in Iowa. People in this neighbourhood considered tiling worthless because they usually didn't survey the land as John did. The tile which had been installed in 1910 for the barn was full of dirt by the time they did the tiling. John hired Chris Norem and his brother, who were in charge of three more tilers. The sons had to haul carload after carload of tile, which arrived from Mason City IA to the fields. John knew from experience in Iowa, to buy the over baked tile which are darker in colour, as well as harder than regular tile, also less expensive. It took lots of planning because there were many different sizes used, depending on the capacity needed. They tiled through all the lower parts of the farm. This gave the farm a tremendous advantage over untiled land in the neighbourhood. They were always the first in the field, so many more acres had good crops during wet years. Nearly all of the tile is still in use, being incorporated into the newer tile systems. Every place we dug up the old tile, we found it to be in perfect condition. About this same time, they dug a new septic tank closer to the house, so they could install an indoor toilet stool, which they were used to in Iowa. The drain was connected to the tile system, which worked great until many years later when an owl, sitting on top of the soil pipe, was pulled down into the drain system. After much digging, they did manage to locate where it was lodged, in the centre of the lawn.

The part of the farm west of the road had an old cottonwood grove which surrounded an old stage coach station, that was famed for being the last stop for a successful gold miner returning from CA. He was feared to have been murdered not too far away, after he set out on his journey. There were rumours that he was trying to buy a saddle horse in the community, planning to travel by himself, not a good idea because he was never seen again. Shortly after this time, a family in the area who had horses for sale seemed to have more money than other families, causing some Old timers to have their suspicions. The large grove was in the way for farming, so John decided to remove it, hiring Chris Clemens to saw lumber from the logs. This lumber was used to build a large granary, a big shed on the west side of the barn, a barn on the north 80 acres across the road, corncribs etc. The stagecoach station was made into a granary for that farm too. Future owners of the farm did tear down the old structure, but the Walkers did have respect for it. Ruts from the old stagecoach trail were still discernible at the time the Walkers moved here. Several mounds were still noticeable in the 1940's, which were never excavated to find what caused them. One was close to the slough, north of the house, with others close to other low spots. Around 1970, an oil exploration operation was conducted on the road between the farms. We were paid for exploration rights, never finding what was discovered. The well drillers did find a tar-like substance from a deep level, while drilling a well.

With all the projects going on, financing had to be arranged. Jeff Clark, a wealthy Civil War veteran, loaned John much of the money needed to get these things done, as well as purchasing the north 80 acres west of the road where Clara and Martin had been living. The south 80 west of the road was added to the north 80 to make another farm where Hattie and Oscar farmed, before Clarence and Sophie began farming it.

The main farm had large orchards of apples, plums, and berries, also lots of room for gardens. A smoke house located in the garden was another time-consuming job for Olava, who kept the fire smouldering as long as it was needed. Potatoes were always raised along the fences bordering corn fields because cattle didn't try to reach through to eat the potatoes. It allowed an extra row along the fence on land which would have been wasted. This plan made for lots of potatoes to pick every fall, filling the large

bins in the basement. This didn't make the children overly happy because more sacks were given away to guests, than used at home.

There were two whole bedrooms reserved for visitors of which there were many with John involved in the Hauge Intermission, as well as many friends and relatives from IA. No matter who was visiting, John never missed prayer meeting. When the banker from IA was visiting, he even left him at home, to attend prayer meeting. They had many guests after church services on Sundays too, so Olava always cooked extra-large dinners, with this in mind. Many of their friends around Kenyon were formerly residents of the Radcliff, Story City area in Iowa. There seemed to be an influx of Iowa people at that time. Many years later in the 70's, when I tried to explain where my family originated from, to strangers with deeper roots in this community, they made remarks like "oh, you're one of those". In time, they seemed to be accepted in the community because they elected John to the schoolboard, as well as various offices in the Hauge Lutheran Church Board. Some of the old timers said they had great respect for any man who drove spirited horses like John Walker drove. The reason they were so spirited was the fact that he got some great buys at auctions because they were wild horses that were unbroken. It gave his boys some extra work for slack seasons on the farm. It also saved him a lot of money. On some of the worst horses they actually had another horse connected by a rope to the outlaw horses' neck. When it reared up, the good horse flipped the wild one on it's back. A very dangerous system for the guy in the saddle (usually Ted) but very effective. Fortunately, the rider always scrambled out of the way.

Olava was a very thrifty housekeeper, who deserves much of the credit for their financial progress. Many things we buy today, she had to make from scratch, saving much in expenses. She seemed to like it here, although it wasn't long before John began to think of moving to N.D. His cousin, Helge Larson lived there; however, Olava refused to move again. With a nearly new house plus two married daughters with Grandchildren living nearby, it's easy to see why she put her foot down on that idea.

The U.S. entered the 1st World War on Apr. 6, 1917, so in 1918 Henry was called up in the draft, which was a serious thing because so many young men were being killed in France, as well as dying from the flu. It was a very trying time for John. Ordella remembers that it was the only time she heard him cry. He probably left Norway with the hope of finding a better life for his family in the U.S. The draft here was similar to the conscription in Norway, which was very unpopular. Fortunately, Henry never got to France where so many were sent with very little training at that time. He was scheduled to embark for France, one week after the armistice. People at home had to do without many things too, like eating barley bread which was so tough the boys broke a milk pitcher by tossing a loaf of it around. All the girls were involved in rolling bandages and knitting. John was involved in War Bond drives, that were used to finance the war. Horses were needed by the military, so two of the work horses were drafted. Henry had many interesting stories to tell about his time in the army. We always had lots of respect for him for being in on the big war. The Spanish flu injured Henry's heart, while he was in the service. They slept in tents, receiving little medical care while sick. He never slowed down because of his heart, always working like two men, well into his later years. He always went at full speed, which didn't always work too well. One time when Orven helped him tie the bales on his truck, they forgot to tie the rope on the other side of the truck, so when Henry gave a vicious tug on the rope, down came Orven. It wasn't very serious because Orven had many broken ribs during his career.

A cement Keystone silo was one of the first additions to the farm. The water tank on the second floor of the barn was soon installed to provide water pressure to drinking cups in the barn. It was a great help during times when there was too little wind to run the windmill, so it was usually called the supply tank. Some of the people who lived on the farm drank the water from this tank, although after a few years, we found dead rats floating in the tank, plugging up the overflow. On a few occasions the windmill was left running too long, causing a flooding of the entire barn. Probably the worst occasion was the time when baby pigs were floating around on the water. The windmill was getting becalmed by the growth of the big elm trees, so it was necessary to add an extension to raise the wheel to a greater height.

The buildings that were done on the farm around this time were really built quite well, even though they were mainly built of cottonwood from the west 80 acres. The lumber stood up very well where the wood stayed dry. The granary was built for small-grain storage, but they used so much wood in building it, that

it easily withstood the stress of heavier grains, like corn and beans. The last year it was filled with corn, it paid for itself many times over because the corn price went above \$4.00 per bushel that year. He had one of the first portable grain elevators to fill it, at a time when many farmers had to carry the grain to the second floor of their granary in sacks. The barn addition still stands, which made it one of the few in the area capable of housing 40 milk cows, at that time. The machine shed was getting kind of cramped, so after the cottonwood was about gone, he bought the original Standard Oil shed in Kenyon. This was moved to the farm where it served its purpose for many years. John had a clever method for reusing used tin roofing. He filled the holes with rivets to stop the leaks. The shed never did burn down, even though some of it always looked thoroughly soaked with oil. It was recently torn down. Some of the wood is still in good enough condition to be used for new buildings. John used to say all these buildings would outlast him. Even though he used inexpensive materials, most of them outlasted his sons. Some are also outlasting many grandsons. When he was rebuilding the standard oil shed, he received some painful injuries when he fell from the roof.

Henry, the oldest son, purchased a neighbouring farm during the land boom. He was the first son to leave the farm; therefore, Ted and Clarence were next in line to start operating the farm. John, Olava and family moved to a rented house north of the boulevard in Kenyon. The farming arrangement didn't seem to work well because Ted discontinued farming, leaving Clarence and Sophie operating the farm alone for a short time. It wasn't long until John, Olava and family moved back to the farm. Ordella didn't even get to start going to school in town because she had stayed in the country to finish her school year. Orven left home for greener pastures about that time too. John, Olava, Charlotte and Ordella moved back to the farm again, where they managed things for a short time before moving back to town, after buying one of the better houses. It had lots of beautiful woodwork with many glass cabinets, which were awfully intimidating to rambunctious grandchildren! It was located north of the water tower in Kenyon, with a large garden, also a horse shed built on the garage. When they left the farm, they held an auction to dispose of the things Henry didn't need when he returned to the farm. They had to supply the crowd at the auction with a noon meal because it took lots of time to auction everything off.

The land price depression had hit Henry, who bought the Stokker farm. This depression preceded the stock market crash by a few years. Although Henry and Selma worked hard, they were finally unable to make the payments, for prices of farm products had gone down. Land prices fell below the amount they still had to pay on the mortgage, so they were forced to let the farm return to the former owners. They moved home to do the farming. Since he had farmed on his own, he owned his own equipment and livestock. The Holstein herd he had acquired was one of the top herds in the area.

Henry was the largest operator of the farm for many years, farming the adjacent 160 acres to the north-east, as well as milking a barn-full of cows. Henry was married to Selma, a daughter of Lars Helland, who was a close neighbour. She was also a sister of Oscar Helland who married Hattie. Selma was a teacher for the younger Walker children at the country school before her marriage to Henry. Selma was a good worker, even doing the milking, when necessary. They adopted Chester during the time they lived on the farm. He was an accomplished piano player. They were very prosperous at farming, as well as business enterprises, like buying various feeds which he sold to other farmers. He did hire extra help because there was entirely too much work for one man. One of his hired men was John Closter, who left a trunk in the attic, when he left for Seattle. The trunk is still there because he never returned. His lifestyle was kind of on the edge, with many knife scars from various fights, many of which occurred in Norway, where he had recently emigrated from. After a few years of successful farming, Henry and Selma decided to move to Kenyon to begin other enterprises, such as Surge Milker sales, a Guernsey Dairy and construction work, in partnership with Ted and Carl Otterness. They moved to a huge house near the Zumbro river by highway 56, one of the largest houses in Kenyon.

About 1929. John was running out of sons by this time, so Orven was the only one left. With very little equity, he got the honours of buying out Henry. He left the shovel operating job he loved to start farming. It was a couple years after he married Leda Richardson. She was happy to move to the farm because her family lived on a neighbouring farm, also they had been moving around with his job to some undesirable locations. Leda was an excellent cook, housekeeper, poultry farmer, gardener, mother, and pianist, to name a few of her attributes. She was able to play piano for the silent movies quite successfully because she could play any tune by ear after she heard it. Leda could do the housekeeping

without spending much money for supplies or furnishings, so considering the time they moved on the farm, she was a great help to Orven.

All the farm wives through these years had some very busy days when the butchering was done on the farm. It entailed much cutting, canning, and curing the meat. Usually, the butchering was done when the outdoor temperature was about the range of a refrigerator, because much of the work was done outside. Another panic situation occurred when the large crews, during threshing or silo filling had to be fed. These guys were awfully hungry, so it required substantial amounts of food.

This was about the worst time in history to start farming because the depression hit before he got started farming. The renters farmed on half shares at that time, but John made the agreement with his sons, that when they got their machinery paid off, they could buy the land. Orven borrowed enough money from Jessie Clark to buy the machinery and livestock he needed to get started farming, continuing dairying on a fairly large scale for that time. Jessie never liked to have any principal repaid, so each year when Orven paid the interest, he would buy them lunch. If Orven paid any principal, no lunch. The depression hung on so long they were never able to get out of debt during John's lifetime. In spite of the depression the farm did support the operators better than many farms because the heavy black soil did produce quite well during some extremely dry years. Many traces of the blowing dust are still visible where banks of dust drifted along fences lines. The farms were able to scrape by, with enough feed for the livestock because they planted emergency crops, such as sweet clover for pasture, as well as soybeans for hay. Soybeans were cut green with grain binders at that time. After drying, they were picked up with a hay loader to be hoisted to the hayloft on slings. In one cutting of beans, they just beat the army worms, which were so thick in the bundles they came tumbling down out of the haymow in large enough numbers to fill the gutters in the barn. The other crops were damaged severely by the worms, which reportedly made lots of noise as they consumed the crops.

These years were the first time the farm was operated by only one man, because the crop was so poor, help couldn't be afforded, even though John had made Orven promise he would always hire a man to help. Things got so bad during these years that anyone who smoked on the farm had to roll their cigarettes, which they were capable of doing in a moderate wind. One of the first hired men made the mistake of ploughing up the patch of wild hay land which prevented erosion from washing into the drainage ditch. The drainage ditches were an important part of the tile system because they allowed the tile outlets to drain across the neighbour's land. John had paid the neighbours a sizable amount to obtain these rights. John got the hired man to turn all the sod right side up with a pitchfork. Since the grass kept on growing, it prevented the eroded soil from plugging the drainage ditch. That hay land was still there well into the mid-century.

In the winter hired men could be hired for room and board plus a little tobacco money, so Orven always had extra help in the winter. Most years, extra help had to be hired during threshing and corn picking, making it necessary to pick up itinerant workers who happened along, one of which was a divinity student. Some years during threshing it got so hot the men would sleep on the lawn at night. They were from many different backgrounds, usually following the harvest through the country. Corn was picked by hand at this time, a very time consuming job, but some men were fast enough to get paid well. Payment was figured at a bushel per inch of depth of the corn in the wagon boxes. It often was done after the ground had frozen, so the corn was compacted in the boxes by shaking over frozen ruts, making unhappy hired men when they had fewer inches of corn in the box. Some of the newcomers could cuss the horses in a couple languages, which made the horses speed up still faster, so the corn shook down even more.

One year about this time Clarence and family moved into the old house in March, when there wasn't a farm available to rent, they spent some awfully cold nights in that house which had only a single layer of boards on it. Jeanette caught pneumonia, because it was an awfully drafty residence. He milked his cows in the machine shed. Fortunately, it was a temporary arrangement, because they soon moved to John's other farm, across the road.

The farm operators were making enough progress to modernize the machinery during this time, so the Walker farms which had been running threshing machines and silo fillers were about the first farms to purchase a corn picker and combine in the neighbourhood. Farming became nearly horse free around

this time, since most of their work was done by tractors. Many horses were traded in for tractors because things had to be done faster to keep up with the machines. The horses often went from the tractor dealers to the fox farms, but usually the best team was kept hauling corn bundles during silo filling. There were times in the winter when snowstorms were bad, causing the team of horses to become very valuable. It caused a drastic change in the arrangement in the barn, in place of the dozen horse stalls, they now had many hog farrowing or calf pens.

Orven bought a Jay hawk stacker which was quite an innovation at this time. He could build stacks 40 feet high or carry hay to the barn where it was lifted to the haymow on slings. It was a great labour saver. Until this time, haying was mostly done with hay loaders, with the farmer placing the hay on slings in the hayracks. It was a very tiring job because they constantly sank far down into the loose hay. He travelled as far as Cannon Falls doing custom work with the Jay hawk, however it was a nasty machine to operate because the driver had to steer the tractor like backing a two-wheel trailer.

Very few farmers had corn pickers at this time, so they were busy each fall, doing custom picking, traveling as far as Aspeland before they finished picking one year. Orven had one bad day on the picker, when his brand-new overalls were caught in the power-take-off. Fortunately, he was able to get a good grip on the tractor, while all his clothing was getting 'Mapped on the power shaft. It removed everything he wore, including the socks in his shoes. He said it was an awfully cold trip home, on a blustery fall day. The John Deere combine was such a lemon, they had a tough time doing their own harvesting, never doing custom work. It did save a great deal of labour compared to shocking and threshing of the small grain. They were one of the first in the area to combine soybeans for seed. Since no market had been established for beans to be processed, it was a small operation. The John Deere was so bad they even had factory reps out to try to improve it's operation. John owned half interest in the harvesting machinery at this time. When the factory reps. wanted to work on the combine on Sunday, John informed them that no one worked on his machines on Sunday, on his farm. He wanted no part of Sunday work, realizing he had been blessed in many instances by refraining from it. He definitely had done well, considering he now owned two farms and a fine house in town. Their whole family with many Grandchildren living right in this area were the greatest blessing of all. He wisely knew where these blessings came from. Very few people moved very far during those years, so family get-togethers were huge, usually at the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas times.

The buildings were well maintained during this time, with John doing most of the painting and repair work, but there was little new building done, other than a new steel silo being built on the foundation of the old cement Keystone silo, which had been torn down. The day the Walker brothers demolished the silo was exciting because the tractors weren't capable of pulling it down. They had to run up to the silo with sledgehammers to chip more of the base away. They ran away even faster, before the silo tipped on them. I was probably the only one who enjoyed the spectacle, from a safe distance, of course. The Walkers seemed to live close to the edge at times, but fortunately they were survivors. The new silo was made by the Babson Co, sold by a good friend of John's, E.G. Clinton, who he often visited when he accompanied Henry to Minneapolis on business trips. E.G., thought John always brought him good luck when he visited him, eventually he did own a large business, advertising on stations like WCCO. John bought another steel silo for Clarence's farm too. Clinton was a big help in getting the newest electrical equipment out to the farm, always giving John some very good prices.

The Skelly fuel dealer, Ralph Mork was another good friend of John, so Skelly fuel was used on the farm. Since he had emigrated from the same part of Norway as John, they knew many of the same people in Norway. We filled the car with gas at his station the day after Norway was invaded in World War II. It was a very sobering experience to hear someone so close to many endangered people, talk about the news from Norway. It seemed unusual to see grown men cry in those days, but that was one time when they did.

Hybrid corn seed caused quite a change in farm practices about this time. Of course, Orven was right in on the ground floor of it, but John wasn't convinced about paying for seed corn, so they split the field in two. John's half was planted with the old farm raised seed corn which had been dried in the attic on all those nails sticking out of the rafters. John was very happy to pay his half of the seed corn bills in the coming year, after this trial which proved the value of hybrid corn.

The REA came to the farm in 1937, with Jim Stolee bringing the wiring up to date, he was a Grandson of John, who had graduated from Dunwoody Inst. In a few years he was the only Grandson who saw action during World War II. He was listed as missing in the Pacific when his ship was sunk. He and the only other survivor were rescued by natives. There was much concern for his safety at that time because no one knew he was with the natives. At the time he did the wiring he was able to use a good share of the original wiring, causing no problems, in spite of its age. Much of this knob and tube style of wiring has been used until the present time, with no indication of any safety hazards with it. More outlets were added at this time in all the buildings, because in 1910 no one had any idea of all the uses for electricity in the future, also more buildings were wired as needed. Even the chicken houses were wired to make the hens lay during the winter months. Many new conveniences, such as refrigerators, electric stoves, water pumps, lights everywhere, brooder stoves, etc were added, making the advent of the R.E.A. one of the most profound changes to occur during the farm's history. Even though the farm had power plants for a limited amount of power for many years, it was inconvenient, needing fuel, maintenance, manual start-ups, and few appliances were available for 36 volts.

The next big project was re-shingling the house, with John putting in lots of time on that too, reclaiming the tin and cleaning up the mess. Nothing ever went to waste on these farms. The used shingles were all saved for kindling in the furnaces. The tin and scraps of lumber for future projects, also the used nails were straightened. Some of the grandsons remember straightening these nails on rainy days. The shed on the west side of the barn was roofed with tin at the same time. She was the contractor who did the work, also building a new granary on the other farm. The last building John built was an 800-bushel corn crib, which he built all by himself, except for me, constantly asking questions about almost everything I could think of, as I tagged along. He was very patient with us, even pulling LaDonna and myself out of the manure pile, where we sank down to the level of our knees, while chasing a chicken (life must have been boring). The crust on the top did look nice and dry though.

About this same time Ted and Lillian needed an apartment to live in, so the east kitchen and two upstairs rooms were separated from the rest of the house. The former dining room was changed into a kitchen, with the dining room getting moved into the sitting room. This apartment was used by several married hired men after Ted and Lillian moved out. While they were there, as Ted came home one night, he heard chickens squawking, a sure sign of chicken thieves. They got the shotguns out, advancing to the henhouse with guns at the ready. Ted ordered them out with their hands up, but no thieves emerged from the henhouse. When they went in to see what was going on, they found an old dying hen who was just squawking her last cries. She did die very shortly after they got their hands on her, the buckshot giving her a quick exit. The apartment was not a good arrangement because they were so crowded in their rooms, with everyone in very close quarters.

The only known crimes committed on the farm were attributable to hired men. In one case Orven replaced the gasoline in a barrel with water, when he thought it was disappearing too fast. The hired man didn't get to the end of the driveway before his car stalled on him. Another hired man tried to break into the hired girl's room, when they were home alone, but she was smart enough to pile enough furniture in front of the door to thwart his advances. They found the heating oil disappearing from the tank on another occasion, so after investigating the disappearance they discovered the hired man's wife was siphoning it out. Another one went to the Moland Creamery yearly meeting, where he tried to get sympathy for the starvation wages, he thought he was being paid. A couple of them had cases of various diseases, making them undesirable to have in the home.

Saturday night was always party time for the hired men, who seemed to find various activities to brighten up their tedious lives. Some of them didn't own a car, so they would ride to town with us. We seldom missed going to town on Saturday night, always buying groceries at the Sands store, where Orven's boyhood friends were in business. Some of the best doors in the world emanated from their back room, with the coffee grinder and bulk bins. The hired men were always back on the job by Mon. morning or Sunday evening if it was their Sunday to do chores. One time a friend came along to help with the chores. Since he needed more excitement, he was tearing around the yard with the Triplane pickup. He tore the stairway off the chicken house, as well as a fender on the pickup. We never found how many hens met their demise, but the Triplane made a quick trip to the body shop.

Most of the experiences with hired men were pleasant though. The finest hired man was Wally Olson, who worked for Orven during most of five years, eventually knowing what to do without being ordered around, so they got along terrifically well. Wally helped plant the rows of Ash trees in the southwest part of the grove. He was present on the Halloween evening when the War of the Worlds was broadcast. They tuned in late, so we all believed it was for real because it sounded like a real national disaster. He was an awfully quiet man as he listened with our little housedog sitting on his lap, Wally eventually fought in the battle of the Bulge in Belgium. He was the only man in his squad to walk away from it. During these years, the Stolee girls stayed at our house at times, pulling tricks like starching his shorts, but he got them back with things like a pail of water above the door, which dropped on them as they tried to sneak in late at night. The most favourite hired man of us kids, always sent us a whole box of Milky-Ways each Christmas. Most of the time living with the various hired men was a pleasant experience. Spurgeon Markuson was the best one to play with us kids, although Mother had to wash the ceiling many times after he helped us walk on it. He even taught me to drive his Model T Ford. One of the worst events happened the time "Jiggs" dared me to shoot him in the hand with my BB gun. I couldn't think of anything I would rather do, so I did it. His hand got pretty black, but he probably got a little smarter. Feeding and washing for these extra men did make much more work for the housekeepers.

June 15, 1941, Father's Day, was a sad day for the Walker family because John passed away from a heart attack. He was a very well respected and active Christian leader who was deeply missed by his many friends and family. His reputation of being a wise, well respected farmer, ready to adopt new farming practices was well known. He had a huge funeral, with even E.G. Clinton attending. The farm was willed to Olava for her lifetime, with Charlotte the executor of the estate. It was not a time to make improvements on the farm, due to it being an estate.

In 1941, World War II began, causing shortages of most inputs for the farms. Most of the old antique machinery was cut up, to make scrap iron for the war effort, even the old Russell threshing tractor went. All the old tires were brought to a huge pile in Kenyon, from where they were never used in the war effort, being useless for recycling. Fuel, gas, sugar, meat, and many things required ration stamps to purchase, but there were few hardships for farmers during the war years. Farms were considered valuable to the war effort, so hired men could be deferred to help keep the production up. Many posters were displayed, showing what a great contribution farmer made to the war effort. Orven was placed in a draft status which was close to a call-up because of his shovel operating experience. Lloyd Helland worked here during fall harvesting and the winter of one of the war years. We really enjoyed that time, he had recently returned from the Hillcrest Academy, with many stories of his time there. He was one of the few men who didn't get wild on Saturday night.

Lincoln Swelland worked here during the war for a while on a deferment, but he got bored with farming. He enlisted in the Marines, in time to land on Iwo Jima. Lincoln was probably the strongest man to work on the farm. Being a friend of the neighbouring Houglum boys, they had a competition about who could get the manure hauled out first in the morning. Lincoln did usually win at this contest, of course Orven enjoyed getting the work done quickly.

The Armistice Day blizzard at this time caused many problems with livestock, also many hunters died because it was a perfect morning to hunt ducks. Halfway through the day a howling blizzard roared in. The hog house began filling with snow, which blew through a few small cracks because of the extremely high wind. The hogs began to get wet, which was beginning to freeze them, so we had to move them to the barn. It proved the intelligence of hogs because they all seemed to know just where to go, directly into the barn. Lincoln came to school with the sled and team to bring us home, so we weren't marooned there, like many country school students were during the storm. Some of the wettest years in the farm's history occurred during the war years. In the wettest year, the only corn that was good, was close to the tile ditches. The corn was so bad that a neighbour's hogs, which usually broke out, walked a half a mile through his corn fields to get to the better corn on the tile ditch. Another year there was hardly any small grain, but the hay and corn kept the milk herd going.

During the war years the milk went into town to be dried for the war effort. Every day the milk hauler had to grind his way up the driveway, which was especially hard on the driveway during rainy weather. The milkmen were an excellent source of neighbourhood news, even though they had backbreaking work, they brightened up the day with some conversation. Some of the time Orven hauled ours and Frank

Magee's milk in the Triplane pickup. At this time, they finally used the whole cooling tank in the separator room, which was arranged so all the water the cows drank ran through it, cooling the milk. It had been far too large for the smaller amount of cream they produced before this, when all the skim milk was fed to pigs, chickens, and calves. The skim milk was mixed with ground grain to make a slop, to be fed in troughs. It was a very labour-intensive process, being fed by wheeling it around on a wheelbarrow.

Orven always used the latest technology, which meant being the first in the neighbourhood to try an electric fence. He decided to end the problem of hogs getting up in the slop trough, by stringing an electric wire above it. It worked great until one hog got tipped on its back in the trough, being unable to get out, he, was killed by the shock. The electric fences were valuable for confining livestock, although they arrived too late to use on the horse pastures. Horses constantly became tangled in barb wire, which caused awful wounds on them. They wrecked many fences by reaching through the barb wire. Will Rogers said there were three types of people in the world, those who learn by reading, the few who learn by observation and those who learn by tinkling on the electric fence wire. Years later Orven's grandsons discovered the truth of this saying, by convincing a cousin to give it a try. Building fences was one of the unending jobs which never seemed to end, because cattle and hog pastures were often rotated to new areas. The rotation was valuable for disease prevention and soil improvement.

Olava's health was not good, and her eyesight was failing too. On July 15, 1943 she passed away. She was missed greatly by family and friends too, she was a very wonderful, loving, and caring mother and grandmother. In her quiet way, she lived the Christian life, a genuine testimony to all of us. In our confirmation Bibles, she noted the 121st Psalm on the fly leaf, which she had confidence in. It has proved true in her family's lives, all of them became true believers. Much of John's success in farming was due to her ability to feed and clothe their large family without spending a great deal of money. This thriftiness allowed much of the farm income to be spent on the farm, so it could continue to grow.

During this summer, Ted, who had been working at building the Howard Hugh's Spruce Goose in California was called home, because of Olava's illness. They stayed in Kenyon so he could help with many repairs on the buildings, to get them ready for sale by the estate. He and Orvis Walker from across the road even painted the inside of the silo, a job which I envied them for, because they balanced on each end of a plank, which looked like such a daring thing to do, as they hoisted themselves up and down with a block and tackle. The Steel silos were supposed to be painted every few years on the inside where they became corroded by the silage acid. Ted had painted the outside shortly after they were built, using aluminium paint, at which time he swung around on a block and tackle from a hook on the edge of the silo top.

In a deed dated Mar. 20, 1944, Orven Walker bought the farm for the sum of \$20,000 from the 8 brothers and sisters, many of whom re-invested it in land or houses of their own. It was an excellent time to buy land because the war was soon over, with the price ceilings about to be removed. Some fields on the farm actually paid for themselves in one year by producing a crop of flax, which sold as high as \$7.50 per bushel, with 15 bushels being an average yield. The next year the price went down to \$5.50 but the yield was better, so that field paid for itself in one year too. Orven began using two portable hog houses, which allowed him to raise more hogs. It was a profitable way to help pay off the mortgage. The houses were moved nearly every year to give the new litters fresh pasture. Lars Richardson, Leda's father, lived on the farm at this time. He was especially skilled at caring for hogs and chickens, also weeding corn and beans all summer. He raised a large garden, often selling the surplus to grocery stores. He was blessed with excellent health, considering he was about 80 years old at the time. Every morning he usually said he was better today, a very optimistic outlook for that time in life.

Probably the worst disease epidemic to hit the farm happened at this time. The young pigs began dying from some unknown cause, which was unknown to the veterinarian as well. Shots for cholera proved to be useless, so they died even faster. Usually if the Veterinarian didn't know what it was, they would give them these shots, because it was profitable. They knew the farmers were scared to death of this disease. A mineral salesman recommended a vile smelling concoction for the survivors, but it killed even more of them. They did save a few pigs by treating them for necro, but even they were awful sickly.

In spite of a few setbacks, farming was almost too good to be true for a few years. It was a time to do lots of upgrading on machinery and vehicles on the farm, much of which had deteriorated during the war

years. Orven bought the first tractor equipped with live hydraulics, a Farmall C, including a mounted mower, cultivator, and planter. A MM model U was next, it also had live hydraulics, live power take-off, a mounted 4 row planter and cultivator. Live power on tractors was one of the most valuable innovations to ever come along. Without it, there was no way to stop the tractor without disengaging the clutch, which also disengaged the power-take-off, causing the machine to plug up. Orven had a method to stop the KT Moline without de-clutching, by slipping it out of the forward gears. It was risky because the gears could be ruined by hitting another gear. He never missed or had a problem with this method. Very few farmers had switched to four row equipment at that time, so Orven was ahead of most of them again. The two Walker farms purchased a John Deere field chopper, a great labour saver for filling silos. Hay and straw were chopped too, with false end-gate wagons unloading at a blower, undoubtedly the most dusty and miserable work ever done on the Walker farms. The neighbours all worked together in the same silo filling ring as they had worked in before, when the Walker family owned their own silo filler. Until this time, the filling of silos with chopped corn, was accomplished with bundles that were cut with a binder. The bundles were loaded with pitchforks to open sided wagons, which hauled them to a silage cutter at the silo. This was usually a very strenuous job, also requiring a good team of horses to load bundles in the field. The surplus silage corn was often placed in shocks to dry in the field, then run through a shredder that snapped off the ears, with the stalks getting blown into a barn or

A new Dodge One ton truck, plus a new Dodge car were added to the inventory. With the income from 20 acres of corn enabling the purchase of a new vehicle. With the increased prosperity, each Walker farm purchased their own combines and corn pickers, becoming more independent.

When Orven had most of the mortgage paid off, he sold the milk cows after the price went up to \$200. per head. This allowed him to pay off the entire mortgage. He said at the time, someone else wanted to milk cows more than he did, if they were willing to pay that price. Many farmers still remembered the depression, which gave them a big incentive to get out of debt. Orven acquired a arc welder to help make use of his leisure time, building various machines, such as a trailer built from a gravel truck, a wood chunk splitter, motor powered lawnmower and a powered bicycle, to name a few.

Part of the barn was used for housing laying hens for a few years. Very little grass was raised around the farmyard those years, when they all ran loose in the summertime. One rooster had a serious grudge to one of Orven's nephews, whom he would always chase back to the house yard. To make this nephew mind, we only had to remind him of that rooster waiting for him. It was not a good time to walk around the yard bare footed either. Leda usually took care of the chicken flock, helping to buy the groceries with the income. She started a new flock in the brooder house by using an electric brooder stove each spring. One winter while taking care of the laying hens in the west chicken house, she felt something warm on her neck. About the same time the odour of the civet cat hit her, causing a quick retreat to the bathtub. She was very successful most years though.

Orven started a six head herd of beef heifers, one of which bloated on frosted alfalfa the first year. A very good Hereford bull was bought from the Ches-Mar farm in Excelsior, MN. He also began raising Hereford / Holstein crossed calves from the young stock left over from the milk herd, which got him back in milking again on a much smaller scale.

Orven had an appendicitis operation during harvest time the year his son James graduated from High School, in 1949. James is the person attempting to write this history, so will continue to speak as the author. I began farming on 1/5 shares, rather than attending Augsburg College, as I had planned. Orven needed surgery for appendicitis that fall, so I was needed on the farm for a while. The fall was noted for the strongest wind on record, with leaves blowing past cars traveling 80 mph. Thankfully, we were half through picking corn on October 1 0th, when the big blow occurred. Much of the corn was on the ground, causing a tiresome job of cleaning it up by hand. We built a round steel 800 bu. corn crib, which was half filled with corn picked off the ground by hand. Orven invented a special hook on a handle, which allowed him to pick up corn without bending over, not really recovered from the surgery at the time. He had to do some doctoring for arthritis that fall too, because he had a lot of pain after the surgery.

We did keep fairly busy during the off seasons by doing lots of shop work. Various machines were welded together during this time, such as a barn cleaner, hay hoist and rotary snow plough. The better snow plough was considered a necessity because of a great amount of snow one winter. The wind never

seemed to quit blowing that winter, making the old system of bucketing snow inadequate. During one windy day, Orven began bucketing out the driveway in the morning, which took until noon. After he got to the end of the driveway, he turned around to discover the driveway was completely filled in again. He had to work the rest of the day, just to get home. All the neighbours had to get together, to shovel snow by hand so they could get the snow ploughs through in April. Ted Walker was ploughing snow that winter with a large Caterpillar plough, so Orven got him to plough the driveway. The banks he pushed up actually touched the telephone lines. Unfortunately, he slid off the edge of the driveway, causing the track to come off. This caused a half day job to remount it, in terrible working conditions, with lots of wind and snow. The Sahl Bros., who owned the Cat. were very unhappy, since a hot south wind came up the next day, melting the snow in a short time. Even snowstorms were a good time on the farm, bringing a kind of closeness to the family when we felt marooned out there with only ourselves to depend on. One of the best storms in Mar. even marooned our cousins from Iowa with us, when the horses had to pull their car from the Alvin Dokken farm. That farm seemed to be kind of a jinx for us because many years later, when Doris tried to get home with Diann and some of her friends from bible school, that was where they got stalled too.

The advent of television happened for our fan in 1949. Of course, Orven purchased one of the first in the neighbourhood. It seemed very strange to have everyone sitting around watching TV, when neighbours came visiting. They were completely spellbound by TV, hardly conversing at all. The roller derbies weren't all that exciting, but they even sat around watching those. TV was a great improvement over Radio, especially for farmers because we didn't have to drive somewhere for entertainment. We actually quit field work for some of the major events, such as the world series. The TV naturally came from E.G. Clinton, as well as the next machine on the cutting edge of technology, an American corn drier. We were among the first farmers to start crop drying, beginning with crib drying, where ducts were placed in or on the side of cribs. Fortunately, we never burned up any corn cribs, which seemed a wonder considering all the sparks which blew into the air ducts. The scary thing about this was drying the crib, which was built in the granary, where the year's harvest of small grains was stored. Very little sleep was possible when that crib was being dried. We dried some shell.com and beans on a new type of wagon, which had a screened floor, connected to the drier by a canvass duct. This drier and wagon were picked up the day after the State Fair closed, being demonstrators there. When Orven arrived home, he found out that he was a Grandfather, because Cheryl, LaDonna Van Horn's daughter was born that day. Cheryl was the first of the next generation to live on the farm. After a few months Orven helped drive them to Edmonton, where her father, Ralph Van Horn, met them. Ralph was flying in Alaska, as an Air Force bush pilot at the time. LaDonna was an Air Force nurse for a year before they were married. After they returned from Alaska, they acquired a German Shepherd dog, which they decided to leave at the farm. He showed promise of being the best cattle dog we ever had. Orven had him trained to chase the cow herd wherever he wanted them to go. This worked fine, until one day when the cows formed a circle around him. They ran in circles, tightening it up to the point where "Straus" was about to get trampled. Orven could never figure out how that dog got out of there without getting injured. It was the end of his cow herding though, never going near them again. Farm dogs were an important part of the life on the farm. Living in the country, they provided much of our companionship through the years. "Nibs" was reputed to be the best dog that lived on the farm. One time he drove a mad bull so hard, he ended up jumping in the water tank, which did wreck the cover. The bull did timidly enter the barn when he got out. Unfortunately, he had to be put down in the prime of life because he began foaming in the mouth, a sure sign of rabies. Years later we learned that worms could cause these same symptoms. The dog history began with a bulldog at the time of the move from Iowa, ending with a beautiful Norwegian Elkhound, who seemed to have an affinity for rat poison. He overdosed on that enough to eventually die from cancer, which put an end to his great hunting career. "Peggy" was another well-loved house dog, who had to have an eye removed when a salesman ran over her. We bought one of Palmer Sandenoe's collies, a very good cattle dog. Orven complained about something the dog didn't do right to Palmer. He always had an answer ready, so he told Orven, you have to be smarter than the dog to train it. "Stanley" was running over by a school bus traveling at high speed. We were sure he was dead, because he didn't move for a long time, but bouncing around in the pickup on the ride home seemed to revive him. Being part wolf, he made a good watchdog, because nobody could figure him out, as he stood peeking around the corner of buildings, when visitors came. He was somewhat retarded from his accident, much more afraid of people than they were of him. "Coco" was a collie we bought

from David Aase, who had the misfortune of losing a leg to the hay mower. He was a perfect dog for taking care of children, as well as herding cattle. There were too many dogs to include all of them here, but they were well loved and deeply missed.

In 1953, I became the second Walker from the farm to leave for the Army, during war time or police action in Korea, as it was called. I was in basic training in Virginia when the armistice ended the Korean War. Orven hired Miles Brekke to fill in as hired man. Since he was a town kid, he required lots of training. His father, Eddie Brekke and his crew shingled the barn that spring, 43 years after it was built.

Another cutting-edge of farming technology was tried that summer, with chopped hay being formed into a round stack with a centre duct to dry the stack with artificial heat. It turned out to be far too expensive an idea but produced some of the finest hay ever put up on the farm. The next winter the new weed-chopping electric fencer started the stack on fire. Orven and Leda managed to get the fire out, without calling the fire dept. by carrying water in pails, also by working the hardest they could remember in their lives. It was not a good winter, because they got the Dodge car smashed up on the way to Faribault, by a driver who went through a stop sign. In a few weeks, one of Orven's eyes had pressure build up in it, which caused him to lose his vision. When it continued to get worse, the Doctors decided it had to be removed. He had many complications with the operation, mostly blamed on cortisone treatments, used to cure arthritis. He was hospitalized for a long time, well into the time for spring work. Bud Houglum and Gordy Richardson helped plant the small grains that spring, with Orven doing some of the planting with the grain drill, which was pulled behind the disk. It was another of his inventions that worked well. Since the Korean War was over by this time, he was able to get me home from the Army on a hardship leave to plant the corn and beans, also another leave to do the haying. I was a helicopter mechanic, which were about a dime a dozen after the shooting stopped, with no wounded to fly to the M.A.S.H. hospitals. Later that summer I came home on a hardship discharge after Orven continued to have complications from the surgery. I went back to farming on shares again.

After the fall work was done, we started doing commercial corn drying that winter. Since the corn hadn't dried that year, we shelled corn for neighbours, so it could be dried on our drier wagons. After a while we bought trucks to dry with, which saved the work of unloading it; however, we spent much of the winter trying to shovel corn out of cribs which often sat in frozen mud. We also bought a truck from a junk yard with which we hauled corn to elevators in Minneapolis. We bought corn from the elevator, because it was cheap, for the Kenyon elevator didn't have a corn dryer.

We tried another new innovation during the next year, when it was unusually wet. We bought halftracks for the Moline U tractor which got us through lots of mud but backfired when a track slid off right in the worst mud hole on the farm, causing a very bad day. Orven was used to fighting the mud with all his energy, usually getting stuck at least once each spring. The worst occurrence happened when the platform on the KT Moline settled a foot below the ground surface, requiring all the horses and tractors on the farm to fish it out. He did manage to get some of the neighbours awfully excited though, by starting so early. One of them would head down the road to his other farm about the same hour Orven started field work. These neighbours usually spent some time in the mud too.

Farming was undergoing many changes during these years, with a rotation of corn and beans becoming the mainstay of the operation. We began using increased amounts of fertilizer, especially Nitrogen applications. The planters couldn't apply all the fertilizer, so we had to spread it on by broadcasting. Corn yields were topping out in the 100-bu. range. The increased fertility caused another major problem. More and bigger weeds. They got so vigorous, we often cultivated corn five times, when we checked it in with wire. We could not cultivate across the rows when it was checked good enough. The weed problems caused the advent of herbicides (weed sprays), which began with 2 4D. Orven was one of the first farmers in the area to spray crops, beginning with a commercial operator, who used the wrong 2 4D on twenty acres of oats. It raised a great crop of straw, but hardly any grain. In a short time, he and a group of neighbours purchased a mounted sprayer, which they used with better success. Atrazine soon came on the scene, allowing us to kill all the grasses in the corn rows. We built barrel mounts on the tractor, in front of the driver, to apply it during planting. In rough fields the mixture always seemed to splash out on the driver, however we were quite cavalier about it, never hearing many warnings. We went through many transitions of applications through the years, such as granular and fertilizer

incorporation. The last years we farmed, there were still problems, like a certain neighbour who zapped our soybeans every year, with his drifting bevel spray.

I continued to farm on shares, finding time in the off season of 1956 to get married to Doris Fretham, who grew up on a farm near Waseca. She knew much of what you needed to know about farming, as well as how to do beautician work. Like her predecessors, she was a great gardener, housekeeper, and mother. Many of the things we accomplished on the farm, were attributable to her help and optimism, as well as her ability to put up with many hardships.

Orven was happy to leave the farm, so Orven and Leda moved to Kenyon. Orven, like his father offered to sell the farm to us as soon as we got our machinery paid for. Due to some good years, this happened in 1958, making I and Doris the third generation of Walker owners. We began to buy the farm on a contract for deed. Farm prices had doubled since 1944, making a mortgage of \$40,000. We continued with about the same farming operation, except concentrating more on hog production. The beef cow operation continued to grow, peaking out at 75 head of cows some years. We didn't have much luck in the poultry enterprise because the hens began keeling over faster than you could count. It was diagnosed as cholera, so we steamed out the henhouse thoroughly. The next year it happened again, only they seemed to drop even faster. We didn't raise any more chickens. It meant the end of personal income for Doris, so she soon decided to start a beauty shop in the east room of the house. Considering our location, she did fairly well with the shop, especially with the Moland trade. It had certain drawbacks, like the ladies backing into the only snow drift left on the yard, on bad hair days.

Doris always drove the tractor on the baler during the haying season, which interfered with the beauty shop at times. Haying season was an important part of our year because of the number of cattle we fed. we usually hired High School boys to run our hay hoist at the barn. Jerry Olson and David Arneson usually ran the hoist. After some practice they could unload fast enough to keep the baler going. One year when Henry Richardson was stacking bales on the hay wagon, Doris happened to get the tractor in road gear by mistake. Looking back before she stopped, she saw Henry bouncing around so violently, which caused her to laugh so hard, it took even longer to stop. Fortunately, Henry didn't fall off the wagon, at that time. Although the next fall after Henry painted the machine shed, many beer cans bounced out of the straw rack of the combine when I started it up. Henry was Leda's brother who worked for us on different occasions. He played in the Army band during World War I, as well as managing the Kenyon the Kenyon baseball team, where he was at the beginning of a triple play, at shortstop.

About this same time, the town board decided to build a new road where the old shady lane on the south side of the farm was located. For some unknown reason, this trail was called the Sioux Line, hence the book name, because the Walkers did move above it. We don't know how this road got it's name. The old road was a wonderful place for picnics, cooling the horses in the shade of the large cottonwood trees, or simply pheasant hunting. There was a large rock right in the middle of the road, which had the reputation of tearing holes in oil pans of low-slung cars. The road usually grew a nice crop of hay, so it was hard to see the rock. The new road doesn't begin to have the character of the Sioux Line, which was known best as a favourite parking place for young couples.

In 1960 the neighbours formed a group for the purpose of digging a drainage ditch, with us getting billed for one of the larger shares in it. We were assessed \$3000, which seemed like lots of money at that time. Blanket type tiling was required to get much good from the ditch, so before long we began getting the worst areas of the farm tiled. All of the tile lines we added were paralleled with the old lines which were still working fine. We hired Bob Mollenhauer to do the digging, using tile from Sheffield Iowa, unluckily it happened to be one of the wettest years in history. One of the simpler sorts of workers always remarked, "it's wet, man it's wet", any time he found anyone to listen to him. It was so wet Bob had to string the tile by pulling a wagon with his tracked back-hoe. The new tile made farming much better, due to timelier planting and harvesting. I tried another fly by night scheme during the time we were getting the tiling done. Arvid Boy-um found a used Buckeye tiling machine and backhoe, which seemed like a fantastic opportunity. Of course, we bought half share in it, believing it could lower our tiling expense down to rock bottom. Arvid ran into a rock bottom at his farm, which pretty well demolished the Buckeye. After some rebuilding, we managed to dig in enough tile to pay off the price of the machine. It was a learning experience though. Larry Helland, Lloyd's son, worked for us during the spring we tiled. A new type of tiling came on the scene about this time, using a plough pulled by a large tractor or caterpillar.

This brought the price of tiling down to the point it didn't pay to use the old diggers anymore. We still have a slightly used Buckeye tiler for sale. One bad side effect of the tiling was the fact that our land was too valuable to continue grazing the pastures as we had done in the past. Orven was selling MC choppers for the E. G. Clinton company, so we bought one to green chop the hay on wagons which the cows constantly emptied.

Running the cows on pasture during rainy weather looked awfully good at times. Many of the more efficient methods made farming more hectic, as well as time consuming.

We built two pole sheds, one east and south of the barn for cows, with the other one east of the house for dry corn storage and machinery. We hired the Bauers to build the cow shed, also a 56-foot 5000 bu. double corn crib, which was built west of the grove to get more wind for corn drying. They were both built with oak lumber which we had sawed from Doris' home farm near Waseca. We hired a portable sawmill which was moved to the woods, sawing 26,000 board feet of lumber during the preceding winter. It all had to be hauled home to be stacked and dried, by placing strips between each board. The crib speeded up corn picking because artificial corn drying was quite slow, using the small driers of that era. The number of cattle we were raising, required lots of ear corn for feed, so the other cribs weren't large enough at this time.

The Henry Bauer construction crew were the only carpenter crew who worked with oak lumber in our area. Orven happened to remark about the difficulty of getting nails through the oak lumber after it was dried. When Laurence Bauer heard this, he picked up an old bent nail from the ground, which he straightened. Unbelievably he nonchalantly hammered it through two inches of oak, which had dried for more than a year. Orven told this story to many people over the years, but the funniest part of this story, was years later, when Laurence admitted to me, he had never been more surprised in his life, than the time that nail didn't bend. We were still using oak lumber many years later, when we built the corn storage shed, at which time all the nail holes had to be drilled. Both sheds were constructed with at least one row of poles on the inside because Bob Brotzell (LaDonna's husband) talked about sheds built to that plan in Dakota, where supposedly they never blew down.

The old steel silo was nearly rusted through about this time, so while finishing the filling I noticed while levelling in the top of the silo, the silage was starting to blow over the roof. Looking down I noticed the silo was buckling in the middle, causing it to tip out over the men working by the blower. I beat a very hasty retreat to the ground, where they barely got the wagon out of the way before the silo came down on top of the blower. Amos Stolee and Jordan Walker were the men working by the blower, so if the silo had tipped a few seconds sooner, it would have wiped out all of John Walker's grandsons who were farming in the Kenyon area, at that time. I had nightmares of the moment I saw the break in the silo for weeks afterward, as well as sore arms from that trip down the ladder in record time. I remembered that Alfred Helland said it took quite some time for his similar silo to tip over. Fortunately, I didn't try riding down with the silo, because the roof exploded as it impacted the ground. Jordan, who lived across the road also had a steel silo built the same year as ours, which he wisely decided to fill only partially afterwards. A new silo had to be built before the next season, which was a Rochester 50x16 size. It included a silo unloader, which was one of the best labour savers ever used on the farm. We chose a new location east of the barn, to better elevate silage to a bunk on the cement slab east of the barn, where a corral and feed bunk had been built. Our son, Jerry and I tried artificial inseminating in a chute at the end of this corral, with the untamed cows trying to jump over everything, including ourselves. We soon decided to forget that enterprise, because it seemed too much like a rodeo, with the cows winning most of the time. Wayne and Jerry were raising beef calves for 4-H at the time without much success, so calves from the exotic breeds could have helped that enterprise. The training of calves was usually postponed until the last weeks before the county fair because it was a busy time of year. We had to tie their halters to a tractor to teach them to lead because they were so large by this time. Each year the judges seemed to have a favourite breed other than Herefords, which seemed unfair after all the effort the boys put into it. By the time we had crossbred calves, the older boys were working at other jobs during Fair time. We did raise a few calves as bulls for our own use, of which "Old Red" (Norwegian) was most notorious.

We began another enterprise of a rather dubious nature soon after this, by purchasing Doris' home farm in Waseca. Orven and Leda moved to the farm, doing much of the farming there. The distance of 34

miles was a big handicap, although many times we could work one farm when the other one was too wet. After a fall when it never seemed to quit raining, we decided to stop farming there, but continued to pasture cattle there each summer. This operation had a few problems too, such as the year the end gate came loose on the truck, causing most of the cows to jump out. They all had the same idea, to head straight back to Waseca, where they thought their calves were. Fortunately, we were close to home, so we were able to get them home, with some of the neighbours helping us. The only noticeable effect of the drop from the truck while it was moving, was an umbilical cord on one of the calves born the next spring, which was twisted many times.

Our four sons, Wayne, Jerry, John, and Richard were active in the farm operation in the coming years, with Dianne helping in the house, plus some chores. They had to take their turn at the farm work, because they each seemed to find better paying jobs during the summer, as soon as they were old enough. After graduation they all left for school or college, which worked fairly well until the last one, Rich left. Wayne had a very close call, when the steering went out on a tractor running at top speed on the road from the Helland farm, which we farmed together with the home farm. Luckily, the tractor didn't turn over as it went into the ditch, because it had a heavy stacker behind it which could have caused serious injuries. Jerry had a close call during a sudden thunderstorm when a bolt of lightning jumped from a wire, he was holding to a steel post, a foot away. We feel very blessed that they didn't suffer any permanent injuries considering all the hazards involved with farming, especially the wild cattle. One angus cow really went berserk over her new calves, actually worse than a mad bull.

The greatest labour-saving machine was bought about this time, a combine with a corn head, which made it possible to pick and shell corn about four times faster than before. It was a well-used 151 McCormick self-propelled. We preserved wet corn by pickling it in acid, which worked well, using the old cottonwood granary for storage. Pickled corn had the advantage of being dust-free when ground, as well as being much faster to process than drying. Wheat made a comeback during these years, with the government allowing unlimited acreage. Soon the market was flooded, causing an end to that enterprise.

We had another substantial expense during this time, when our well went dry. Lars Otterness warned John about the well, because he caught the well driller using some cheap casings. We discovered he was correct when the side of the casing collapsed. Many trips were made to Kenyon to haul water, because the drillers were complicated by cave-ins when they drilled. They drilled 430 feet to enter a vein which wasn't likely to be polluted in the future. The water in a vein closer to the surface was better at that time, although chemicals are now leaching slowly downward. They dug up a tar-like substance before they finished, so drilling deeper may get interesting someday. An oil exploration team went along the road by the farm with echo resonating equipment, shortly afterwards, so who knows what is down there. Water on the farm is always taken for granted until one doesn't have it, because the cows seem to get extremely thirsty when the water is hauled.

After finishing a home study course on TV repair, a TV repair shop in Kenyon came up for sale. I bought the shop, being quite ignorant of the operation, hardly knowing how to get the back off a TV at the time. The TV business did expand to the point where there was less time for farming. Our sons and Orven did a great deal of the work at this time, or probably most of it, if they tell it. Orven commuted from their home in Waseca, where he cared for the cows pastured there. A larger corn drier, a storage bin and storage shed were added to the farming operation.

Farming took another turn towards prosperity about this time, so we found a buyer for the T V store, concentrating on full-time farming again. We began renting the Helland farm, until a few years later, when it came up for sale, at which time we traded the Waseca farm for it. Farming expenses were increasing faster than the income, so it was necessary to expand or get out of it. A Hesston stacker to provide feed for the beef herd was another new machine which saved lots of work as well as enabling the addition of more cows on fewer acres. The first year we owned the stacker happened to be a perfect year to do custom work, so it more than paid for itself the first year. We needed one stack each day on our own farm during the winter, causing a work to overload each fall. Before long we added a Farmall 1456 tractor, five bottom plough, 22-foot tillage equipment and New Holland 72 Axial Flow combine, with a six row corn head to the inventory. The first year our Grandfather, John farmed, he ploughed with a walking plough. The advances in farm equipment were mind boggling during those years, also the investment to start farming increased tremendously. We usually bought used equipment, which often

needed repairs to hold our costs down during these years. The N H combine cost about 1/4 of the new price.

Farming seemed rather boring after working at what I considered more challenging vocations, so I began working as a factory electrician, which necessitated another change in the operation. Wayne had just graduated with a degree in Ag. Engineering Technology, so he became the next Walker to rent the farm, starting in 1982. After a few years he bought a trailer to live in, which he connected to all the utilities, locating it east of the house. He lived there with his wife Julie for a few years before moving to the farmhouse when we moved to Faribault in 1989. Julie soon learned to drive tractors and feed animals, even though she grew up in South Minneapolis. She was a great help to Wayne, these wives had to be special people, just to put up with the long hours, lack of spending money and abundance of dirt, which were some of the drawbacks of farming.

Wayne began a new type of farming called ridge tilling, which eliminated ploughing, also most of the trips over the field, preparing seedbeds. Nitrogen fertilizer and herbicides were applied with the cultivator, all of which brought the production costs down. It required good management to get good yields, which he did, being the first Walker to win an award in the MN. State Corn Growers yield contest, where he came in second in his division. Corn yields were beginning to reach near the 200 bu. per acre range by this time. He farmed with probably the most modern equipment of any of the farm operators, much of which was necessary for ridge tilling. A new Deutz tractor was one of the new machines, which had such a comfortable cab, Julie sometimes rode along because it had the only air-conditioning on the farm at that time. The ridging of the fields caused the water to stand in each ridge after heavy rains. This problem necessitated still better drainage, so the rest of the farms was blanket tiled. Even the high ground had to be tiled, which wasn't all that bad an idea, because there were years when we had been stuck on what we considered the hills, so it was quite an improvement. Having drier fields to begin farming after the rain made it possible to farm more acres of wet land. He rented 80 acres from Herbert Houglum, which was so wet it actually drowned out the weeds at times. He rented the 160-acre Magee farm, as well as running the Helland farm. Wayne continued farming with a corn and bean rotation, as well as raising hay for sale to dairymen. The pole shed which had been built for long-term corn storage was filled with corn each year, as well as the granary and bin, with beans. The volume of corn raised on the farms was up about 12 times the amount that was raised on the farm in the 30's, back when John built a third corn crib to make it unnecessary to build temporary cribs. The elevators sent the semitrailers out to the farms to pick the corn up, which was a great time-saver, compared to hauling all the grain to town. Julie was often able to load a semi, by starting up the augers, when the bins were full. Quite a contrast to the days when grain was hauled to town in wagon boxes, pulled by horses. A job which took John most of the winter. Small grains, which were the main crop until the 50's had nearly vanished from the scene by this time. The large volume of grain did cause certain logistical problems, such as one bad day when a gravity wagon lost a wheel causing it to overturn in the field. While turning on the approach to the road, Doris cut too close to the edge, causing that trailer to stand on edge that same day. It took a half a day to get it all cleaned up, not a good way to spend time, when it could be the last good day of the fall. Another time a city driver, hauling two large gravity wagons, went to sleep, spilling about 700 bushels of corn in the ditch, also damaging the wagons severely. This happened immediately after I commented on what a great, slow driver he was. The problem was, he went so slow, he fell asleep. I don't recall any more city drivers doing that job.

Grain prices were often depressed during these years, but there was a good demand for top quality hay, which he produced successfully.

Wayne decided to start working at McNeilius Industries in Dodge Center, also traveling over many western states, with the company. He worked with parts operations, wherever they needed him in the U.S. He farmed the corn acreage that year, while I did the bean acreage. It was a busy year, although the crops turned out well.

The next operator was Bruce Hill who farmed in 1987, which turned out to be probably as dry as the dust bowl years. The farming practices had improved so much since the 1930's, that the crop wasn't a complete disaster. Bruce continued farming with ridge tillage, which conserved the moisture, because they planted on ridges that only had the tops of the ridge scraped immediately in front of the planter. Bruce had farmed the former Walker farm across the road which his father owned, as well as other

farms, starting at Hope, MN, extending to the Walker farms in previous years. The Hills constructed a large grain storage operation on the former Jordan Walker farm, which was an efficient operation. Annie, Bruce's wife was a great help to him, even combining corn, with their baby riding along in the cab. Both Bruce and Tom, his father, decided to quit farming after that dry year.

Wayne decided to farm the next year, after finding McNeilius was not a good place to work. To make better use of the off time, we converted the barn to a shop. A new ceiling and large door were installed by Haven Bauer's crew, with Wayne doing most of the insulation. The shop was large enough to drive 8 row equipment in, since larger farming operations often caused late season repairs, warm shops were almost a necessity. The last frost in the spring of 1992 occurred on June 21, which did lots of damage to crops, especially on lower ground. In the fall the frost came early, after a very cold summer, causing more losses with immature crops. An eruption of a volcano in Asia was blamed for the unusual weather patterns of these years. Wayne graduated from VO-Tech. at Eden Prairie, which he attended part time, when he wasn't too busy farming. He was the top Hydraulics student in the state in 1992, so of course he found greener pastures, going to work for Fauver Hydraulics in Eden Prairie. He spent a busy fall, doing the fall harvesting, while commuting to work each day.

Leda passed away in Apr. 29, 1989, after a lingering illness. Orven died on July 8, 1993 of congestive heart failure. They both led active and productive lives until the last few years, traveling to AZ for 5 months each winter. Orven worked on the green thumb crew and Leda did lots of crocheting and good cooking during the summer. They were fine Christian witnesses, with many friends, all over the U.S.

I retired from Truth Hardware in Owatonna in Oct. 1993, after spending a hectic spring and summer farming during vacation time. I continued farming through 1995, commuting from Faribault to the farm. I continued with ridge till farming, with Wayne helping after his work hours. The dust from the volcano was still floating around in the atmosphere during 1993, causing another early frost. The corn looked like corn flakes after drying, just like the year before, so most of it was hauled to the elevator in Kenyon for feeding purposes. The next years were much better, with good yields, also the prices turned around, climbing to all-time levels for corn, at \$4.00 per bushel. We still stored most of the corn in the pole shed, which was more work to unload than I cared to continue with. It seemed like a good time to quit, while we were still ahead, so we did.

We sold most of the machinery in 1997 on an auction, by Matt Maring, with Wayne and myself having about an equal share in the proceeds. Most of the junk machinery was never claimed by the buyer, so we still have a large pile of that. I kept 5 tractors, a 1935 Ford 1 1/2-ton truck and a 1949 Plymouth. Some day they might be restored if we ever get around to it.

Wayne and family continue to live in the house, having purchased the house, with some acreage. The house is in the process of being completely rebuilt. New plumbing, electric wiring, hot air heating system, kitchen cabinets, windows, insulation, sheetrock, perimeter drainage and probably a few things I forgot to mention are being installed.

The Lurkin brothers rented the land for cash rent, continuing to farm it at the present time. They farm with large machinery, planting and harvesting the beans and corn they raise, spending only a few days each year doing the field work. The newer types of herbicides, hybrids, and financing, along with very large machines make this all possible. In spite of the large acreages, the crops and yields are better, as well as cleaner than they were in the past.

I think the part of farming I would miss the most today, is the opportunity to work together with our family, where we all learned a great deal. We also seemed to learn to quit farming, with each generation quitting at a younger age. Maybe, someday, who knows, stranger things have happened than the Walkers farming again.