

official trusts, and he has served as township assessor for twenty-four years and is now the incumbent of that office. Being a progressive farmer, Mr. Voje has been deeply interested in the establishment of adequate marketing and credit facilities in the community, and has helped to organize the creamery, the farmers elevator and the Farmers State Bank, all of Hendrum. Politically, Mr. Voje is a Republican. Whenever any deserving movement is started in the community for its social, civil or material betterment, it finds in him an ardent and wholesouled supporter.

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### PETER THOMAS.

Peter Thomas, a well-known and prosperous farmer, owner of two hundred and forty acres of prime land in Mary township, Norman county, and former member of the school board, is a native of the state of Minnesota, born in the city of St. Paul, May 12, 1857, a son of Jacob and Mary (McLean) Thomas, for the latter of whom the township of Mary was named. Jacob Thomas was a farmer, originally entering a homestead tract containing one hundred and sixty acres, which he improved and developed, and as he prospered in his farming operations he added to his land holdings, finally becoming the owner of three hundred and twenty acres in Mary township, on which he carried on general farming for many years. He died at Minneapolis, where he had lived retired, in February, 1912, at the age of eighty years. The land is now owned by his daughters. His wife, Mary McLean, died in 1913, also aged eighty years. They were devout members of the Catholic church and earnest advocates of all movements designed to forward the best interests of the community in which they resided. They were the parents of the following children: Mary, married, and living in Minneapolis, this state; Peter, the subject of this sketch; Melissa, Alice and Fannie, residing in Minneapolis; Emma, married and living in Kendall, North Dakota; Helena, unmarried, who also is living in Kendall, and Bertram, a banker, living in Hansboro, North Dakota. Jacob Thomas was ever active in matters relating to the public welfare and served for a number of years on the school board and also on the township board.

Peter Thomas was educated in the schools of his home district and at the age of twenty-one, in 1878, he homesteaded one hundred and sixty acres of land in section 14, Mary township, later buying eighty acres, and is now the owner of two hundred and forty acres of as good land as is to

be found in the township. In the early stages of his farming operations he used oxen to carry on the work, but as he progressed in his labors he gradually employed modern methods and has now one of the best farm plants in the district in which he resides. Mr. Thomas carried out many substantial improvements and erected several good buildings, and is now engaged in general farming and has been very successful.

Peter Thomas was united in marriage to Regina House, who was born in Canada in 1862. Her father owned a farm of three hundred and twenty acres north of Mary township and sold it in 1886, then going to Michigan, where he died in 1895. Her mother died in Missouri in 1878 at the age of sixty-one years. She has two brothers and one sister living. To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas the following children were born: Harry, married and living in Delavan, Wisconsin; Mrs. Annie Sorsen, married and living in Mary township; Emma, married, living in Racine, Wisconsin, and Elizabeth and Edna, who live in Mary township. The family are members of the Catholic church and are earnestly interested in all its good works, as well as in the good works of the community at large. Mr. Thomas served on the school board for about twenty years and he helped to organize school district No. 36. He is a shareholder in the Telephone Company of Perley and also holds shares in a potato warehouse at Borup, and in many other directions gives of his services to advance the general welfare of the district and township.

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### JOHN A. MERKINS.

John A. Merkins, a substantial and well-known farmer of McDonaldsville township, Norman county, renter of three hundred and twenty acres of his father's choice land, and who has lived in this county all of his life, was born on his father's homestead in Pleasant View township, Norman county, January 1, 1879, son of John and Mary (Ackaff) Merkins, well-known farming people, who are now living retired at Ada.

John and Mary Merkins were both natives of Germany, where they were educated and reared. They immigrated to the United States in 1887 and spent a short time in Red Wing, Minnesota, and then moved to Pleasant View township, Norman county, where John Merkins homesteaded one hundred and sixty acres of land. He immediately commenced the task of preparing the land for crops and in time was well under way, success attending his efforts from the very beginning. As he prospered in his agri-