

EDITORIAL

Young Immigrant

Reading of the death this week of Chris Solum in his home in Racine, we recall quite vividly when he conducted a shoe store and a shoe repair shop at the southwest corner of Second and Blaine streets fifty or more years ago. Many of the men in Merrill today will also recall the days when we were boys and went to Solum's shop to have him measure our feet and make us shoe-pacs. The boys of today probably don't know what a shoe-pac is. They had high tops similar to the lumber jack rubbers of today. The tops range from 6 to 12 inches, ~~the bottoms were of a moccasin~~ type with just one piece of leather for a sole and no heel. They were stitched like a moccasin and the toe turned up slightly. It was quite a knack to walk with shoe-pacs because you can imagine how slippery they were on snow or ice. Fellows like Elmer Bloomquist, Carl and George Granholm, Harry, Harold and Ed Green, Ed and Clarence Olsen, Roy Zipp, and many others were regular customers of Mr. Solum every fall.

Mr. Solum was quite a progressive Norwegian immigrant—starting with a shoe repair shop and then getting into the custom made shoe-pacs, then a shoe store and eventually organizing and operating the Solum Shoe Company which was located in the building now occupied by the Hansen Glove Company.

Mr. Solum was a striking looking man—good physique, black, curly hair and black curly mustache. He was an intensely patriotic individual and we recall after the Spanish-American war he would present each customer, making a purchase of \$10.00 or more, with a handsome framed picture of the battle of Manila Bay or the sinking of Spanish ships in the Santiago Harbor. And we also believe there was a bust portrait of Admiral Dewey.

Being Norwegian ourselves, our families often visited with the Solums. They were parents of fine children who did well on their own after reaching their maturity. One daughter, Miss Nora Solum, who has been an English teacher at St. Olaf's college for many years has made quite a reputation by translating Norwegian literature into the English language.

Mr. Solum is a good example of a young immigrant coming to the country, making good in business and fully adopting America as his home.