

STEVENS COUNTY, AND PROSPERITY OF ITS PEOPLE

Stevens county lies in the western and south central part of the state, thirty miles, at an average distance, from the South Dakota boundary. Its location is in the southern portion of the great and renowned valley of the Red River of the North, the famous wheat growing district of America. The county has an area of sixteen townships, or 368,640 acres, and of this large extent perhaps not more than a thousand acres is not tillable.

The value of the territory now included in Stevens county was early known and appreciated, and the county itself was created by the legislature of 1852. It was, however, not completely organized until 1871, having, in the meanwhile, been attached for legal purposes to Pope county. The completion of the old St. Paul & Pacific railroad—now the Great Northern—through the county and the regular running of its trains to Morris in August, 1871, gave great impetus and influence to the immigration into and development of the country, and brought about the long delayed political organization. The county was named in honor of Hon. John H. Stevens, a prominent Minnesota pioneer, who was one of the founders of Minneapolis, and who died in that city, full of years and honors, a few years since. The counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Pope and Stevens were all organized from Pierce county between 1850 and 1870. The population of Stevens county in 1870 was but 174; in 1900 it was 8,721, or about 17 persons to the square mile.

There were in 1900, according to the assessors' books, 345,728 acres of land in the county, exclusive of town lots, and the taxable value of the farming land—about one-third of its real value—was \$2,821,102. The taxable value of the town and city lots, including buildings thereon, was \$447,762. The total taxable value of all the property, real and personal, was \$3,268,864. These figures indicate very fairly the condition of this little county within thirty years of its real and actual settlement proper.

And within this period of thirty years Stevens county has reached an extraordinary state of development. From a naked plain, virgin as when the Creator made it and "saw that it was good," the country has attained to the conditions which some of the older states have been a century and a half to attain. It is a county in even Pennsylvania and Indiana and Illinois far behind Stevens county in the particulars of development and general improvement.

This county has the magnificent natural advantages of its best sister counties, and is one of the most productive localities in the Northwest. As has been said, the soil is almost all susceptible of cultivation, and produces abundantly. In 1902 there were about 75,000 acres of wheat harvested in the county, and the yield was more than 1,200,000 bushels. Wheat is the principal crop and the chief article of export, although oats, flax, rye, barley, corn, potatoes and tame grasses, as well as all sorts of vegetables, grow to perfection and are largely cultivated. Originally, or forty years ago, Stevens county was a great natural meadow, closed in by a belt of timber, with a most luxuriant growth of grass and herbage, making a fine buffalo and deer range, and adapting the country to the growth of wheat, oats and other cereals. The country now is a rich and fertile, recent state fair, taking fourth place among the twelve counties making exhibits.

The surface of Stevens county is made up of rolling prairie and the drainage is almost perfect. The Pamme de Terre river flows through the county from the southwest, furnishing several water power privileges and opportunities, some of which have been improved. The affluent creeks of the Pamme de Terre and tributary lakes furnish the water power of pure water for live stock and ample drainage for the land. There are numerous small and beautiful lakes scattered over the county, and fish abound at the proper seasons in fish and fowl. This is a favorite region of Northwestern sportsmen for shooting, fishing and hunting.

As a result of the industries and intelligent cultivation of the fine, fertile soil of Stevens county for twenty years, and in many instances for half the time, scores of farmers have become wealthy, or what is generally termed, well-to-do, and are living practically in retirement. The little hamlets and villages, all that date from 1870, 1875 and 1880, have given place to the attractive and comfortable farm mansions, with their accompaniments of big barns, commodious residences, filled granaries and cribs, large and ample groves, and all the other adjuncts of advanced rural civilization. The early settlers had rough experiences for a few years after settling in this county, but in an incredibly short time they had overcome every obstacle in their way to prosperity, and in comparatively a few years had acquired a comfortable and splendid work. It is a fact that the general condition of Stevens county today, within practically thirty years of its first settlement, is fully equal to many counties in Eastern and Southern states more than a hundred years old, and in many instances to some of them. This swift achievement, due, of course, to the favorable conditions in the county, of a fertile soil, an abundance of good water and near-by markets.

The next twenty-five years will show more progress and development here than the past forty years, indeed, will be the farmer who buys a Stevens county farm within the next year and "hangs on" to it for at least ten years. A good Stevens county farm is more valuable now than the average New York or Ohio farm, and, as a rule, far larger.

As a ground to be inspected by home seekers, Stevens county ought not to be overlooked. A recent article in the Hancock Record, one of the county's best and most enterprising newspapers, thus presents the situation of many a home hunter, and of the advantages offered by Stevens county. It is a fact, as the article says, that one of the greatest desires of the human heart is to own a home, yet how few of the millions of our land own the roof that shelters them, and yet the fault is not theirs, but of the Eastern and Central portions of our land thousands are looking with disinterested faces at the unsatisfactory and unsettled condition of affairs, and the despondent prospects for the future. In all other communities of the East all trades are overcrowded, and existing avenues are taking the place of a growing family and the prospect of a pleasant home and a prosperous future for his children give rise to many gloomy reflections.

Many a man has seen the chosen home of his early manhood develop from a wilderness through all the stages of modern progress, has helped to organize society, build churches, schools and factories; has seen one door after another open and new ideas take the place of the old order, and as the man of fifty years of age allows his memory to turn in retrospective view, remembrances awake with his busy brain, and he is dumb with amazement to think that his brief span of life has seen so wonderful a transition. And with such thoughts will come others. Is there yet left a place, a country, where the development of an empire will give to a coming generation a field for successful effort, where it is not too late to lay for his children the foundation of prosperity and comfort?

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The three banks are strong and valuable institutions. The oldest is the Stevens County bank. The president is H. H. Wells, of the mercantile firm of Wells, Hanson & Co.; the vice president, L. E. Pease, an old settler of Stevens county, and the cashier is William F. Cooley.

The Morris National bank was organized about a year since, with a capital of \$25,000. D. J. Stewart and F. R. Putnam, formerly of Mason City, Iowa, are respectively president and cashier of this bank, and the directory consists of some of the best known high standing.

The Citizens' bank has been in existence for seven years. It has a capital of \$20,000, with a surplus of \$5,000. The president is Harold Thorson, of Elbow Lake; the vice president is Chrest H. Raifer, of Alexandria; the cashier is S. A. Stewart, of Morris. The other directors are H. L. Ickler, of St. Paul, and N. A. Nilson, all individually and collectively responsible.

The Grove department store is a

Hamsey, Eddy, Foster and Ransom, of the North Dakota, and in Canada.

The Thomson Bros. and Land Co. company, which deals in Minnesota, North Dakota and Canadian lands, has organized four years ago. The members, H. E. and H. J. Thomson, are old residents of Stevens county. Their father, Hon. Thomas Thomson, came to the county in 1857, and was the pioneer clerk of the courts for several years.

S. J. Stebbins, dealer in groceries and hardware, and who conducts a plumbing, heating and gas fitting connection with his mercantile business, came to Morris in 1886. He has been highly successful in his business and a prominent member of the state.

The Morris City Mills, S. Stewart proprietor, is an important factor among the business interests of Morris. The mills make a specialty of hard wood lumber, and their brands of "New Gold," "Silver Leaf" and "White Pine" have a wide and deserved reputation. The mills were established twenty-five years ago. Mr. Stewart owns elevators and operates an electric power plant at Morris. He is one of the active and energetic citizens of the county.

The firm of Kerl & Watzke, which conducts a blacksmithing, horsehoesing and plow shop deserves mention, not only for its success in business but for the personnel of its members. It has been in business for twenty-five years. Mr. Kerl has been a member of the local board of aldermen for two years, and Mr. Watzke was a member of the board for two years and for two terms was mayor of Morris.

H. B. Lund, dealer in jewelry, silverware and sewing machines, has been in business in Morris for twenty years. During this period he has been three times elected alderman.

Carl J. Jacobson, harnessmaker and dealer in harness, was born in Stevens county thirty-five years ago, and has resided in the county all of his life. He has been engaged in business for eleven years. His shop is a model of its kind, and he carries a typical, industrious young Minnesota.

The Morris steam laundry, James Thompson proprietor, is one of the oldest in the county. It is in the middle of its capacity and satisfactory in its operation. The present proprietor, James Thompson, established six years ago. D. S. Long, the junior member, has served two terms as alderman and is the present mayor of Morris. His partner is energetic citizen.

Another member of the town council who is engaged in an honorable vocation is George M. Long, sign painter, and an artist of rare ability.

W. L. Colver, a licensed embalmer and undertaker, has been in Morris for five years, and is one of the oldest in experience among the business men.

J. F. Donovan has a large and well appointed livery stable, with some fine and good horses.

Coming to Morris in 1880, J. J. Calney has conducted a meat market for twenty years, and is a remarkably successful in his business operations.

Nilson, Hanson & Co., is an incorporated concern dealing in general merchandise, and carries large quantities of the Postoffice block in Morris, and is also known as Spooner's Glass Block. The manager of the business is N. A. Hanson, formerly of Forest City, Iowa, who has been in the county since he was a boy. Under his control the business of the store has grown extensively. The company has a thorough knowledge of the business, and is complete in every department, and carries liberal advertisements, and carry modern city methods into their business.

George Dorgan, the leading hotel in Morris; it was opened July 10, 1902, and the building is therefore new and modern in style and equipment.

Joe Dorgan, the manager of the Leaning Tower, has a large and superior lot, and an all around good fellow besides. He is a well known horseman and the owner of Legal Boy, a trotter, and a number of other horses, and is a local celebrity.

The Stevens County Telephone company is a corporation of much service to the county. Dr. H. L. Hubbard is the president. The company has exchanges at Morris, Hancock and Chokio.

Among the most influential men in the town, and in the development of the town of Morris and Stevens county has been Hon. L. C. Spooner, a business man and attorney, well known throughout the state. He owns the block and opera house, the Spooner block, and has done much else for his home town and county. With men of his character and disposition, it is hard to see how it cannot fall to become prosperous. Mr. Spooner is an old resident of Minnesota. In 1875 he was principal of the public school at Lehigh, but returned to Morris in 1878, and engaged in the practice of law. He located in Morris in 1880, and has been almost phenomenally successful in his business undertakings. He owns land amounting to real estate, both in the town and country, and has always been liberal and enterprising in behalf of his home community.

The legal fraternity is well represented in Morris. Royal A. Stone is an old resident, having lived in Morris for twenty-seven years, and having been engaged in his profession for five years. He is known as a lawyer, and has been uniformly successful in his practice. James B. Ormond, the present city attorney of Morris, has had his office in Morris for four years. He is regarded as an efficient all-around attorney, and has a host of admiring friends.

Andrew Rowland, the present county commissioner of Stevens county, has an attractive and convenient office, and attends to making collections, farm loans, etc. He has complete abstracts of title to all real estate in the county, and is noted for prompt and correct handling of business. He has been twenty-six years a resident of Meeker county before coming to Morris. As secretary of the Commercial club he has made himself very popular and useful.

Dr. Amos Leach, recently from Rock Rapids, Iowa, is a successful practicing physician. He gives special attention to diseases of women and children, and is a member of the local board of health.

The saloons and sample rooms of Morris are all law-abiding, quiet and orderly, and reputationally conducted. The firm of Wm. J. Ross, of Morris, has been in the saloon business in Morris for twenty-eight years, and altogether has been a citizen of the town since 1870, or thirty-three years. Max Treu, who has been in the saloon business since 1870, and has conducted the Elk sample rooms in Morris for five years. James J. McCanney, who has been in the saloon business since 1871, and engaged in the saloon business since 1871, and Christopherson conducts what is called "Charlie's Place." The place is open day and night. There is a first-class restaurant and a billiard table. The establishment has been in operation for two years. Smith & Reardon's saloon was established three years ago, and is a model of its kind. F. Buckentin is the manager of the Morris branch of the Minneapolis Brewery company, and agent for the Golden Grain Belt beers. Mr. Buckentin has been engaged in business for nine years. Corey & Schuyler have been located in Morris but one year, but conduct a model and popular resort.

The town of Morris is well governed,

with many public improvements, all paid for and at a low rate of taxation. The present officials are as follows: D. S. Long, president of council; George Hogan, Dave Long, H. B. Lund and John House, councilmen; C. B. Burpee, recorder; Louis M. Larson, treasurer; J. B. Ormond, attorney; A. L. Stenger and J. C. Morrison, justices of the peace; Thor. Thomason, assessor; H. Clarke, street commissioner; Erick Peterson, marshal.

The problem of heating and lighting is an important one in every community. Electric light plants are to be found in every enterprising town. Morris has one, there are feeling here as elsewhere that gas can be made to do both—heating and lighting, or at least a good deal of both. The electric light plant only half solves the problem. Several towns in the state with electricity are now putting in gas. The gas plant can be operated economically after it is established, and there is no need to speak of that method. The gas system is one worthy of careful investigation by all of our Western towns.

The village of Chokio is situated on the Crown's Valley branch of the Great Northern railway, in the western part of Stevens county, near the Big Stone and Traverse county lines. The town is only about twelve years of age so far as population is concerned, but has a population of about 500, and is rapidly and substantially growing. Among its other business institutions Chokio has six grain elevators, a saw mill, a mill, a million bushels of wheat annually, two banks, two churches; a newspaper, the Stevens County Review, by Charles E. Seelye, etc.

In August, 1891, J. H. McNally built the first building and opened the first store on the town site of Chokio. The newly built railroad had not then built a platform at the station, and Mr. McNally was for a considerable time alone on the beautiful and wide prairie. He came first to the country in 1876, from Minneapolis, where he had been engaged in business.

The name of the town is a corruption of the Sioux Indian word Chokah-yah (accent on the second syllable), which means "the place where Long ago there was a claim shanty where the town now stands and this point was half way, or at the middle of the distance between Morris and Graceville. The Sioux word for reservation applied their word "cho-kah-ya" to the point and this became known to the whites, who mispronounced the word, however—it may be purposely for euphony's sake—calling it Cho-ki-o (accent on the second syllable), and when a name was sought for the new town, the Indian designation was chosen. It is upon the subject it may be well to say that cho-kah-ya is used by the Sioux only as an adjective, the word for middle in the form or office of a noun is "o-cho-kah-yah."

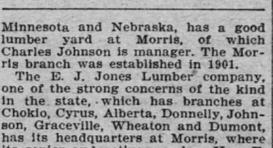
The tributary country to Chokio is rich and productive, and becoming more valuable every day. It is settled by an industrious and thrifty class of farmers, all of whom have prospered. The natural beauty of the country has been improved by its development, and the region itself is splendidly occupied and its advantages utilized. There are no finer and more attractive farms and farm lands anywhere than those adjoining the village of Chokio.

The stores and shops of Chokio are all creditable to the town and fully up to the times. They are modern in structure and appointment and their capacity is well tested by the business carried on within them.

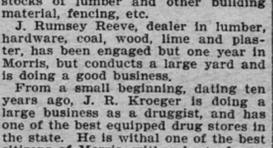
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The firm of Ness & Johnson, dealers

POSTOFFICE BLOCK, MORRIS, MINN.



STEVENS COUNTY COURT HOUSE, MORRIS, MINN.



Minnesota and Nebraska, has a good lumber yard, and in which Charles Johnson is manager. The Morris branch was established in 1901.

The E. J. Jones Lumber company, one of the strong concerns of the kind in the state, which has branches at Chokio, Cyrus, Alberta, Donnelly, Johnson, Graceville, Wheaton and Dumont, has its headquarters at Morris, where its senior and active member, E. J. Jones, formerly state senator, resides. The company carries large stocks of lumber and other building material, and is doing a good business.

J. Rumsey Reel, dealer in lumber, hardware, coal, wood, lime and plaster, has been engaged for one year in Morris, but conducts a large yard and is doing a good business.

From a small beginning, dating ten years ago, J. R. Kroeger is doing a large business as a druggist, and has one of the best equipped drug stores in the state. He is withal one of the best citizens of Morris, with a host of personal friends.

The firm of Hulburd & Johnson deals in drugs and stationery. Its members are Dr. H. L. Hulburd, the oldest practicing physician in Morris, and C. R. C. Johnson.

The recent appreciation of the value of Minnesota and Northwestern lands generally has influenced the location of several first-class land offices at Morris. The Minnesota, Dakota and Canadian Land company makes a specialty of Stevens county lands, but has extensive tracts elsewhere—rich land where corn grows, where nutritious grasses flourish and where nutritious plenty of pure water. The members of the company are John House, a member of the city council of Morris; C. B. Burpee, city recorder, and W. J. Dumble.

The Dreveskracht & Church Land company, which handles real estate, loans and insurance, was established three years ago, with the main office at Morris. The company has branches at Lakota, N. D., and Sioux Center, Iowa, and has lands in Stevens, Grant and Swift counties, Minnesota; Nelson,

Wells, of Morris. They occupy a fine double brick building and commodious warehouses, carry large stocks in their lines, are extensive shippers of cream, and own their own electric light plant. The local and long distance telephone exchange for Hancock is in their store. Maunum Brothers, dealers in general merchandise and millinery, came from Pope county to Hancock two years ago. Their establishment is virtually a department store, is well conducted and has been very successful.

The Stone-Stebbins company is an incorporated mercantile firm dealing in hardware, furniture, farm machinery, buggies, wagons, stoves, etc. It has been established in Hancock for five years. Its quarters are 28x140 feet in area, occupying two floors and a large basement. R. L. Stebbins, the junior member, is the son of a well known Methodist minister of the Southern Minnesota conference.

A very complete establishment is that of Nystren Brothers, of which H. Nystren is the manager. The firm are watchmakers and jewelers and deal in silverware, sewing machines, musical instruments, cameras, etc. The manager, Mr. H. Nystren came to Hancock four years ago from Mount Horeb, Wis., where he was once engaged in the jewelry trade.

Andrew Overstad, dealer in grain, fuel and farm implements, came to Hancock in 1888, and began business six years later. For three years he was in the hardware and implement business, then was a grain dealer and dealer in farm implements. This year built his present large elevator which is fully equipped according to the latest and best modern ideas and standards. M. Overstad handled 355,000 bushels of grain in his warehouse and his business is steadily increasing now that he has elevator facilities.

I. Tollfson, druggist and pharmacist, came to Hancock in 1890, and about fourteen years ago established his present business. Mr. Tollfson is a native of Wisconsin. He has been entirely successful, carries a full and very well selected line of goods, and his trade is steadily increasing.

The Hancock bank was established in 1899. Its president is N. A. Smith, a native of Racine, Wis., who came here from Sheldon, Iowa, and the cashier is W. J. Browne Jr., from Minneapolis. The bank has a modern patent screw door safe, safety deposit boxes and the interior of the building is finely finished in mahogany.

The establishment of a national bank in Hancock will be effected at an early day. The organization has already been completed.

The Hotel Columbia is a first-class hotel with all modern improvements, and has been in existence for six years. The proprietors, A. C. Corless and D. L. Woodward, are well known and very competent hotel men.

Savings deposits made on or before Oct. 5 will receive 3 months' interest on Jan. 1, Security Trust Co., N. Y. Life bldg.

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with many public improvements, all paid for and at a low rate of taxation. The present officials are as follows: D. S. Long, president of council; George Hogan, Dave Long, H. B. Lund and John House, councilmen; C. B. Burpee, recorder; Louis M. Larson, treasurer; J. B. Ormond, attorney; A. L. Stenger and J. C. Morrison, justices of the peace; Thor. Thomason, assessor; H. Clarke, street commissioner; Erick Peterson, marshal.

The problem of heating and lighting is an important one in every community. Electric light plants are to be found in every enterprising town. Morris has one, there are feeling here as elsewhere that gas can be made to do both—heating and lighting, or at least a good deal of both. The electric light plant only half solves the problem. Several towns in the state with electricity are now putting in gas. The gas plant can be operated economically after it is established, and there is no need to speak of that method. The gas system is one worthy of careful investigation by all of our Western towns.

The village of Chokio is situated on the Crown's Valley branch of the Great Northern railway, in the western part of Stevens county, near the Big Stone and Traverse county lines. The town is only about twelve years of age so far as population is concerned, but has a population of about 500, and is rapidly and substantially growing. Among its other business institutions Chokio has six grain elevators, a saw mill, a mill, a million bushels of wheat annually, two banks, two churches; a newspaper, the Stevens County Review, by Charles E. Seelye, etc.

In August, 1891, J. H. McNally built the first building and opened the first store on the town site of Chokio. The newly built railroad had not then built a platform at the station, and Mr. McNally was for a considerable time alone on the beautiful and wide prairie. He came first to the country in 1876, from Minneapolis, where he had been engaged in business.

The name of the town is a corruption of the Sioux Indian word Chokah-yah (accent on the second syllable), which means "the place where Long ago there was a claim shanty where the town now stands and this point was half way, or at the middle of the distance between Morris and Graceville. The Sioux word for reservation applied their word "cho-kah-ya" to the point and this became known to the whites, who mispronounced the word, however—it may be purposely for euphony's sake—calling it Cho-ki-o (accent on the second syllable), and when a name was sought for the new town, the Indian designation was chosen. It is upon the subject it may be well to say that cho-kah-ya is used by the Sioux only as an adjective, the word for middle in the form or office of a noun is "o-cho-kah-yah."

The tributary country to Chokio is rich and productive, and becoming more valuable every day. It is settled by an industrious and thrifty class of farmers, all of whom have prospered. The natural beauty of the country has been improved by its development, and the region itself is splendidly occupied and its advantages utilized. There are no finer and more attractive farms and farm lands anywhere than those adjoining the village of Chokio.

The stores and shops of Chokio are all creditable to the town and fully up to the times. They are modern in structure and appointment and their capacity is well tested by the business carried on within them.

As has been stated, J. H. McNally, dealer in general merchandise, is a pioneer merchant of Chokio. His first store is still standing immediately north of his present place of business. A considerable amount of all property first settlement in the country Mr. McNally and his brother were the only men in this section with valid deeds and titles to their lands, and were the only taxpayers contributing to the support of the public schools. Mr. McNally was the first postmaster of Chokio and held the office for eight years. His present store is large and comprehensive and a most successful institution.

The firm of Ness & Johnson, dealers

Wells, of Morris. They occupy a fine double brick building and commodious warehouses, carry large stocks in their lines, are extensive shippers of cream, and own their own electric light plant. The local and long distance telephone exchange for Hancock is in their store. Maunum Brothers, dealers in general merchandise and millinery, came from Pope county to Hancock two years ago. Their establishment is virtually a department store, is well conducted and has been very successful.

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ATLANTIC STEAMERS.

Port.	Arrived.	Sailed.
Liverpool	Collier	Collier
Liverpool	Georgia	Georgia
Moville	Columbia	Columbia
St. John	Corean	Corean
Boulogne		
Sir Mer.	Potsdam	Potsdam
Queenstown	Kaiserin Maria	Kaiserin Maria
Southampton	Kaiserin Theresia	Kaiserin Theresia

As Beautiful as Venus and Fair as Diana

How Mme. De Maintenon, the Most Beautiful Woman in History, Retained Her Beauty and Youthful Appearance.

How Any Woman Can Attain Beauty and Youthful Looks

In dry goods, clothing and general merchandise, has been in business here for the past three years. They have a large and very complete establishment. The firm is composed of O. A. Ness, the present mayor of Chokio and who came from Fillmore county, and L. O. Johnson, formerly of Granite Falls. The latter is interested in the State bank.

A. F. Riedner & Co. are druggists and jewelers, who have been here but two years, but are well established and have been quite successful. In addition to their regular stock they carry full stocks of paints, oils and wall paper, and do general watch and jewelry repairing. The firm was formerly in the drug business at Lambert, Minn., for two years, coming to Chokio in 1901.

The enterprising firm of Leaman, Shannon & Company has a large and profitable trade in hardware, furniture and agricultural implements. Its members are Charles Leaman, W. S. Shannon and H. E. Leaman. The senior partner, Mr. Charles Leaman, is the father of the junior member, Mr. H. E. Leaman, is a pioneer of Stevens county. He came from Winnebago county, Wis., to this county in 1867, taking up a homestead in what is now Baker township, then unorganized and without a single dwelling. Mr. Leaman worked in the construction of the railroad, and in 1894 engaged in the agricultural implement business. Two years ago the hardware and furniture branches of the business were added.

Four years ago Mr. L. J. Ross, of Morris, established a general hardware, furniture and implement store at Chokio, and two years later associated with himself Mr. P. Salmonson, constituting the firm of Ross & Salmonson. In addition to dealing in hardware, stoves, paints, oils, etc., they are agents for the McCormick harvester. Mr. Salmonson came to Minnesota many years ago, but first taking up a homestead in Big Stone county. Subsequently he was in St. Paul for some years, and came to Chokio two years ago.

E. G. Miller has a well equipped harness and saddlery establishment, and deals in trunks, valises, etc. He has been in business here for seven years, coming from Columbus, Wis., where he was born. He is personally popular in the community, and has been quite successful in his vocation here.

Knute Sanders, merchant tailor, is a well known dealer in Chokio. He came here last spring from Mora, Minn., where he was