

## **The Trip to No. Dak.**

**“I wish I had written a book 20 years ago.”**

**By Agnes (Velure) Anderson<sup>i</sup>**

(Note: This letter was sent to a relative in 1986.)

My folks John and Johanna Velure were married in La Crosse Wisconsin. I have their wedding picture taken in La Crosse. Mother wearing a beautiful long dress of heavy silk, very fitted. She also has a heavy long chain of beads, also a long veil. Sena was born in Wisconsin in 1888.

They moved to Ruthton Minnesota shortly after Sena was born. Mother had a brother and two sisters living near Ruthton. Brother Arne Aga, wife and 2 daughters, 2 sons. As far as I know the children live in Minneapolis. The wife passed away in Minneapolis. She lived there with daughter Agnes (Gladys married). Mrs. Julius Bly and family and Mr. And Mrs. Andrew Lofthus and family – mother’s sisters – lived on farms near Ruthton.

I remember the large house we lived in near Ruthton. My father farmed there several years. Anna, Ella, Nelda, Agnes, Lawrence, William, and Arnold – a baby of 1 year when they left for North Dakota– were born in Minnesota.

Sometime in the year 1903 my dad and Andrew Lofthus decided to go to North Dakota and buy land. They had heard about school land being sold near Valley City for \$1 an acre. They were taken out in the country. My father purchased a quarter of land where the home is now<sup>ii</sup>. Mr. Lofthus bought land by Nome. There were few neighbors scattered about far between, no roads, only paths cross country. Father became acquainted with Mr. Tomten, a bachelor who lived where it later became the Gangstad place. Father stayed with him. That’s when the empty buildings were on the place you mentioned<sup>iii</sup>. The house quite large was back on the yard. Many trees on the north and near the road. A sod barn dug in a hill toward the road. It was quite roomy.

The two men came back to Ruthton. Each one rented a railroad car. Loaded animals – horses, cows, chickens – furniture, and everything – even the dog. They each went with the railroad car. Had this all in their places, barn and house. Then mother with her brood and Helga<sup>iv</sup> with 5. Each was carrying a baby, they got on the train in Ruthton in March, and went to Fargo.

My father and uncle (Mr. Lofthus) met us at Fargo. We boarded the train the same evening and were on our way. Lofthus got off at Nome. We arrived in Hastings at 12 midnight, cold and snow and storming. Depot was closed. Someone helped us get to the restaurant (next to Camilla’s store). I remember so well, I was 6 years old, would be 7 in April. The older girls had to hang on to the little ones. All had something to eat. Kids laid on the floor and slept until morning. Father had the team of horses and bobsled in the livery stable. It was a long drive across rocky fields or prairie until we got to where was to be home. They say Sena, Anna and Ella cried all the way. We were soon settled. Then it was up to clear land of stones and rocks with one horse and a stone boat<sup>v</sup>. There were plenty of stones. We kids were along – father picking stones that we could carry. They were dumped in huge piles all over the field. Took years. Father with a sulky plow<sup>vi</sup> and three horses had to break land.

In 1906 or 1907, the house was built by Miller Langseth from Nome and his men. Also a shelter for horses, cows and chickens. Later a lean-to for young stock.

Those days it seemed all farm people had hired girls and some hired men. Didn't take long before Sena, Anna and Ella had jobs. In a couple years, Sena and Anna had good jobs in Valley City. Sena worked for a commissioner and family for 15 years until she married. Anna started for lawyer Engler and family, but soon had a job in the alterations department in Chaffee store in Valley City until she married the shoe manager. Chaffee store was the best.

By 1928 both families were at the coast. Later Nelda and Lawrence, and in 1959 Emil and I landed here. It was a good move. Had many good years and a lovely home. Now Emil has been gone 6 years.

Love to you folks,  
Aunt Agnes

*This letter was transcribed and edited for clarity in March 2003 by Tricia Velure Nissen. She is the daughter of John Velure, granddaughter of William Velure, and great-niece of Agnes.*

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<sup>i</sup> Agnes was born on April 17, 1896 in Ruthton, Minnesota. She died April 16, 1992.

<sup>ii</sup> This refers to the Velure farm of today, where John Velure and Todd Velure reside and farm.

<sup>iii</sup> "The place you mentioned" probably refers to the original farm where the family lived when they arrived in North Dakota. This farm was located less than a mile north of the farm where they later settled (the one known today as the Velure farm).

<sup>iv</sup> "Helga" is assumed to be Helga Lofthus, Johanna Velure's sister.

<sup>v</sup> A stone boat is a flat plank with blades on the bottom to run through the soil.

<sup>vi</sup> A sulky plow is a single plow that could be pulled by a horse with one man behind it.