

## JOHN J. OAKLAND.

Throughout a long period John J. Oakland was identified with the agricultural interests of Yankton county but since 1910 has been living in honorable retirement in a comfortable home in Irene. He is one of the worthy pioneers of this section of the state, having come here in April, 1870, when the settlers in this territory were widely scattered. He is a native of Norway, born near Bergen, July 23, 1846, and was there reared to the age of nineteen years. On the 10th day of May, 1865, he secured passage on a sailing vessel from Haugesund, and, after a long and tedious voyage covering six weeks, landed at Quebec. He thence made his way by lake to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and from the latter city journeyed by rail to Dane county, that state. For six months he was employed at farm labor in Penrose township, near Madison, Wisconsin, and on the expiration of that period went to Leland, La Salle county, Illinois, where he was employed at farm work until the summer of 1866. He then made his way to Benton county, Iowa, where he lived for four years, and in 1870 made his way to Dakota prior to the time that railroads were built through this section of the country. In April, of the latter year, he filed on a homestead four miles southeast of Wakonda in Clay county, living thereon until he had proved up on the land and received a deed to the same. In 1874 he took up a preemption claim in Turner county and was identified with the agricultural interests of that section for thirty-five years, in the meantime increasing his holdings until he became the owner of four or five hundred acres of rich and productive land. During this time, however, he endured with other pioneers, many hardships and privations incident to establishing a home in a new country. For seven years, from 1872 until 1879, he suffered loss of crops from grasshoppers and droughts. During one winter he was without funds and as he expresses it, "did not have enough money to buy a postage stamp." He walked one season to Sioux City, Iowa, a distance of sixty miles, to secure work and after an absence of three months from home, walked back the entire distance after having secured enough money to provide for his family until spring. For eight years the only fuel he had was dry slough grass and hay, which was twisted into bundles and used for fuel. In 1881 there was no flour in the house, their only breadstuff being corn meal and wheat meal which had to be ground in a coffee mill. However Mr. Oakland bore these hardships with bravery and gradually worked his way to success until he is now the owner of farm property and is able to live retired from further labor, occupying a comfortable home in Irene, where he has lived since November 12, 1910.

Mr. Oakland has been married twice. He was first married in Benton county, Iowa, to Miss Martha Ponsness, a native of Norway, by whom he had nine children, seven of whom survive: John, who is living on one of his father's farms; Margareta, the wife of Harry Conklin, an attorney of Yankton; Marthina, the wife of John C. Baker, a resident of Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Lars, who has taken up a claim in Stanley county; Josephine, the wife of Peter Henset, who is also residing on a claim in Stanley county; Peter, who lives on the old homestead; and Hannah, the wife of Peter Smith, of Cedar county, Nebraska. On July 21, 1909, Mr. Oakland married Mrs. Rachel Torgerson, who bore the maiden name of Scheie, and was born in Woodstock, Illinois. She was first married June 7, 1869, to Thomas Sundy, who for a number of years was a merchant of Canton, South Dakota, and by whom she had four children. He died July 10, 1887, and on the 17th of September, 1890, she married Rev. O. E. Torgerson, who died February 23, 1901.

Mr. Oakland is a republican in his political belief and he is identified with the Lutheran church, in which he has served as a lay minister. Throughout the greater part of his residence he has been closely identified with church and Sunday school work and has been instrumental in organizing many church societies and Sunday schools in the state. For the past few years, however, his health has been somewhat impaired, so that while he bears his affliction with a cheerful heart, it yet deprives him of taking an active part in religious or other work as he was formerly able to do. He is a man of high ideals and noble purposes, has given a large portion of his time to the effort of inculcating a higher sense of duty and responsibility in both young and old and his life has indeed been one of activity and far-reaching usefulness.