

## *The Prairie*

This is the end of a day and a dream,  
The end of the trail, where their dreams come true,  
The home is theirs; the journey's thru.

M.H.B.

### ☆ FIRST TRIP TO NOBLES COUNTY—1874

In the early summer of 1874, Dad set out to the south west, from Faribault, Minnesota on another land seeking trip. He and Ma ha devidently talked it over, and decided to try to get a home of their own. Government land was open to homestead in South Dakota and southwest Minnesota. At that time, and ex-soldier could take a 160 acre claim. They thought at the time that they might have to go clear to Dakota.

He started out with a team of horses, a covered wagon, a supply of grain for them and food for himself. There was no roads then, just a trail across the seemingly endless prairie. After he got out of the "Big Woods" country. This "Big Woods" was a section of country, east and south east of Mankato, where there was lots of oak and other hard wood timber, and other deciduous trees. There was no roads then, just a trail. On the way to the southwest, he fell in with another man, with the same kind of outfit, and with the same object in view. So they journeyed on together. They would try and stop near some settlers home at night. Mainly to get information about the land, and incidentally to get water and food for themselves, although they carried off food with them. They got plenty of free meals. The settlers were glad to have company. The treeless prairie was rather dreary at times, and company could mean news from the outside world. Very few settlers asked for, or expected any pay from passing travelers.

They pulled in one evening at a settlers house, situated on a hill to the west of a big slough, which was fairly alive with ducks and geese. An ex-soldier from New Jersey, by the name of Robert Daugherty had homesteaded the place and he made them welcome. During the evening visit it developed that his neighbor to the west, a Scot Highlander named Joe Mason, wanted to sell out. Mason was married to a half breed Indian woman and had several