sought a place to establish his home. He first rented a small farm in Jasper County, Iowa, but remained there for less than a year, going in the spring of 1866 to Cherokee County in northwestern Iowa where he homesteaded on the NW¼ of Section 28, Township 92 (Sheridan Township), Range 41. This rich and now populously settled part of the State then had only a few scattered settlers. The country was a beautiful rolling prairie, carpeted with wild grasses and flowers. Along the course of the Little Sioux River were bold bluffs heavily timbered with hardwood.

Not till 1871 when the Illinois Central Railway was built through to Sioux City did the town of Cherokee begin to appear at the present site. It had at first only a depot and a postoffice. Meriden, five miles north of the Roddis homestead, was then called Hazzard. Cleghorn was four miles distant from the farm. The Spinhorneys, Walters, Pecks, and Zimmers came in the summer of 1868 as well as the Hogans, Reynolds, and O'Boyles. The Lauries, Addeys, and Peter Holm came still later. English, Scotch, German, and Irish names were found in about equal numbers among these early settlers. Laurie was Scotch and one of the daughters was named Annie. Peter Holm was a Dane.

The first shelter built on the Roddis homestead was of sod. This was used for one summer while the owner built a frame house 12 x 20 in size. The lumber for this house was hauled from Sioux City, a distance of seventy miles and a four day journey by team. The main part of the farm house was added in 1875, a structure 24 x 24 with 12 foot posts, a pretentious building for those days and that pioneer community.

The first trees planted on the homestead were from maple seed secured from Perry. They came from the banks of the Sioux River a short distance from the site of the present town of Cherokee. Roddis broke the tough stubborn sod of

the prairie with an axe and planted the seeds. This was in the spring of 1869. At the same time he set out several saplings of maple, cottonwood, and a number of willow cuttings. The same year he set out an orchard. It comprised an area of about one quarter of an acre and contained fifteen Miner plum trees and a number of Hyslop and Transcendent crabs. A single representative of the Wealthy apple, which had recently been developed at Excelsior, Minnesota, was added to the trees of this small plot. This fine apple had been developed by Peter M. Gideon from seed of the Cherry crab that had come from Bangor, Maine. The fruit was first described in the *Western Farmer* in 1869 and it was the account in this periodical that led to the planting of what was probably the first Wealthy in the State of Iowa. At the same time currants, gooseberries, blackberries, and raspberries were planted, and a barberry hedge. The orchard was constantly enlarged and eventually contained about ten acres. The setting out of forest trees was carried on at the same time. By 1885 this grove consisted of about five acres of soft maple, box elder, cottonwood, willow, larch, locust, and Black Hills pine. In addition there was about one acre of black walnut and butternut trees and a vineyard of the same extent containing black, white, and red grapes. A more unusual venture was the planting of a large mulberry grove not only for the fruit but for the purpose of feeding silkworms. The trees, which were the red mulberry variety, grew well and produced a good quality and quantity of mulberries, but the growing of silkworms was a failure due to the long cold winters and the lack of practical knowledge of the subject on the part of the amateur silk grower.

It must be remembered that at this time it was generally believed that many of the varieties of fruit planted could not be grown so far north in the Mississippi Valley. Doubt

and open derision was expressed by many at attempts to grow apples, cherries, vegetables, flowers, and many varieties of shade trees in that climate. The demonstration that they could be grown successfully was of great importance from the standpoint of the horticultural history of the area and many orchards and flower and vegetable gardens of northwestern Iowa would not have been planted so early if it had not been for this work in Cherokee County.

Another Cherokee County pioneer who was equally interested was H. M. Hinckley, a historian of many of the features of the early settlement of the county, who is still living. Mr. Hinckley was a warm friend of Mr. Roddis and like him was greatly interested in horticulture. He was the only early settler who encouraged and assisted the latter and he was himself a pioneer grower of many varieties of fruit in the new county. Both of these men closely followed the course of Professor J. L. Budd's expedition to Russia in search of hardy varieties of apples. It was Professor Budd's contention that as the apple was grown successfully in Russia in a climate as severe as that of northern Iowa, the varieties found there might be suitable for the colder sections of the United States. Professor Budd brought back to Ames the first specimens of the valuable Oldenberg group of apples and established contact with Russian pomologists, particularly Dr. E. Regel and Dr. R. Shroeder that led to the introduction of hundreds of varieties of Russian apples by the Ames Experiment Station and the United States Department of Agriculture. The first Duchess of Oldenberg or Charlamoff apples and the first of the justly celebrated Siberian crabs, the Tetofski, to be planted in Cherokee County were on the Hinckley and Roddis homesteads, and it was these two men who began to grow these important varieties on a commercial scale as well as to distribute grafts and buds to neighbors.

An even more important event was the introduction of red clover. The first crop of this plant grown in Sheridan Township and probably the first in that section of the State was grown on the Roddis farm in 1878. The stand was very poor but the second year there was a splendid crop. The knowledge of the value of legumes as a fertilizing agent was fairly widespread and as soon as this experiment had succeeded clover became a common crop throughout the region.

During the first two summers Mr. Roddis had only one horse but he began to acquire stock as soon as the land was fenced. In 1885 he had a hundred head of grade horned cattle, about a hundred and fifty hogs, a number of sheep, and fifteen horses as well as chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, guineas, and pea fowls. With this increase in live stock he rented additional land adjacent to the homestead and farmed at that time about five hundred acres. In 1881 he brought in a registered Shorthorn bull, King Philip II, the first in western Cherokee County.

Grain at first was cut with the cradle. This was simply a scythe with a small frame secured back of the blade to catch the grain as it fell. As the cradle was swung back for the next stroke, the grain cut on the previous stroke was allowed to slip off the frame to the ground. The advantage over the scythe was in leaving the grain in a long windrow easily raked into bundles. Binding was done by hand with a wisp of grain. It required a powerful man to swing a cradle all day in heavy grain and two acres was considered a good day's work.

The next improvement in harvesting small grain was the "dropper". This was a horse drawn mower with a cradle to catch the grain and a reel to brush it off the cradle and drop it on the ground, when a sufficient amount for a bundle had accumulated. This was followed by the Marsh har-

vester which was simply a dropper with a platform on which one or two men stood and bound the bundles before they were thrown to the ground. It was really a binder with man power binding. The change to a mechanical binding device came with the advent of the McCormick self binder. The horse drawn mower with sliding sickle appeared in the early 70's as did the horse drawn rake and the riding cultivator.

Corn was then as now the principal Iowa crop. Many of the settlers came from the corn States of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and were impressed at once by the adaptability of the soil and climate of Iowa for corn growing. The prairie sod was first broken with a heavy breaking plow often drawn by oxen for there were not many heavy draft horses in the western country and light horses were unsuited to such work. Corn was invariably husked standing in the field and was not cut and shocked as in the smaller fields of timbered country. During several years when the price of corn was but 8 to 10 cents a bushel, it was often burned for fuel. This was before the day of the power corn sheller. After this machine became commonly used, the cobs only were burned. The whole corn made excellent fuel, developing a hot fire that did not have to be replenished as frequently as the faster burning cobs.

Wheat and oats were about the only other field crops commonly grown in addition to corn and hay. The latter was usually timothy. There was a little barley and rye planted and small amounts of buckwheat and millet. Most of the grain was fed to stock and marketed on the hoof. Every fall after the railroad had been built the settlers would ship steers, hogs, and sheep to Chicago. Prices were low compared to the present. In the following table the prices of beef, pork, and mutton as well as the common crop grains are given for 1866, 1876, and 1928.

TABLE OF PRICES OF LIVE STOCK AND GRAIN

	1866	1876	September, 1928
Cattle	$4.00	$3.80	$17.00–$18.60
Hogs	8.69	6.81	12.15– 13.30
Sheep		3.60	11.75– 15.35
Wheat	1.361	1.032	1.095
Oats	.314	.316	.415
Corn	.54	.446	1.015

No account of agricultural conditions in Cherokee County between 1868 and 1890 is complete without reference to the grasshopper years. This "plague of locusts" came in the late summer of 1873. The greater part of the small grain was in the shock, though about 25 per cent of it was yet standing. The corn was in the tassel and the silk. One old settler described the onslaught by saying that the locusts came down like "the wolf on the fold". Vast clouds of grasshoppers swept in and settled on the fields. There have been many skeptics who have expressed doubts as to the stories that the sun was obscured by the moving masses of insects but the evidence seems clear and certain that such was the case. In any event the grasshoppers ate up the crops in an incredibly short time. They ate the silk and tassel of the corn. All the standing grain was riddled. Grain in the shock escaped in some measure. The pests left in September but returned in the following spring and ruined all the small grain west of the Sioux River. The young growing grain was cut off to the ground. They left again "just ahead of a cold northwest storm" one narrator informed me and never returned in sufficient numbers to entirely destroy the crops though there were some other bad grasshopper years notably in 1876 when they did much damage. This grasshopper was the Rocky Mountain locust, the *Melanoplus spretus* of the entomologists. It was estimated that the States of Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and

Minnesota sustained losses amounting to many millions of dollars in the years from 1873 to 1876 and thousands of farmers in the northern part of the middle west were brought to the point of starvation.

Mr. Roddis was also one of the pioneer school teachers of Cherokee County and taught the school of his own district for nearly thirty years. The occupation of farmer and school teacher went well together, the winter season on the farm furnishing a favorable time for outside duties. He was also the secretary of the township school board for twenty-one consecutive years. Although several times urged to run for a county office or the State legislature, he refused to do so and aside from the chairmanship of the township school board held no other office except that of justice of the peace in which capacity he served many years both in Iowa and Minnesota.

In 1896, with many of the children grown and making homes of their own, Mr. Roddis, then fifty-five years of age, moved to central Minnesota and bought 184 acres of timber land on the north shore of Lake Osakis. This was in Todd County in the hardwood timber belt, the heart of the lake country and one of the most beautiful parts of the State. The work of opening a new farm here was even more difficult than on the Iowa prairie. Towns were relatively near and the country fairly well settled but clearing the land of timber and underbrush was a heavy task. "A strong back and a weak mind" was the formula of the old backwoodsmen for the grubbing of stumps. This farm in Minnesota was a fine piece of land, the soil a black sandy loam fertilized by centuries of accumulations of leaf mold and decaying timber. Wheat was the staple crop of farmers. Scarcely any corn was grown, for it was believed that the summers were too short and cold. A settler from the corn belt and an experimentalist in agriculture like Henry

Roddis was not ready to accept such a view. His optimism was justified and he produced a field of six acres that brought in 300 bushels of fine hard corn. This would not be remarkable now but it was looked upon as unusual by farmers of the vicinity at that time. The earlier maturing and finer ears were selected for next season's crop and much seed was sold to neighbors with the result that by actual demonstration as well as by his enthusiastic belief that good corn yields could be obtained in Minnesota, he did much to encourage the growing of this great crop in that section of the State.

The dairy work of Professor T. L. Haecker of the College of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota was beginning to be felt throughout the State at that time and interest in dairy farming was increasing. The building up of a good grade dairy herd and a share in the establishment of a creamery in the north part of Gordon Township were among the tasks to which the former Iowa homesteader devoted himself. He was also a believer in hogs as an adjunct of the dairy herd and was in the habit of citing Lorenzo di Medici as an early exponent of this combination. He also kept a small flock mostly Southdowns and Shropshires (he was particularly partial to the former); he favored Barred Plymouth Rocks as a utility farm fowl but he was opposed to the dual purpose cow. Both by example and voice he was thus an advocate of what we now call diversified farming.

It can be imagined that the man who planted one of the first large orchards, vineyards, and mulberry groves in northwestern Iowa would not forget horticulture in Minnesota. He devoted himself here, however, to small fruits, particularly strawberries, planting an acre on the west side of the knoll on which stood the farm house. Bederwood, Glen Mary, Senator Dunlap, and Warfield were the princi-

pal varieties and the bed proved very prolific. He experimented with the single plant, matted bed, and matted row system and decided in favor of the last. Some of the native wild strawberries were transplanted from the nearby woods to see if their flavor could not be retained and the size of the berry increased by cultivation. Both he and wife were ardent floriculturists and large flower gardens formed a part of both the Iowa and Minnesota farms. Sweet briar roses, peonies, the old fashioned shrubs such as snowballs, lilacs, spireas, flowering currants, and syringas, surrounded the house and in the flower garden were such old favorites as monkshoods, asters, columbines, larkspurs, canterbury bells, gladioli, hollyhocks, golden glows, fox gloves, phlox, and stocks or gilly-flowers. At one time they had seventy varieties of roses alone.

The vegetable garden was richly stocked with every sort of garden crop and included many of the less usual sort of garden products such as okra, salsify, broccoli, parsnips, lentils, kohlrabi, water cress, corn salad, and Brussels sprouts. His green peas were his particular garden pride and he was accustomed in later years to plant three kinds, the celebrated dwarf variety, Tom Thumb, the equally well known Telephone pea, and the large Champion of England. He made new plantings of these every two weeks and had green peas nearly all summer. An attempt to grow peanuts on the Minnesota farm was, however, a failure. The garden always contained many of the potherbs so commonly used in French and continental cookery such as anise, caraway, sage, summer savory, dill, and sweet marjoram. One of the peculiarities of the garden was the attempt to attract bees, butterflies, and humming birds to it. For this purpose he planted the *Monarda didyma,* known to beekeepers as Bee Balm. A plant called the butterfly weed was used to attract butterflies, and larkspur to draw humming birds.

The home itself was rather remarkable. Built on a wooded knoll on the site of an old Indian village, it was a striking object from the lake or the opposite shore. The frame was of oak, the rooms spacious and a square tower had been planned to add to its character as well as its comfort. An area of about twelve acres had been retained about the house as a sort of park, the underbrush having been cleared away and dead and fallen timber removed while the fine trees of the original forest were left standing. Such a place did not take much effort to sell, and an opportunity occurring in 1904, the farm that was bought eight years before at $9.00 an acre was sold for $55. A farm directly across the lake was purchased but the death of his wife led him to sell this also. His children were grown and he was alone.

He began to feel the long cold winters of the north and after looking about for some time went to Missouri to develop a 325 acre tract of wood land for one of his married daughters. This land was in the Ozark Mountains near Lebanon, Missouri, in the heart of the Shepherd of the Hills, and Jesse James country. It was covered with oak timber. The task was too much for a man of his years and he was persuaded to go to Miami, Florida, where another daughter was living. Here, however, he would not stay in Miami itself. He had not used a portion of his homestead right and he filed on an 80 acre tract near the present site of the town of Homestead, south of Miami. The building of a house, the planting of grape fruit and orange groves, vegetable and flower gardens, and the study of the semi-tropical agriculture all new and interesting, occupied him to his death which occurred in 1913 from broncho-pneumonia, the "friend of the aged" as Osler has called it. He was ill but four days and had previously been in active and vigorous health. He had pioneered in four States.

We are a little inclined to be astonished today at the courage of these early settlers who so calmly faced loneliness, isolation, monotony, separation from medical aid, and an almost utter absence of what we call the "amenities of life". But they did not need our pity, for as a matter of fact the records left by letters, reminiscences, and the chronicles of these early communities show that the people were comfortable, contented, and happy. Nearly all were young, in good health, and were building homes and independence for themselves and their children. The pleasures of family life and work with crops, live stock, fruit, flowers, building homes and barns filled their time full of interesting tasks, enjoyment, and accomplishments. Then as the communities became more populous, the church and school added neighborhood interests. There were singing schools, church suppers, "harvest homes", dances, spelling bees, and similar social festivities that gave opportunities for enjoyment to young and old. Social distinctions were unknown and envy from this source reduced to a minimum. That there were hardships and suffering is certain but it must not be forgotten that there was pleasure and happiness as well.

We are beginning to realize that these plow pioneers, the successors of the hunter and fur trader, were the real makers of our immense farm empire. They were the agricultural Daniel Boones of the new country. There is no desire to belittle the work of the men who built the railroads, the bridges, the telegraph, and the towns, but only to place beside them and ask that credit as empire builders be given to the hundreds of thousands of men — bold, intelligent, and forward looking — who first tilled the new country, planted the first orchards in it, reared the first herds and flocks there, and labored to improve both plants and animals. The Indian fighter and other similar pictur-

esque figures have occupied the attraction of the popular historian and the men who built up the farms and developed a new variety of fruit or improved the yield of oats or corn have been neglected. The career of Henry Roddis has a particular significance in that he was a representative of this type of pioneer; the narrative of his life and work portrays also the life and work of thousands of others whose value to the country and to agricultural progress has been great but who have received little credit or recognition by the historian.

Louis H. Roddis

Washington D. C.