

Johnson, a connection that continued for eight years, or until 1897, when he became an independent contractor in the painting and decorating line and has since been very successfully thus engaged. Mr. Eklund is a member of the Moorhead Commercial Club and takes an active interest in the general business affairs of his home town, for years having been one of the most earnest "boosters" of that city. He aided in the organization of the Moorhead Building Corporation and has been vice-president of the same since its organization.

In 1885, the year after his arrival in this country, Gust Eklund was united in marriage to Margaret Nordine, who also was born in Sweden and who was but a child when her parents, Jens Nordine and wife, came to Minnesota and settled in the neighboring county of Otter Tail. To that union eleven children have been born, two of whom died in infancy, the others being as follow: Ewin G., who is now engaged in educational work in Boston, Massachusetts; Rudolph, who is engaged in the jewelry business at Moorhead; Florence, who is a teacher in the public schools of Warren, this state; Anna K., who is now attending college at Cambridge, Massachusetts; Margaret V., who has just completed the course in the Moorhead high school, and Ila, Horace, Ruth and Iva, who are still in school. Mr. and Mrs. Eklund are members of the Congregational church and take a proper interest in church work and in the general good works of their home town. Mr. Eklund is a thirty-second degree Mason and a noble of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. He also is affiliated with the local lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, of the Ancient Order of United Workmen and of the Order of Yeomen and takes a warm interest in the affairs of these several organizations.

ELISHA C. SPRAGUE.

There is no positive rule for achieving success, and yet in the life of the successful man there are always lessons which might well be followed. The man who gains prosperity in any vocation is he who can see and utilize the opportunity that comes in his path. Such a man is Elisha C. Sprague, a real-estate dealer and farmer, of Moorhead, Clay county.

Mr. Sprague was born on November 26, 1880, in Moorhead, a son of Elisha C. and Louise (Carlson) Sprague. The mother was born in Christiania, Norway. When about fifteen years of age she came with her uncle



MRS. E.C. SPRAGUE



E. C. SPRAGUE

and aunt to America, and they located in Aurora, Illinois. Her parents never came to this country, both dying in Norway. The death of the mother of the subject of this sketch occurred in 1893, she then being forty years of age. The senior Elisha C. Sprague was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and came from Chicago to Clay county, Minnesota, about 1876, one of the pioneers of the Red River country, and did much to develop this section of the state. He devoted his active life to agricultural pursuits on a large scale, and to the real-estate business, and operated about ten thousand acres of land, raising immense quantities of grain and large herds of live stock. He owned about twenty-five thousand acres up and down the valley of the Red River of the North, his land extending many miles from Crookston down the river to Breckenridge and over to Fergus Falls. He was a man of much executive ability, sound judgment and business acumen and was rated as one of the big ranchmen of the state in the early days. He helped organize Clay county and helped organize a company to build the railroad from Moorhead to Breckenridge, which was later absorbed by the Great Northern system, of which James J. Hill was the promoter, and was also a heavy stockholder in many important enterprises throughout this section of the state. He made his home in Moorhead from 1878 until his death. He was one of the most influential and best-known men in the western part of the state, a man of progressive ideas, well informed on current topics of the day, public spirited, broad minded, and enjoyed the good will and respect of all classes. Although active in all movements having for their object the general upbuilding of Clay county, both in a material and civil way, he was never a seeker of public honors, never caring for political office, preferring to devote his attention to his vast business interests, striving only to be a good citizen in the best sense of the term. His death occurred in 1896, at the advanced age of eighty-four years.

To Elisha C. and Louise Sprague the following children were born: Benjamin F., who was associated with his brother, Elisha C., Jr., in business from 1900 to 1906, who also owned farming lands and who made his home in Moorhead until his death on April 11, 1906; Elisha C., Jr., the subject of this sketch; Mrs. Emma Butts, who lives in Los Angeles, California, and Mrs. Bessie Machrise, who also lives in Los Angeles.

The junior Elisha C. Sprague grew to manhood in Moorhead and there attended the public schools, later studying one year in college at Worcester, Massachusetts. Upon returning home he took up the live-stock and real-estate business, together with farming, beginning his business career when

only sixteen years of age. In 1903 he dropped the live-stock business and since then has devoted his attention exclusively to the real-estate business and to farming, now the owner of two thousand acres of rich farm land, some of which lies near Hawley and some near Moorhead. He keeps several renters on his land. He farmed his land personally from 1901 to 1903, inclusive. His splendid modern home is located on part of the land formerly owned by his father, the latter of whom sold parts of his land from time to time. The estate is now valued at about three hundred thousand dollars and has been in court since 1904.

Elisha C. Sprague, Jr., was married in Oregon in 1911, to Grace Wise, who was born on August 27, 1884, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where her parents still reside, her father being engaged there in the furniture business. Politically, Mr. Sprague is a Republican, but he has never been an office seeker; however, he has always been a booster along all legitimate lines for Moorhead and Clay county, where he is well and favorably known, being regarded by all as a worthy son of a worthy sire and a man of many commendable personal attributes.

OLE J. BREKKE.

Ole J. Brekke, a retired farmer of Wild Rice township, where he owns a quarter section of well-improved land, was born in Tordenskjold township, Otter Tail county, Minnesota, September 3, 1868, being the first white child born in that township. He is the son of Sever O. and Anna (Rorgo) Brekke, both of whom were born and reared in Norway, where they married. Together they emigrated to America in 1866 and settled first in Dean county, Wisconsin, but after remaining there a short time they moved to Winneshiek county, Iowa, remaining there only a little while. Feeling that their opportunity to establish themselves permanently in a comfortable home lay farther north, they started out in the spring of 1868 in a wagon behind an ox-team to Otter Tail county, Minnesota. After a journey of three weeks duration, they arrived in that county and immediately pre-empted one hundred sixty acres of land and established their home where Ole J. Brekke was born in 1868. The Brekke family remained on their quarter section, which they improved until the spring of 1878, at which time they again followed their team of oxen farther northward to Norman county, the journey taking just seven days. There they located on disputed land, in what is now Wild Rice town-