The Rauk families pioneering in Iowa

Knudt O. Rauk was born the 12th of Feb. 1825 In Hallingdahl Norway. He came of a large family as there were 8 brothers and one sister in the family, But only the sister Cary had courage enough to come with Knudt at that time to America which at that time looked to them like the promised land.

They arrived in Dane county Wisconsin in 1846. Knudt was then 21 years old. Like so many others in those days it took his small savevings to live off. It didnt worry him any however, He had good health which is the foundation for many good things. He took up stone-masoning also blacksmithing, Rough work to be sure but honest.

His sister Cary worked as a maid in a Hotel in Cambridge Wisconsin and made her own support until she was married some years later.

There were a few families already settled in that part of Dane county; Later called Koshkonang. There lived a family named Lien who had arrived from Ness, Hallingdahl Norway a year or two earlier. In this family there were two brothers, Hendrik and Peter, also one sister whose name was Matty. Matty was 19 years old and persisted in making her own living. So she went to a near-by town and worked as cook in a hotel

called the Goodrich Hotel. In time she met this above mentioned Knudt Rauk, whoom she later married. Years passed on and their family increased. They had never suffered want but they both wished for a farm home. after a time the family decided to go out to Mower County Minnesota, and Matty's youngest brother went with them. Peter bought a farm in Mower County and lived there until his death in 1879.
Knudt Rauk and family had stopped in Mower county only a few months when they went down into Mitchel county Iowa.
There was the kind of country they had been looking for, so they bought a farm three miles north of St. Ansgar.
On this place they built a log-house for immidiate use and had just got comfortably settled when there was a big Indian outbreak in Minnesota.
The Rauks were not so sure that the indians would not come down their way, as they were only 5 miles from the Minnesota line. They still had their prarie scooner and planned on loading it with the most necesary supplies, so as to be ready to flee if the Savages should appear. They also loaded

their wagon In order to be ready as this was quite an indian scare among the settlers.
When the wagon was loaded they were discussing if there was any other articles they could need. One of the little boys, Christian by name, he was four or five years old spoke up and said Well I can carry my jacket, He didnt seem to think there was room for that on the wagon and felt as if he had to help out.
But soon some of the Minnesota white settlers who had left their homes to get away from the indians came there, and they told the Rauks they didnt think the Indians would come that way, so if you leave we will move in.
Its needless to say they didnt go. but this place was still new and there was much to do the next few years to make a comfortable home for the family, This farm was only a mile east of the Ceder river, And limestone quarries were plentifull along that river, so Rauk decided he would make use of his Stone-mason trade and build a stone house on his farm. His family had increased so they needed more room. Well there was no money to buy lime with, So Rauk and his two oldest sons built a limekiln down near the river so they burnt their own lime

but that required alot of care and attention so one or two of the men had to be there nite and day to keep a steady fire going. I can not recall how long it took. When it happened the two boys were there over nite they sometime found pleasure in fishing. There was a good supply of fish in the Cedar river, and the boys had a small boat, some Spears and torches. and when they wanted fish for the home farm they would go out in the (hollows) they called the deepest places in the river, and light their torches. Soon the fish got curious about the lights and came up around the boat to look, they were easy seen from the boat and "bang" and a spear would dash in and they could always get a fish. This ofcourse was done before dawn so they would be out about three oclock in the morning. There were also caves in some places by the river and one day a bunch of boys went down there with a bulldog. and he chased out six bobcats. Well when they were thru with the lime burning they turned their attention to making shingles.

Logs were hauled home and cut into blocks just right for Shingles Then a long tank was produced, and set in such a way it could

be a fire put under the whole length. Then it was filled with the wood chunks and water put on, and steamed. Rank then bought a shingle mill and the chunks were cut into shingles. The work went on until there were enough shingles for the house and later for a barn.

Well the Rank family were a busy family and at this time there were 8 children four boys and four girls. They had been having a lot of hard work but they were proud of their home when it was finished. It was realy three stories high counting the basement. The basement was divided into two parts, one-half was lighted with plenty of windows and well lighted It was used for a carpenter shop. The other part was used for household needs. Then above the upper story, was a big attic used for storage room. And for the last finishing touches inside the house and painting we were lucky enough to get a Deccorater That realy knew how. In fact he was an artist also. His name was "Seffanias" a name we children could not forget because we that it was funny.

The boys and girls done all the farmwork, sometimes the girls too worked in the Harvest field and Rank took Masonic contracts to help out. His first contract was to build a Church for the

Lutheran congregation at St. Ansgar, also the Clyde schoolhouse and other buildings in the community

In winter he was busy making lumberwagons as they were called at that time. He had only a small shop on the farm but usually had three or four wagons out in the Spring ready to be sold, also a few walkingplows as they were called after gang-plows got into use, there were no tractors in those days, everything had to be done with horses or even oxen.

In the year of 1876 Rauk decided to go out west and find some place where his family would have a chance to spread out, as all land was taken up in the surrounding country. So he took his son Lewis along and went out on a tour of investigation. He went into the Dakota Territory, and after awhile he got into the then famous Red River valley. This was the kind of place he had been looking for, and both Rauk and his son took up homesteads. By this time winter was comming on but the weather was wonderful mild they bought up some timber and started to cut logs for a loghouse as lumber would have to be hauled a long ways. There was a rail road leading into Fishers Landing now "Fisher" but there

was no lumber there. It was a strange thing to have such lovely weather in the Territary There were only a few settlers In. and they lived close to the river, But some of them that were settled close To Frog Point plowed in February. The next move in this drama will be found in my "Reminicence of bygone days."

Margret Rauk Cooper