Address delivered to 19th Century Club, Owatonna, Minnesota, by W. R. Kinyon in May, 1906:

I have been requested by one of your members to relate some reminiscences of Owatonna. If I correctly interpret this request it is desired that I tell you something of the experience of those who made the first settlement on the site of our city and in its vicinity. My story will contain no thrilling events, no wondrous escapes from great dangers, nor even relate cases of extreme want and suffering. But if it correctly represents conditions it will describe earnest, energetic and persevering men and women who had left their New York and New England homes with all their comforts and conveniences and come to a new and unsettled region to make homes for themselves. In place of the comforts and conveniences they had left, there were many of them compelled to erect the log cabin or board shack while living in their wagons, to furnish them with a chair or two made from an old barrel, if they chanced to have one, a table and cupboard made from the boxes in which their goods were packed, beds of slough grass placed on poles or boughs, such were their homes. Probably the first they had ever been able to really call their own. Brightened by love, ambition and hope for the future, may we not safely conclude that the hay roof of some of these little homes covered as much real happiness as rests under the gilded roof of the wealthy? In the summer of 1854 a small party set out from Winona prospecting for homes. Their objective point was the Minnesota River near Mankato. They camped one night on the banks of the Owatonna River at this point. So well were A. B. Cornell and W. F. Pettit pleased with the surroundings that they determined to stick their stake here. Soon after Mr. Cornell built a log cabin near where the residence of G. F. Albertus now stands. Mr. Pettit built a small one story frame house where the main building of Pillsbury Academy now stands.

In the spring of 1855 a few came, among them Mr. & Mrs. Winship. Mr. Winship commenced at once to haul logs for a hotel and erected one 16 feet wide and 20 feet in length. It was not quite as pretentious as "The Owatonna". In that hotel the kitchen, dining room, office and parlor were all in the same room. Guest chambers in the attic under the rafters where the guests soon learned to stoop low and to roll out of bed instead of rising on their feet. In time of a rush the main floor was used as a guest chamber and even the adjacent lots outside. The hearty welcome extended by Mr. & Mrs. Winship

to all their guests, the watchful care for their comfort, their kindness, sympathy and even aid, when needed, made the Winship House a pleasant remembrance for years after to all who enjoyed its hospitality.

Many came in 1856, mostly young men looking for speculative snaps. The town site had been platted & it made a beautiful city on paper. So well did the town proprietors portray its advantages and this future great city of the west, that these young men blew their money into town lots at fabulous prices. Many of the purchasers resold in the next two years at one-fourth the price paid and left the country. The latter part of 1857 was a period of great financial loss and distress in the older states and especially was this true in the West. Nearly all the banks in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin failed. The money in circulation was the notes of these banks. They became worthless and many lost their all. Those who had money found themselves as poor as those who had none.

May 11, 1858 Minnesota was admitted as a state. About the same time the people voted to loan bonds of the state in the sum of $5,000,000 to certain railroad companies to induce them to build their roads at once. These acts attracted the attention of people farther east and especially of those who had lost their all the year before. It appeared as though Minnesota would have a boom, that it was the place to retrieve one's fortunes and many came, among them young men seeking a place to begin their life work. I became a citizen of Owatonna in that same month of May and the population of the county was materially increased that season. Owatonna at that time had about a dozen shacks, mostly on Bridge Street. On the North side was the Harsha Drug Store, Morford and Odell Grocery, Hunewill Hardware and Joel Wilson Blacksmith Shop. On the South, Hall & Rawson Office (building still standing), Goodwin & Dresser Tailor Shop, George Howe Saloon and Coburn Store, also a small office building occupied by M. A. Dailey as a law office. Dailey also held all the county offices except sheriff, being deputy for most of them. The sheriff's office was held by David Lindesmith. Where the First National Bank now stands was an office 14 x 20 and 7 feet high. This building was secured by myself and Frank Babcock as an office and the Post Office, County Treasury Office, Law Office and Abstract Office were all in this building at the same time. On Main Street was Deacon Stoughton's Store and Dr. Morehouse's office. Near the corner of Cedar Street and Broadway the Eureka House. This for style in archi-

tecture was unique and without a parallel. At least it has never been my fortune to see anything ancient or modern resembling it. It was all wings. My first view of this structure brought back to me a mental picture I had once formed of Darius Green's flying machine and I always felt when in it as though the thing might rise up and soar away with me. The proprietors were Mr. & Mrs. B. L. Arnold. He was good natured and jovial, rather entertain his guests with a good story or a joke than split wood for the cook stove. She was a typical English woman born in the tight little isle. She mixed up her H's in a bewildering manner. If one ever escaped it was sure to land in the wrong place. But she looked after her business closely and Arnold too when he needed it, visited and cared for the sick, provided for the needy and always had a kind and encouraging word for all. No one was more kindly remembered by the early settler in after years than Mrs. B. L. Arnold. These buildings with a few temporary dwellings and a small log school house comprised Owatonna as I saw it for the first time. I must admit that the prospect of acquiring wealth and fame there did not seem to me exceedingly brilliant, but as financial conditions prohibited my going farther or even getting back from whence I came, I was obliged to remain. Most of those who came this spring were in search of land. In fact land was about the only thing to be found here which humanity could utilize. A few the year before had ploughed some of the prairie, This was sown to wheat. Those coming this year broke the prairie sod and planted potatoes and sod corn. There was a prospect that the inhabitants would raise food sufficient for their wants. Excessive rains commenced in June, terrific thunder storms came daily, buildings were struck, some killed and others injured by lightning. The fields were flooded, the roads almost impassable. Straight River became a rushing, foaming torrent extending from the hill on this side well up that on the other. The bridge was swept away, two persons were drowned in attempting to cross. People "Going West" were camped along its banks until David Lindesmith with a small flat bottomed boat established a ferry. He carried the wagons over a piece at a time, then the people. The horses towed behind the boat were compelled to swim. The current was strong and he frequently landed 1/2 mile below his objective point. The rains and flood destroyed most of the crops. About the middle of August came a terrific hail storm which destroyed the balance except potatoes and smashed nearly all the windows in town. Glass to repair them had to be procured at Hastings. Those that had money procured and set new glass, those that had none boarded up the windows. Winter came, it was severe,

deep snow and cold. It found many without food except potatoes and perhaps a little corn and without money. What flour we had was black stuff. It came from Iowa and cost 4¢ per pound. Many families lived on potatoes and salt. Some could not even buy the salt and took their potatoes clear. Those that had corn ground it in a coffee mill, mixed it with water, baked the mixture and had a feast. Neighbor divided with neighbor till there was but little left. Spring came and the great question was seed. This was finally obtained. The crop of 1859 was an abundant one and never since that time has there been a short food supply in this locality. The inhabitants of Owatonna at this time were mostly young married people. Among all the pleasures and amusements of these days, one would suppose that such a winter among such surroundings must have been dull, lonely, dreary. On the contrary, it was enjoyed and has ever been remembered with pleasure by most of us. We visited and had our little card parties. Some of us would manage to pick up an extra dime, would buy a whole quart of molasses, call in our friends and have a candy pull. In fact this was the high-toned and fashionable entertainment of those days. We had a fiddler in our circle and dancing was freqquent. Those who had never danced before went at it with a vim, none of this slow languid walking or fancy dancing, but good old time square dances ending with a jig. We were a hilarious and happy crowd and I doubt if the more staid and formal society of today has as much real enjoyment.

The population of the town and vicinity increased in'59 and '60. Owatonna put on village airs. New buildings, especially dwellings, were erected. The buildings of all kinds were south of Broadway. North of Broadway was a wheat field extending nearly to Maple Creek. In the spring of 1859 J. W. Morford erected a two story frame building where Rosebrocks' Furniture Store now stands. It was 40 feet long and the most pretentious building in all the county. A store room on the first floor and a public hall above. Church services on the Sabbath, dances, festivals, shows and lectures kept it hot during the week. Morford's Hall was the popular church, the Grand Opera house, the Lecture room and Town Hall of the little village and served its purpose well. The energetic and patriotic people arranged for a proper celebration of July 4th, 1859. Greased pigs, pole climbing, music on the fife by David Lindesmith and orating by Hiram Sheetz and Kinyon. They seemed to think it would require two of us to make an orator and tell all the glorious things the occasion demanded. Such was our program. Everybody was invited to come, bring their own dinner, catch the pig if they could,

"Whoop 'er Up" for the American Eagle and have a jolly good time. The day came and so did the people from miles around. The morning was damp and cold, but the white dresses and summer pants our young people had prepared for the occasion, had to serve. It was Hopkins choice. All were hopeful that as the day advanced warmth would come. Uncle Lindy blew his fife, the northwest wind blew stronger and colder. Flurries of snow came and that wind whistled through those summer garments without the least consideration for the comfort of the wearers. Our seats and platform under the oaks were abandoned. We rendered our program in Morford's new building which was enclosed, but not completed. People found the warmest place possible to eat their cold victuals, enjoyed the athletic sports as well as shivering humanity could, and the day has since been remembered as the coldest 4th of July ever known.? In 1861 war came. The long struggle between the north and south for supremacy in the government of the nation passed from the Forum to the Field of Battle. A large proportion of our people were natives of New York and New England and were imbued with that hatred against slavery which characterized their ancestors. The excitement was intense! The shrill notes of "Uncle Lindy's" fife resounded through our streets almost daily. Our young men and strong men responded to the call of Uncle Abe. So rapidly did they enlist that the majority of our farms were cultivated the next year by the women and children. For four years following the tidings of every important battle were accompanied by tidings that some loved and respected citizen and friend who had gone forth in his strength had laid his life on the altar of his country. Sadness and mourning prevailed. Sympathy for the widow and fatherless was extended by all. The products of the community were greatly curtailed by the scarcity of labor to till the fields and business was confined to a struggle for the necessaries of life. These were dark days throughout all the northern states, but new settlements like ours bore much the heavier burden.

During the winter of 1861 and 1862 Indians, who had seldom been seen in our streets, became numerous. Both Sioux and Winnebago had camps on the banks of Maple Creek and in the timber south of town. They glided stealthily about along the backways wherever they could be hidden from view. They never knocked or asked permission to enter, but would pop around the house corner and, if they found a door unfastened, pop into the house with an UGH which made the average white woman speechless and helpless at once.

Then they would ask for everything in sight. The frightened housewife dared not refuse. Soon everything eatable had been eaten. Then the squaws would ask for clothes, sometimes for those on the person and carry them off. The squaws were the worst of the gang. The Indian would steal into the house, sit down with the stove between his legs, eat everything in sight and utterly refuse to move till men came to throw him out. As an example of these conditions there were three families living near together, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Ramsey and myself in Phelps Addition. Ramsey was absent most of the time, Wadsworth and myself at our places of business. Our wives as soon as their work would permit, gathered in one of the houses, fastened the doors and trembled, but it was necessary to open a door occasionally. This was done after carefully scanning the surroundings, yet an Indian would pop out from behind a tree or around the house corner, push the women away and take possession. We were sent for three times in one day by teamsters passing to come and get the brutes out of the house. The third time we took other help with us. We found them in Ramsey's house. They had eaten everything eatable and nearly stripped her of clothing. Mrs. Kinyon had made a flying leap with her baby George, landed in her own house, locked the door and fled upstairs while a number of the brutes were trying the doors and peeking in the windows. They scattered quickly as we appeared. The first Indian buck we came to in Ramsey's house went head first into a snow bank. The balance of them, squaws and all, were hustled out by vigorous action, their plunder taken from them and they were not to come there again. They did not trouble our locality much after this but remained in camp several weeks, to the terror and annoyance of the women and children. In August of that year, the Sioux Indians suddenly commenced an indiscriminate slaughter of the settlers in the western part of the state. The news came like a thunderbolt. Burning buildings, murder, rapine and fiendish cruelty marked their pathway. Mothers, children and babes were tortured and killed. Most of our able bodied men were in the army and far away south. The whole of our state seemed at the mercy of the treacherous fiends. The Winnebago reservation was between us and Mankato about twenty miles distant. On it were a large number of Indians. Reports came from there almost hourly that they were restless and threatening to join the Sioux. Old men and boys gathering such arms as they could find made all haste to the reservation. Rochester, Mantorville and other towns sent like forces. In a day or two enough had gathered there to hold them in check and keep them on their reservation. The excitement was intense. Reports came continually of the success of the Sioux and their rapid approach. They swept the country for

 one hundred miles without much opposition, the settlers fleeing for their lives. Some hid in the tall grass till the Indians and until starvation had nearly done its work. Others who had more timely notice hitched up their teams, loaded their wives and children and started on a race for life, many times lighted by the blaze of their burning homes. When the Indians reached New Ulm they found people determined to defend their homes, volunteers from Mankato and other places had joined. In the business part of this village were a number of stone buildings. The women, children and defenseless took refuge in these. The Indians in large numbers surrounded the town, burned the frame buildings on the outskirts and attacked the defenders, but the stone walls were impervious to Indian bullets and many of the red skins bit the dust. After a three days siege, they were beaten back and abandoned the town. At Birch Coulee and Fort Ridgely severe battles were fought and the Indians defeated. Many of those refugees continued their flight to Owatonna. Mankato was threatened and even Owatonna was much agitated by frequent reports of advancing Indians. These refugees were without money, food and clothing. Each day added to their numbers until our town plat was well covered with tents and wagons. Our people used every effort to provide them with shelter and food, although expecting that they too would have to flee at any time. These refugees gradually disappeared mostly returning to the older states.

At no time since the settlement of Owatonna has there been such fear and consternation among its people as during the first days of the Indian Massacre of 1862. An army was raised, one or more regiments were sent to our assistance from Wisconsin. The Indians were defeated and overcome. Many of them were captured and afterwards thirty-eight of them were hanged at one time on the same gallows at Mankato.

In 1860 I took the census in Steele County and visited every family therein. I found many in log shacks without floors, but hopeful and ambitious. There were about six hundred people in the township, one-half of these in the village. In April 1865 the war ended and those of our citizens who had survived the conflict returned to their homes. These added materially to the productive capacity of the community. Affairs assumed a more prosperous condition. About Sept. 1st, 1866 the Winona & St. Peter Railroad was completed from Winona to Owatonna, the Milwaukee & St. Paul from St. Paul to Owatonna, both roads running their first trains here on the same day. The population increased from 600 to 2,000 during the summer. Owatonna was no longer a frontier town, but a thriving, bustling city with two railroads. The pioneers became a small mihority in the vigorous and enterprising community. The days of pioneering in Owatonna came to an end and my story ends also.

To - 15th Century Club. May 1906.

I have been requested by one of your members to relate some Reminiscences of Australia. If I correctly interpret this request. it is desired that I tell you something of the experiences of those who made the first settlement on the site of our City and in its vicinity. My story could contain no thrilling events. No wonderous escapes from great dangers. Nor even relate cases of extreme want and suffering. But if it correctly represents conditions it will describe Earnest energetic & persevering men & women. who had left their New York and New England homes with all their Comforts & Conveniences and Come to a wild and unsettled region to make homes for themselves in place of the Comforts and Conveniences they had left. They were many of them Compelled to erect, the Log Cabin or board shack while living on their Wagons, to furnish them with a Chair or two. made from an old barrel, if they chanced to have one. A Table and Cupboard made from the boxes are which their goods were packed. Beds of Slough grass placed on Poles or boughs. Such were their homes. Probably the first they had ever been able to really Call their own. Brightened by Love