Locally he took an energetic and serviceable part in public affairs, serving as president of the village of Fertile for ten terms. Fraternally he belonged to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and was zealous in his membership and his devotion to the fraternity. As Mr. Opheim never married he was able to give earnest attention to every public interest, and he did this diligently.

CHARLES NELSON.

Living retired from active pursuits in his pleasant home at Climax, this county, Charles Nelson has plenty of food for interesting meditations in the many features and numerous thrilling experiences of his long years of useful labor. He was born at Nummedal, Norway, June 30, 1844, and lost his mother by death when he was but two years, seven months old. In 1857 his father brought him to the United States, locating in Dane county, Wisconsin.

In 1862 Mr. Nelson and his father moved to Kandiyohi county, Minnesota, with a view to bettering their opportunities for advancement. But the time was badly chosen, for six weeks after their arrival and the filing on a preemption claim by the father the Sioux outbreak came and, with many others, the newcomers were obliged to leave that part of the state.

Many of the settlers gathered on Indian island, and on the historical Wednesday afternoon of that period thirteen neighbors of the Nelsons were massacred by the Indians there. Mr. Nelson and others afterward visited the neighborhood to ascertain if there were any wounded persons on it, but they found only dead bodies.

Sixteen wagonloads of fleeing settlers left the country Saturday morning under the guard of an escort, which conducted them well out into the prairie and then left them. The teams proceeded to Paynesville and from there to Goodhue county. The Nelsons never returned to their claim, and the father passed the remainder of his life in Goodhue county, where he died at the age of fifty-two. Charles' brother Nels died in 1901 by falling from a tree which he was pruning. Charles remained in Red Wing working at his trade as a painter until 1878, when he was married in Minneapolis to Miss Carrie Olson Romoe of Goodhue county, whither she was brought by her parents from her native town of Stördalen, Trondhjem Stift, Norway, when she was twelve years old.

After spending some months at the home of his wife's parents he visited Crookston and other parts of Polk county on a tour of inspection, in July, 1879, and in May, 1880, bought a proved-up homestead of 120 acres of Halvor Steenerson in Section 29, Vineyard township. He also bought 200 acres of railroad land at an average price of $7.50 an acre with a rebate of $3 an acre on all that he broke and seeded within three years. He broke up three-fourths of the tract and got it sowed, and thereby he saved the rebate on that much.

On April 17, 1880, Mr. Nelson arrived at Crookston with a carload of live stock and farming implements, and the wife and child arriving in May. When the railroad was constructed through here it was built along the section line nearly the whole length of his land, and when Climax was made a railroad station Mr. Nelson sold a part of his land along the road in town lots, and he has since sold more, as the village of Climax is partly on his farm, and his own residence is in the village, although the farm buildings are half a mile away.

The Nelson farm now contains 295 acres. Mr. Nelson cultivated it in wheat, oats and barley for about twenty years, and since he retired it has been farmed by tenants under his direction. He has served four years on the village council of Climax, but has given his attention mainly to his farm. In politics he is a Democrat, but in connection with local affairs he is independent of party ties. His first presidential vote was cast for Gen. George B. McClellan in 1868. His religious connection is with the Lutheran church at