

HISTORY OF  
Goodhue County  
MINNESOTA

ILLUSTRATED

EDITOR IN CHIEF

FRANKLYN CURTISS-WEDGE

ASSISTED BY

W. M. Sweney, M. D.; Jens K. Grondahl; C. A. Rasmussen; Julius  
Boraas, M. L.; F. W. Kalfahs; Edward W. Schmidt, M. A.;  
Mrs. Julia B. Nelson; E. Norelius, D. D.; George C.  
Wellner, M. D.; John C. Applegate; Ralph W.  
Holmes; Dwight C. Pierce; Henry Hal-  
vorson; Rev. James H. Gaughan;  
Henry R. Cobb; Edgar F.  
Davis and many others

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CHICAGO  
H. C. COOPER, JR., & CO.

1909



HON PETER NELSON

Chinlund; secretary, David Gustafson; treasurer, Harry Anderson. Willing Workers, president, Mamie Gottrick; vice president, Hulda Skoglund; secretary, Gena Lundquist; treasurer, Minnie Swanson. Concordia Society, organized 1909; president, the pastor; vice president, N. J. Skoog; secretary, Arthur Johnson; treasurer, P. A. Lamberg. Sunday school is held every Sunday and is attended on the average by 150 children. The school is divided into a senior and junior department, the senior department having fifteen departments and the junior department ten classes. Superintendent, the pastor; vice superintendent, Andrew Mossberg; secretary, Harry Anderson; treasurer, Clarence Skoglund; librarians, Leonard Nelson, Reuben Skoglund, Eva Lindgren and Mabel Anderson. There are two church choirs, the senior choir, composed of about twenty members, and the junior choir, composed of about thirty young ladies. The congregation publishes a monthly eight-page paper, edited by the pastor.

The following statistics may be given for the church year ending January 1, 1909: Number of communicants, 658; total membership, 1,001; expenses for salaries, \$1,858.88; other purposes, \$1,387.16; to missions, education and benevolent purposes, \$1,210.32; total, \$4,456.36. Since its organization the congregation has contributed toward church buildings, \$38,000; toward missions, education and charity, \$20,300, and toward current expenses, \$102,000; total, \$160,300.

**Hon. Peter Nelson**, of Red Wing, ex-senator, is a man greatly honored throughout the county for his work in upbuilding this section of the country. To his efforts is largely due the fact that the Training School is located here, when there were many other cities bidding for the honor. He was born in Skatlof, Sweden, April 14, 1844, son of Nels Nelson, a Swedish farmer and bridge contractor. The subject of this sketch left his native land on May 1, 1866, bound for America, but on account of the great rush was compelled to wait at Liverpool nearly a month. When he at last secured passage, cholera broke out on board, and out of 250 cases seventy-five proved fatal. For this reason the ship was held at Ellis Island in quarantine for a month after reaching New York, and it was consequently nearly the last of July before Peter Nelson was permitted to set foot on the land of which he was later to become an honored citizen. Since that landing his record has been one of successful achievement. He arrived in Rockford, Ill., August 1, 1866. In this town he was employed at various work, and by attending night school, supplemented the education he had received in the public schools of his native country. During the latter part of his stay in Rockford he worked at the carpenter's trade, and December 4 of that year entered the

employ of a sash and door factory in Water Valley, Miss. In 1868 he formed the firm of Newbero & Nelson, contractors and builders. A year later he bought his partner's interest and carried on the business himself for about a year, after which he purchased a half-interest in a hardware store at Oxford, Miss., the firm name being Peter Nelson & Co. In 1873 he sold out and came to Red Wing, where he started a store in company with Jonas Peterson, on Bush street, handling all kinds of hardware and also harvesting machines and farm implements. In 1888, Mr. Nelson bought out Mr. Peterson's interest and in 1895 added a plumbing department. He continued this business until 1905, when he sold to D. B. Johns and retired from active business. Mr. Nelson became interested in politics in early life, and has always been a staunch Democrat. He was a member of the state committee from 1883 to 1889 and served in the senate from 1887 to 1889. In 1890 he was defeated for that office by but thirty-five votes, and in 1892 was defeated for secretary of state by 8,250 votes. He has also occupied other prominent public offices. He was interested in the Minnesota Scandinavian Relief Association in its earliest days, and in 1886 was elected vice president. Since 1892 he has been its president. He also belongs to the Elks and the Commercial Club, and is financially interested in many of Red Wing's leading industries. Mr. Nelson was married in October, 1870, to Oliva Olson, daughter of Mr. Olson, a hotelkeeper in Awika, Sweden. To this union has been born one son, Peter A. Senator Nelson has a pleasant residence at 1004 Fourth street.