

1865. When they started for the west, father had not made up his mind where he would locate, but thought Minnesota was the best. We came with an ox team, in a covered wagon, and were more than three weeks on the road. We had a cow hitched by a rope to the hind part of the wagon.

We had traveled about 50 miles when we met a man also in a covered wagon who asked father where he was bound for. Father said Minnesota. Said the man, "I would advise you to turn back. Minnesota is in a dreadful way. Why, it rains all the time so that people cannot sow or reap. If one man does succeed in getting in a crop, he can't harvest it on account of the rain; rain and fog. The sun very seldom shines, hay won't cure, and the people are starving, actually eating corncobs and gophers." Well, the man said so much that father turned back, but soon formed an opinion that the man was a 'talker' so turned back on the journey.

We drove over the 'dividing ridge,' a very bad climb. There was a man who lived at the foot of the hill, and who kept teams to help people up the hill, but father did not know it and so started up, got up a few rods and saw it was going to be a very hard pull and so taking the cow off the wagon, gave the rope to sister Susan and told mother to take us all and go ahead of the team and get a good start before he started. Well, he started and had to do a great deal of goading (goad, a pointed wooden stick to make an ox move faster) and shouting to get the oxen to the top of the hill. The oxen were badly frightened and so was my father, but to stop meant ruin, possibly death for the team at least, for on the left was a sheer precipice of several hundred feet, and only about three or four feet between them and it! But at last the top was gained. But as soon as gained, the oxen dropped down exhausted. Father let them rest, then hauled the wagon out in the woods and we camped there four days.

The woods were red with wild strawberries which we children soon gathered enough to make a berrie shortcake, of which we had plenty while we were there. The cow yielded us enough milk and cream to supply all our simple wants. Mother had an old fashioned covered iron baker with a long handle that she baked corn meal cakes and did all kinds of cooking in. They would build a fire of hardwood, get a bed of coals and hot ashes in which they buried the baker, and when they took it out, whatever was in it was baked to perfection. Sometimes when we camped overnight, mother would fill it with beans and pork and it would be all baked for our breakfast. You see, beans tasted pretty fine for a 5 o'clock breakfast after sleeping in the pine or oak woods in a wagon.

At about that time some of the Sioux Indians were on the warpath, which made mother very nervous and father would sleep outside on the grass for a bed with his gun beside him. But we did not see or hear of Indians on the road but once. We passed some camped beside the road getting their evening meal. Most of