

[The following information was secured from Mrs. Peter Hahn by Irene Persons on Wednesday, March 24, 1937.]

Mrs. Peter Hahn, formerly Margareta Holl, lives at 180 Sherburne, St. Paul, Minnesota. She will be ninety years old on November 10, 1937. Mrs. Hahn's parents, Frank and Frances Holl, left Bavaria, Germany, for the United States when Mrs. Hahn was about 6 years old. Some time was spent by the family in Chicago. While there, Frank Holl decided to join a party of several other families planning to homestead in the vicinity of what is now New Ulm, Minnesota.

The site chosen for a homestead was about 3 or 4 miles from New Ulm in a locality known as Milford. There was no town there, according to Mrs. Hahn, so perhaps this was the name of a township.

During their first years on the homestead, the Holl family lived in a one room shanty. There was no flooring, only the hard loam. The covering or roof of this primitive shelter consisted of bundles of slew grass. This grass grew very high and was unusually coarse in texture. Tied in bundles, it served as roofing for the settlers' cabins. Light entered the Holl cabin through one six-paned window. The stove pipe passed through one of the squares that had no glass. The stove itself had been purchased by Mr. Holl in St. Paul. It stood on 4 legs and had two lids at the rear for cooking. On winter nights the stove's front doors were opened in order that the family might have some illumination. There were no candles at that time.

Since the Holls were unable to purchase horses after their arrival on the homestead, it was necessary for Mr. Holl and his wife to plow up what earth they could. This they did by hand with hoes. Under such conditions, of course, it was possible

to plow only a limited amount of space. The first crop consisted of potatoes.

The diet during these first years on the homestead, Mrs. Hahn said, was exceedingly monotonous - chiefly potatoes, bread made from corn meal and saleratus, and some salted meat. During the summer months there were a few wild plums and strawberries, but the supply was scanty. The corn meal used for the bread was first dried in the oven and then ground in a coffee mill that had been purchased in St. Paul. The salted meat was also the result of a trip to St. Paul. Sometimes, the men in the neighborhood would purchase a hog or a part of a cow together while in St. Paul for supplies.

There was no school in the district so Mrs. Hahn did not learn to read or write until her own children attended school.

Several years before the Indian uprising at New Ulm, the Holls had befriended an old Indian in need of food. After this kindly gesture on the part of the Holls, the Indian always visited them whenever he was in the neighborhood. This visit usually occurred during the winter or spring. Whenever he appeared in the spring he brought wild duck or goose eggs for Mrs. Holl to bake for him. After the eggs were baked he would go off with his pony. This pony was harnessed between two shafts which, in turn, dragged a kind of pouch made from a blanket or animal skin. This held his baggage - what there was of it.

The Indian was a man past middle age with stooped shoulders. Mrs. Hahn never knew his name, but she understood that he lived in what was called "the big woods", between New Ulm and Shakopee.

At the time of the Indian uprising the Holl family consisted of seven children: Margareta (Mrs. Hahn), John, Francis, Anna, Maria (now Mrs. Furber of St. Paul), Josephine, and a baby, Henry,

who died in the autumn following the uprising. There was a barn on the farm at this time and about 11 or 12 head of cattle, including several calves.

Mrs. Hahn's father was preparing to thrash. In order to lay in a store of supplies to feed the men who were to assist him, Mr. Holl, his wife, and youngest child went to New Ulm. About an hour after their departure, the old Indian appeared and commenced gesticulating excitedly. Mrs. Hahn did not understand him, nor did she and her brothers and sisters pay much attention to him. At this time a farmer drove by in a wagon with his family, and the old Indian practically forced the Holl children into the wagon, and no doubt saving their lives by his act. This was the last time the Holls ever saw the Indian.

When the children reached New Ulm they found everything in tumult. Across the main road into the town a trench had been dug and men stood guard in it. The Holl children were left by the farmer at the Krohne [?] grocery store which was already crowded with women and children. Mrs. Hahn said they appeared to be more dazed than excited. In this store the Holl children found their mother and brother. Eventually, the store became so crowded that Mrs. Holl and her youngest child sat on the steps leading down into the cellar. In the evening the children began to cry, and Mrs. Hahn milked a cow in a barn next door for them.

Next day Mrs. Hahn went out to search for her father. She found him in the trench with the other men. Still later, she brought him some food. On the second or third day after her arrival the militia came. Mrs. Hahn thought that it was on the third day that wounded were carried into Seidel's [?] hotel. She and Mrs. Fogel [?] hunted for bandages for the wounded



and washed soiled ones.

Later the Hollis, together with other refugees, were taken to St. Peter. Some of the "church ladies" set food out on a lawn for them. From St. Peter the family came to St. Paul.

The autumn following the uprising the grandfather of Dr. Myerding invited the Holl family to stay in a house of his in New Ulm. Mr. Holl accepted this invitation and the family spent the winter in New Ulm. Everything on the homestead, they found, had been destroyed by the Indians. Naturally, they were overwhelmed by their loss. They had no funds whatever, and it was only through the generosity of Frank and Louis Foxlenger [?] (brothers of Mrs. Holl living in Buffalo, New York) that they were able to live through the winter. In the spring the family returned to the farm.

Mrs. Hahn, however, did not spend the winter in New Ulm with her parents. She remained in St. Paul, working for a family of seven for seven dollars a month. Her employer was a locksmith who lived or maintained a shop on 6th Street between Robert and Jackson.

Later Mrs. Hahn married her husband, Peter Hahn, and became the mother of ten children. At present she is living with her youngest son, John.