are very active in the potato industry. While Mr. Flaat was president of the Red River Valley Potato Growers Association, he served as a member of the U.S. Potato Advisory Committee to the Department of Agriculture and worked out a cooperative program of research and development of the potato industry in the Red River Valley. The Flaat Farms built the first two-row potato harvesters which were used extensively in the harvest in the potato producing areas of the country.

During World War II the Flaats were asked by the Federal government to furnish the raw vegetables and to carry out the dehydration of potatoes and other vegetables for use by our armed forces. This plant was constructed and employed four hundred individuals in the processing phase.

Mr. and Mrs. Flaat have been active in civic, school, church, political and business organizations. He has served on the Board of Regents of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota and they received the Regents Award for their commitment to Concordia College.

They have made significant contributions to and have been very active in the program of nursing and retirement homes and he is presently serving as president of Valley Memorial and Tufte Manor homes in Grand Forks.

Some of the awards and recognitions given the Flaats are the award of the one of the “One Hundred Living Greats” in the State of Minnesota, Northwest Farm Managers award, Master Farmer of Polk County, Premier seed grower, the Red River Valley Winter Shows award as homemakers in the valley and a congressional award for his work in the Ninth District Federal Land Bank.

Odney and Lowell Flaat are now the active managers of Flaat Farms and other activities in business and civic affairs — a normal transfer from one generation to the next.

Our family owes much to the people of the Red River Valley and our country; however God’s blessings have made human efforts productive.

S. K. FLAAT

In Evje, Norway, Kittel Aanandson Flaat (1831-1887) married Helge Aanensdatter Nordbo (1841-1873). The children were: Aanand Sr., Aanand Jr., Ketil, Aadne, Sveinung (1871-1953).

In Amherst, Wisconsin, Osmund Osmundson (1841-1914) married Anne Olson Sannes (1843-1896). Their children were: Osmund, Bertha, Caroline, Albert, Tilda, Ole, Mary (1872-1962).

Sveinung Flaat (1871-1953) married Mary Oline Osmundson (1872-1962) on November 8, 1899. Their children are: Clarence (1900-1952), Bygland; Oscar (1902), Bygland; and Helen (1904), Cass Lake.

Sveinung Flaat came to America in the spring of 1889. Several brothers had preceded him and settled in this area. There was a severe economic depression in the early 1900’s and the large numbers of immigrants from Norway were struggling with this problem.

The congregation of a Lutheran Church, made up mostly of Norwegian immigrants, sent their pastor, Rev. Christian Sau斯塔ad, accompanied by Mr. A. Stortroen westward to investigate sites for a new settlement. They came back to Minnesota and Sau斯塔ad gave his report to a crowded congregation at the church at Neby. He described the Bella Coola Valley in British Columbia as “having many of the features of your beloved Norway. Mountains rise almost perpendicularly, streams leap from the mountain sides, glaciers gleam in the sun, game is plentiful and the streams are never still from the splashing of fish.”

The report was received with great enthusiasm and the next meeting was held in a schoolhouse west of Crookston, Minnesota. Here a colony was formed to function under the laws of British Columbia, and the group left from Crookston October 17, 1894. There were about seventy men, but also some women and children. Albert Hammer, eighteen, was the youngest colonist to receive a grant of land. Sveinung Flaat was one of the “Bella Coola Norwegians”, as were Nels, Ole and Gunder Olson (Lysedalen) from Bygland. The article from Sons of Norway magazine “Viking”, October, 1972, states “as the crew made preparation to discharge the cargo, the passengers gazed around them with awe, wonderment and fear. There was no wharf, no sign of habitation, no indication that humans had ever trod this shore.”

When S. K. Flaat returned from this expedition he started a store in Bygland in 1897. In 1899, he bought a farm from Paul Sorenson and that same year married Mary Osmundson. Most of the remainder of S.K.’s life is told in the article on “Bygland Stores”.

Mary Osmundson came with her parents, and a brother and two sisters, from Wisconsin in the fall of 1876. They came to St. Paul by wagon and from there to Fisher by train. She lived on her father’s farm in Huntsville Township and attended grade school there. Later the family moved to Mallory where