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MEMOIRS OF TWO ECCENTRIC PERSONALITIES OF MANITOWOC'S NORWEGIAN COMMUNITY

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Andrew Anderson Veblen was born in Ozaukee County in 1848, the first surviving child of parents immigrated from Valdres in Norway the year before. In 1854 the family settled on a farm in Cato a mile or so north of what is now Valders. They lived here until they moved to Minnesota in 1865. (Andrew's famous brother, the political economist Thorstein Veblen, was born in Cato in 1857.) Andrew Veblen went on to a career as mathematician and physicist at the University of Iowa, but retained a lifelong interest in Norwegian culture and the Norwegian settlement of the United States. This interest led him to be a chief organizer and first president of Valdres Samband, a society of natives of Valdres and their descendants. This was the first American **bygdelag,** as these organizations of persons from one locale are called in Norwegian, and Veblen is honored as the father of the **bygdelag** movement. Valdres Samband and several other **bygdelags** are still active today, though not on the same scale as in the early decades of this century.

Samband is the official organ of Valdres Samband, and Veblen, in addition to his other activities in the society, contributed a number of articles over the years. Of particular interest is a set of four articles published in 1915 and 1916, in which he recounts his memories of his early life in the Norwegian settlement in Manitowoc County. Two of these have been published in translation in the Manitowoc-Two Rivers **Herald-Times-Reporter:** "Christmas in the Manitowoc Woods", 24 December 1981, p. A-2, and 15 April 1982, p. 12; and "The First Schoolhouse in Our District in Manitowoc County", 13 September 1982, p. 10, and 14 September 1982, p. 8; the remaining two appear below. All four center on the topic of education, both formal and informal, in a pioneer community. At the time the Veblen family lived in Manitowoc County, the community was less than twenty years old. While conditions were obviously primitive at that time, these articles show that they were not quite so primitive as we in the 1980s may be inclined to imagine. Three classics of Scandinavian literature were available to the boy Andrew. The Norwegian immigrants were highly literate, and parental concern for their children's education is a prominent feature of all three articles translated here.

Veblen's articles about "Old Berger" (**Samband**, No. 89, September 1915, pp. 653-661) and "Fat Rode" (**Samband,** No. 91, November 1915, pp. 25-32) inspired another son of the Manitowoc-Kewaunee Norwegian colony to submit his own recollections to **Samband** (No. 94, February 1916, pp. 230-235), perhaps because they were rather more negative than Veblen's. The man's name does not appear with the article, which is signed "By a man from the north end of the Manitowoc woods", but it is clear that the author is Carl Johan Magnus Jensen Gronlid, Norwegian Lutheran pastor in Waterville, Iowa; the anonymity was apparently due to the subject matter and informal style not becoming to a pastor. He was born in Two Rivers in 1855, and grew up on a farm in Carlton, a mile north of Tisch Mills. Like Veblen, he was the oldest child of recent immigrants. Though his parents were from Oslo, not Valdres, he subscribed to **Samband.**

Valdres was the home of perhaps half the Norwegian settlers in Manitowoc County, and gave its name to the Norwegian Lutheran church in the western part of the settlement, which in turn gave its name to the modern village of Valders some forty years later. ("Valders" is the spelling that was current in the middle of the 1800s.) The church in the eastern part of the settlement (where the Norwegian Lutheran pastor lived) was given the name Gjerpen after the Norwegian home of a much smaller group who were prominent in pioneer days. Gjerpen in Norway is just outside the Town of Skien, a seaport on the southeast coast and the home of "Captain" Rode. The Norwegian population of Manitowoc City, a substantial number of whom were engaged in the maritime industries, came in large part from Norway's southeast coastal area.

No information is available on Rode other than what appears in these articles. Of Berger, however, we know that he immigrated in 1854 and made his declaration of intent to become an American citizen the following year, as recorded in the court records of Manitowoc County. This document states that he was born in about 1802. Also in 1855 he bought land in Carlton, just outside of Tisch Mills, which he sold in 1870. His further history is unknown.

OLD BERGER

by Andrew A. Veblen

Even if the pioneer period in the oldest Norwegian settlements was characterized by many privations and difficult living conditions, compared to the present with its abundance of all the things that make life pleasant, still those days had their special institutions which have disappeared like those times, but which did a lot to lighten the labor of the pioneers and to provide variety and distraction. Among these I might mention the old-fashioned spelling bees in the humble log schoolhouses, logging bees, and barn raisings, which all provided great opportunities for social contact. And then there were the peddlers who traveled around with thread, buttons, lace, calico, tablecloths (both oilcloth and linen), and everything you can imagine. Every settlement had its more or less remarkable characters and eccentrics. They might be residents or itinerants, and the latter had their own circuit of several neighboring settlements which they visited. But the most numerous and most interesting were the local resident characters. One who made an

especially deep impression on me was Old Berger.

It was before the Civil War, and we were living on the edge of the famous Valdres settlement in Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, on the border between the Norwegians and the Irish. There was a German family near by, and a few Yankees who ran stores and sawmills. Our school district had been organized, and the primitive schoolhouse was built, but the school hadn't really started yet. And it was long before any kind of Norwegian school was held in the neighborhood.

I remember distinctly an evening at the beginning of winter. Father had stopped in at Pastor Ottesen's on his way home from town. And how it excited us children when he told us that we were going to get a tutor. The pastor had introduced Father to a man named Ole Pederson Berger. Of us children there were only three who were old enough to be interested, and I was the oldest. Those few days before our tutor arrived, we were both curious and fearful about what kind of person he would be.

Then finally one evening at dusk Father brought Berger home, and we saw a gray-haired man, old but forbidding-looking, wearing a tall hat and a long blue overcoat, with a fiddle case in one hand and an old carpetbag in the other. He walked in with an official military bearing, put down his bag, took off the very tall hat, and made a low bow. We saw that his gray hair was carefully wound like a wreath around a very smooth and shiny bald pate. My sister and brother had watched for their chance and withdrawn, but I, who was the biggest and the oldest, couldn't get out of it: I had to step up and say hello. It was hard to do, and the tears threatened to flow, and it wasn't any easier when he said that I shouldn't be afraid of proper folks. The thing about his attire which made the strongest impression on me was the blue stock which was bound around his neck, and was so wide and stiff that he had to keep his chin high. At any rate, the first impression was not reassuring. But next morning at the breakfast table I couldn't help staring at his friendly eyes, and his conversation with my parents and uncle was downright fascinating.

The living room was immediately arranged as a classroom, and before we knew it we were in full swing, with regular lesson hours and free hours. Soon everyone in the neighborhood knew how well it was going, and some of the neighbor children got permission to come to the "school". Among them was my friend Knut Rennun, who was my age, and the sons of Thomas Helle came too. He was the brother of Stefan Olsen Helle (or Kubakke), the founder of the Valdres colony in Manitowoc County. Later in the winter, Berger moved to Thomas Helle's to instruct his boys at their home.

Berger had come from Skedsmo, as I understood, and had been assistant to the sheriff there for a long time, until the sheriff died. He had expected to succeed him, but was disappointed. So he was discontented and emigrated to America, which he had long envisioned as freedom's promised land. Berger had become a democrat, as Europeans of the middle of the century understood the term, and after he came here he joined the Democratic Party because it had the right name, signifying everything that was most progressive and fair: in principle, and therefore presumably also in practice.

He was old when he came. He insisted that he was 60 years old, and that was about as young as he could claim to be if he hoped to be taken at his word. People thought that he was at least 70. He was a bachelor, and entirely unaccustomed to physical labor. But he took land back in the woods and courageously set about the work of clearing it entirely by himself. He said that he had built his own house without any help to speak of. He had cut the logs himself, and rolled them up to construct his little cottage. Later he built an addition the same size as the original house. Somebody who had visited him said that Berger had arranged it so that from his bed he could take wood from the woodpile and put it in the stove without getting up. Berger himself told that when it was really cold, he always made a good fire in the stove and let it get nice and warm before he got out of bed. The same man who had stopped in at Berger's had many funny stories to tell about the hermit's housekeeping and cooking. I suppose it would have to be fairly peculiar: an old bachelor, who had spent his youth and manhood without any practice preparing food and keeping house, managing without any female help.

When the long winter came, the loneliness finally got too depressing, and he was seized by the longing for association with other people. So he hiked to Manitowoc and visited such people as he felt were on his social level, more or less. The families in town who fulfilled this requirement were very few, and when his visit had been extended as long as good breeding permitted, he went out to the parsonage at Gjerpen Church a few miles away, and stayed with Reverend Ottesen and later with Reverend Biorn. It was during one of these visits at the parsonage that Father met him. Pastor Ottesen got the idea that it would be good for Berger to stay with us during the worst part of the winter and pay his keep by instructing us children. At the same time it would be very good for us and a relief for Father and Mother, who had to try to teach us a little reading themselves if we weren't to grow up heathens while the school situation was so poor.

Although we were afraid of him at the first meeting, it wasn't long before we were very fond of him. I remember how his friendly manner and interest won me over, so that when we parted after the six or seven weeks he stayed with us, it was even harder to hold back the tears than when his arrival scared us.

Earlier I had learned to write so that I knew the letters. Now I learned to write grammatically. In order to learn to use the punctuation marks and the capital letters correctly, according to the rules, I wrote from Berger's dictation a good part of **Synnove Solbakken**, which had found its way through the woods to our house. A year or so before, our neighbor Andrew Jackson (Anders Isaksen) had lent me Snorri's **Heimskringla**, and I had read it. Then we came into possession of an edition of **Frithjof's Saga** (in Norwegian translation), and I had learned a good share of that by heart. Now I had to learn the entire catechism, and during the weeks Berger was with us he laid down the rule that if I could recite everything he asked me from the catechism on Monday morning, then I would be free of that book for the rest of the week.

Arithmetic received the most attention in my lessons. Berger knew almost no English, so a regular English arithmetic book was useless. And there were no Norwegian arithmetic books to be had. The result was that he had to set up the rules for me, or dictate them, and I wrote them down in a blank book, together with problems all worked out to illustrate each rule. In this way I got a complete manuscript arithmetic book including whole and abstract numbers, the rule of three, fractions, and simple interest computation. This was the course, and it is proof that he was an excellent teacher, the fact that I knew this thoroughly when he left, although when he started I had only got to addition and carrying the tens, and subtraction was something entirely new. He demanded the multiplication table on Monday morning, together with the five parts of the catechism.

His methods had a geometrical regularity about them. Thus the pattern for adding fractions had the numbers arranged around five straight lines, which I thought of as representing Berger's stovepipe hat, with the common denominator dominating everything from its position above the hat's crown. I believe that Berger taught me very nearly his entire repertoire of arithmetic, because he often lamented that we couldn't attack decimals, a field he had never investigated. But it

was some consolation that you could get along with them.

I mentioned that he brought with him a fiddle case. He played the violin from written music, and looked with scorn upon other fiddlers who played by ear. When he played, he moved his mouth as if he was whispering the music over to himself. Once when several women came to the house in the afternoon, and there were some young girls with them who had heard that Berger could play the fiddle, they got him to tune up and oblige them with his art. They even danced a bit while he played, but I happened to hear one of them remark to another: "But he chews the tune!" Mother, like many others at that time, had been brought up to regard the fiddle with some suspicion as not quite moral, and Berger didn't receive any encouragement to play it from that quarter. But I liked it a lot, and it happened several times that when Mother was outside, looking after the animals or something, Berger let me come to his room, where the fiddle was kept, and I even got to try it. He taught me to hold the instrument securely with my chin, to hold the bow, and to press the strings with the right fingers, and I could go up and down the scale after a fashion. But once Mother came in unexpectedly, heard that the fiddle was being played, and caught us in the act. After that, the fiddle stayed in its case.

Berger came to Manitowoc every winter and paid visits to the pastor's family and to the few families out in the country where he was known and where he liked to go. Every year until we moved away he stopped at our place, and he had to have a full report on what progress his former pupils had made during the year. He was always welcome. It was like having a holiday when he came. The conversation flowed spontaneously, and always along lines outside the ordinary every-day. I was too young to form any opinion about what was going on in his mind, and I don't think that those who were older had any good conception of it either. He had nothing to say about himself and his affairs. I can't say just how much he had been stirred by the liberal movement in Europe in the earlier years of the century, but I imagine he had formed his opinions on the questions which were discussed most. After all he came here absolutely sure that the best thing was to be a democrat and he admitted it too. How he handled the topic when he was once asked what he thought about Negro slavery, I wasn't big enough to understand, but I remember hearing someone say that it really didn't matter much what he thought.

FAT RODE

by Andrew A. Veblen

Among the Manitowoc colony's characters, Fat Rode was the biggest in weight and size. I don't know just when he first came, or how he came, but I remember that he suddenly appeared on the horizon of my consciousness. Dear loveable old Berger was a permanent institution and belonged to Manitowoc with undivided loyalty. Rode, on the other hand, had a larger "circuit", a more extensive area of operations, so that Manitowoc, although surely his "main parish" in a way, had to share his time and activity with the settlements to the south. He always came without warning, appeared in our midst, and might hang around a half a year or even longer. But then wanderlust or whatever it was, a sense of duty perhaps, drove or drew him away. It's not certain that his real name was Rode: there were those who had their doubts about that. And what name he had received at baptism I am even less certain about, but it might have been Peter. I seem to recall that he signed his name P. Rode. He was supposedly from Skien, and had commanded ships out of that port for a long time, had sailed the seven seas and seen all the nations of the world, and had a little knowledge of many languages. So he was "Captain" Rode. But although he pointed out that this was his correct title, it seemed easier to call him "Fat" Rode. Perhaps because while there was no reliable evidence for the rank of captain, there was no question about the fat.

He was well over average height, and his plumpness seemed to have spread over his entire body with unique impartiality. Arms, neck, legs were big, and in my boyish tendency to make comparisons, it took me some time to decide which familiar trees were as thick as, for example, his thighs or his arms. But I am quite certain that around the middle he was of the same circumference as a certain basswood that stood behind the schoolhouse. His head was round and well-shaped, with fairly thin, reddish-blonde hair which ended in a wreath of neat curls on his powerful neck. The face was severe, and the eyes rather small and restless. His countenance was not gentle, and especially on children it had a forbidding effect. He was, or rather he gave the impression that he had been, a weatherbeaten personality. In his dress he stood out from the farmers, the pastor, and the Yankees. It is not so easy to state in particulars exactly what the difference consisted of, because I was too young at that time to analyze it scientifically down to the details. But it was his coat which was most striking. It was long, much longer than any overcoat anyone wore at that time. And it was very full, even for that heavy man, and it was certainly of very good materials, dark blue with dark red lining. And through the loops around the middle there was a twisted cord as thick as a cowhalter with enormous tassels on the ends. Whether it was of silk or of wool was never satisfactorily determined, but when it was properly tightened and tied, I decided that it would take a rope of the same length to tie around the basswood by the schoolhouse. All in all Rode was power personified to look at, and when you heard his voice, there was no doubt the power and strength, because it was deep and so loud it made your ears ring. When he really launched into a roar, it was the kind that would be needed to give orders on a ship when a storm was at its height.

Rode was of course possessed of some learning, and his first visit to the settlement was made at the parsonage, because as a man of breeding he had to associate with the pastor's family. I think he held the first "Norwegian" school in the Manitowoc settlement, and it was in or near Valders Church. At any rate it was the first attempt to get a Norwegian school going that I know anything about. But it didn't last long. I believe that Rode was fond of children, and in his way he was friendly to them, but his advances just repelled them. His overbearing and forbidding personality made them shy and afraid; and when he tried to caress anyone, as sometimes happened, it was usually frightening. It was especially the little girls who were scared, because he insisted on trying to kiss them. It was surely this kissing urge which made him impossible as a schoolteacher, because there were girls near the age of confirmation* in the school, and after a couple attempts to kiss some of these there was a revolt. The children preferred a whipping to going back there when their parents tried to force them to continue.

But there were some who thought that if they took him home and let him instruct their own and the neighbors' children under their supervision, it would work. But Rode continued to be a terror for the little girls, and for the littlest boys too, the ones who were so small that he wanted to take them on his lap. I know of several of these attempts at private schooling (one of the first was at our house), but they didn't go well and were of short duration.

* *In the Norwegian Lutheran church, children were confirmed at the age of 14 or 15, as a rule.* (Translator's note).

Rode was no Haugean or lay preacher, but when he saw the settlers' interest in religion and the practice of it, he took pains to speak with them about their children's religious knowledge, and would order the children to recite. This didn't contribute to making him welcome among that part of the family. But it can't be denied that he enjoyed a certain popularity among the young members of the household even so, because he was a master storyteller. Not gossip and news, he never concerned himself about that kind of thing, but stories about danger at sea, sea serpents, and shipwrecks, and fairy tales about monstrous trolls. The trolls usually had three heads. They were terribly ugly and bloodthirsty, but in the end they always lost their heads. It was hairraising how much effort it took to chop through the troll's enormous necks, one more enormous than the next. He would stand in the middle of the floor, and with colossal mimicry go through the entire battle. The troll roared, first with wrath and in the end with anguish, and Rode rendered the roars. He filled his enormous lungs and launched into a roar until he was red in the face, and I am sure that anyone who has not heard Rode roar like a troll has no adequate notion of how terrible a troll's roar can be. The house trembles from cellar to roof, and loose objects like cups on the table, scissors, and knives, jump and rattle in fear and trembling. The roar is more frightening than a thunderclap because it lasts so much longer. Many an evening we sat around the warm bright fireplace until late, listening excitedly to Rode's horrible tales. It was worth going through the frightening scenes in order to get to the pleasure at the punishment of the nasty troll. I can still hear Rode: "Baw-aw-aw, said the troll. Bah-ah-ah, said the troll. Buu-uu-uu, said the troll."

Rode used tobacco, plug tobacco. Once when he was at our house his supply gave out, and since there were no tobacco-users in the house, there was no tobacco to borrow; it was necessary to get it from the store. Rode stormed around restlessly and burst out: "Ak! Ak! Tobak!" until something had to be done. My younger brother offered to go to Clarks Mills and buy a plug of tobacco. Rode gave him a dollar bill, which he was supposed to change to get a ten-cent plug. It was during the war when there were no coins, and the merchants issued "shinplasters" for amounts like five cents, ten cents, etc. The boy brought back the tobacco and 90 cents in dirty shinplasters. After Rode had bitten off a chew and calmed down enough to count his change, there was a scene because a five-cent shinplaster was missing a corner and he thought it wasn't worth its entire face value. He bawled the boy out and said: "I suppose you would have taken a stone if they had offered it to you", and he told him to keep the slip of paper, "it's not worth anything". My brother got permission to make another trip to "the Mill" and came home with five sticks of candy he had bought with the five cents.

If he loved tobacco, coffee was no less a necessity for him. Everybody knew this, and if there was a housewife who didn't have the good manners to put the coffeepot on and start the coffee grinder going as soon as he came, she was soon informed how thirsty he was for coffee. And it had to be strong. Where he was a guest among the settlers, he used to supervise the making of the coffee so enough beans were ground. But there were those who didn't humor him by offering him coffee. Once when my parents were away, they got a neighbor girl to come and take care of the house during the day, and it happened that Rode came, probably meaning to stay several days. The girl's name was Tonette, and Rode was not in her good graces. He said he wanted coffee. Tonette replied that there wasn't any coffee to be had. "Well then I'm leaving", said he, "OK, leave", she said, and that was it. He left.

Of all the races, the Irish were especially an abomination to him. An Irishman who lived near us was known for using slightly exaggerated expressions. Rode once made a freehand drawing of the neighbor where he showed him standing on a wheat stack so high and so constructed that it seemed impossible to get down. I quote the caption he gave the picture: "You can stand there, McG_____ , as punishment for your damned Irish lies." He said Father should forbid all Irishmen from crossing his fields, "because nothing ever grows where an Irishman has set his foot."

It was after we met Old Berger that Rode came. He didn't know Berger very well, but he thought he had no learning or manners as compared with himself. And when he heard that we had stopped in arithmetic at the border of the unknown world of decimals, he immediately decided there would be instruction in that field. But the day never came when he started it. On the other hand, he spoke about ships in a fascinating way, and explained to me many things about ships, their construction and operation. He made many drawings of brigs, sloops, etc., and explained how they were different from each other. It was a whole course for me, and one of the last things he did was draw a full-rigged three-decker with a feathered Indian as a figurehead, and with the name of "Manitowoc of Manitowoc". On this drawing he put numbers on the different parts, both of hull and rigging, and prepared a table giving the full name of all 99 numbered parts. I have kept the drawing and the table, and have on occasion surprised seamen with my knowledge of the names of the sails, yards, braces, etc.

Fat Rode rambled through the Manitowoc settlement off and on for several years and was known by all the Norwegians there, and there were few homes where he wasn't a self-invited guest at least once. And there were surely few little boys and girls who didn't get to hear how the trolls roared when their three heads were chopped off. To assist his listeners' imagination and sharpen the impression, he sometimes drew pictures of trolls on a slate. Psychologists assert that both children and adults who have less talent or practice in drawing unconsciously use themselves as a model when they draw human figures, so that they render their own features and distinguishing characteristics. Now although Rode was not without practice in drawing, you couldn't say he was an artist. But the trolls he drew bore a striking resemblance to himself — heavy-limbed, stout, with well-developed nose and mouth, and curls as well. The figurehead on the three-decker has Rode's features too, seen in profile.

What later became of Rode I don't know. He was perhaps not appreciated by the settlers, but nevertheless he had a significant influence on the education of the young, and contributed his share to the intellectual development of society.

MEMORIES OF OLD BERGER AND FAT RODE

by C. John M. Gronlid

Among the pioneer-historical contributions in the last volume of **Samband**, the memories of "Old Berger" and "Big Rode", and the Valdres settlement in the Manitowoc woods, have especially interested me. Old Berger flourished at such an early stage in my existence, that there is little I remember about him; but a top hat green with age, and some scattered wisps of hair carefully arranged over a bald pate definitely rise up from the dark background. He had forty acres of land about a mile south of us, and his

house (such as it was) stood up on the hill some fifteen rods west of the road, just where it runs into the shingle swamp. He didn't spend much of his time in our settlement, but I recall how he performed on the violin making horrible faces, which must be the reason that I, who have always been musically talented, for a long time could hear nothing beautiful in violin music. His stiff formality and dignified "noli me tangere" were what made the strongest impression on my childish simplicity.

But I remember Fat Rode better. I was old enough that I had to go to school then, and Rode was my first, last, and only religious-school teacher. But if I hadn't got better religious instruction at home, I wouldn't have been second best in Biorn's confirmation class in Manitowoc. But that was long after I had gone to school under Rode. It was in the fall of 1863 while the conscription for the war was going on, and Captain Gustaveson from the Manitowoc wood had begun to hunt for the men who had been drafted but went to the woods, several miles into the inaccessible cedar swamps, where they lived and made shingles instead of going to war. Well, to get back to Fat Rode! As I said, he was supposed to hold two months of religious school in the building called Kewaunee Church, two miles west of our place on the land of a Valdres man, Ole Person. Right across the road from the church lived a second Valdres man, a bachelor, Anders Delebaek, and west of the church lived a third, Anders Bersbakken, and then some three miles southwest we had three Hermundstad farms. They were also bachelors for long time, but Nils and Ole finally got married, while Thorstein, the liveliest and the finest fellow of the three, lived and died a bachelor. But what does this have to do with Rode? Well, wait a minute. These Hermundstad brothers had two sisters, of whom the younger, Guri, lived in the Manitowoc woods and married — wasn't it Helle? But that has nothing to do with the story, although she was a fine strapping girl. But the older sister — she was surely the oldest of the family — was married to Paul the sexton, or Paul Nothing as he was also called because one year when he was mad at Biorn he wrote "Nothing" after his name on the subscription list for the pastor's salary. This couple had a daughter at Rode's school approximately at the age of confirmation. She was well-developed and good-looking, and Rode in his advanced bachelorhood had an eye for everything beautiful in women's clothes. And he didn't conceal his preference for Paul's Regnild. But that would have been all right if he had demonstrated his manliness to the girl in some way other than constantly showing how infinitely superior he was to us little boys. I recall one day before the end of school, we were cleaning up the church because there was to be a service the next day. On some impulse or other — perhaps somebody thought it was funny — I knelt on the altar rail. At that moment Rode came up to me from behind and gave me a box on the ear so I rolled across the floor. Well, Rode was supposed to teach three months, but it turned out to be only two, because a complaint was brought against him that while he was boarding with Thore Mathisen he had chased after his oldest daughter and tried to force himself on her. Rode remains in my memory as the embodiment of unbridled vanity and brutality. His whole manner and conduct in school served to break down that which should be built up by the catechism and Bible history. He finished religious instruction in a hurry and set us to writing, while he strung beads for the girls. I have often thought it strange that we, who never had any other religious school, should happen to get such a queer man for a schoolteacher the only two months we had. In spite of our fathers' enlightened interest in our Christian education, Rode's teaching and the painful circumstances which the war brought shortly after had a damping influence on the plans for a religious school. Many memories from Kewaunee emerge as I write this, but they will have to lay buried.

Still, I will have to mention one more. It is also connected with the only two months I went to religious school. Naturally, Fat Rode plays a part in it too: not the main role, but still a really funny role. Here it was not at all the teacher, nor the pupil, who was the decisive factor, but a big beautiful fat ram. In those days, when everything in the way of clothes had to be made at home, from cap to socks, people went in for raising sheep, because there was little clothing to buy and even less money to buy it with. So during the long winter evenings, Father often sat and whittled ax handles to sell in the surrounding logging camps to get money for cotton warp, while Mother sat and spun the weft. So the sheep was a very desirable animal. Anders Delebaek, who as I said lived right across the road from the church, had some, including a fine ram. Whether it was because there was better grazing in the churchyard than in Anders Delebaek's rather dry pasture, or because the ram at this time of year — it was in October — felt more strongly nature's drive to "break the bonds that bound him" and take a look at the other pinestumps in the world, — in any case, he had found his way into the churchyard. There he was, as big as life, just as we came out of school one day and were going home for the evening. We boys, as usual, were out first and bit ahead, Rode and the girls came behind us. When we caught sight of the ram on consecrated ground, it instinctively seemed to us that a ram in the churchyard was even less seemly than a boy on the altar rail, and we set about chasing the ram out. But we shouldn't have got involved in that, because the ram had no intention of being chased. Fiercely it came toward us, head and great horns raised. Now what should we do? Running wouldn't help because the ram could run faster. But we little boys had learned many useful backwoods arts, including the art of escaping from an angry ram. As if by command, we fell flat on the ground, and woe to the ram if he had come close enough for us to get hold of his legs. But he was careful about that. So he no longer paid any attention to us, but noticed the rear guard including Fat Rode, who very scornfully was laughing at us boys in our humble position. And Fat Rode boldly walked toward the ram, just about in the same spirit as Goliath, whom we had recently heard about. In the meantime the girls took to their heels and squeezed through the fence by the church, and we boys jumped up again and took the shortest path to the open gate, which we slammed shut behind us. Just as we looked back, the collision of Fat Rode and the ram occurred. Rode had boasted that he was going to take the ram by the horns and toss him from the stern to the topsail. But it didn't turn out that way, because the ram had planned on doing the tossing himself. Now Rode was a well-developed man, especially around the middle; we boys had often wondered how long it had been since he had seen his knees. But the ram had seen them, and was setting a course to ram Rode midship, and he didn't steer wrong. The ram flew like a rocket right between Rode's legs. It was narrow there, and now something was hanging on his horns which looked exactly like Rode's trouser leg. And Rode? Well, he found that the boys' tactic wasn't so stupid and headed for the gate on all fours, while the ram helped him along with a few well-meaning butts on his meatiest part. But you should have seen the expression on Rode's face. It was like a storm: furious impotent rage. We boys found it advisable to set out for home without waiting for his triumphal entry through the gate. The next morning Rode was a cheerful as ever, as soon as he took out his beads, and with a connoisseur's manner studied how he should arrange them on the string.

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