

twenty-one years of age he went to work as a farm hand, spending two summers in this occupation, and at the end of that time he formed the above-mentioned partnership with his father and brother, aiding in the operation of the two hundred and forty acres in Madison township. They operated this place together for one year but at the end of that time Mr. Istad of this review rented out his share and became a tenant of another farm which he operated for a short time, eventually returning to the homestead. His holdings now comprise eighty acres on section 22 and the farm is well improved with substantial barns and outbuildings, all of which Mr. Istad erected. Understanding farming in principle and detail, he has made a success of his agricultural operations and is today one of the most progressive and substantial farmers in this locality.

In May, 1892, Mr. Istad was united in marriage to Miss Kjerste Bjerke, a daughter of Andrew and Sarah (Haukedal) Bjerke, natives of Norway, who came to America at an early date and located in Winneshiek county, Iowa, where the father engaged in farming during the remainder of his life. Mrs. Istad passed away after a long illness on March 2, 1907, leaving a son, Theodore, who is twenty years of age.

Mr. Istad is a member of the Lutheran church and gives his political allegiance to the progressive party, serving for two years as treasurer of the school board. He is a stockholder in the Farmers Creamery Company and the Farmers Hog Buying Company of Decorah. In the township where he has made his home for so many years his life has commanded the respect and esteem of all who have come in contact with him and his success has placed him in the front ranks of progressive agriculturists.

FRED BIERMANN.

Fred Biermann, proprietor and editor of The Decorah Journal, is representative of the modern, aggressive newspaper man of the times, one whose success is based upon innate ability and most careful education and preparation. Although yet a young man—or just because he is a young man—he occupies a position of importance in Decorah and Winneshiek county and again justifies the modern idea of the young man who proves his ability by the result he obtains along lines of a progressive policy. Not only is he foremost, however, in local newspaperdom but he has become a powerful factor in democratic politics, demonstrating his ability along that line in such a way that he not only plays a preeminent role in the district but even in the state.

Born in Rochester, Minnesota, on March 20, 1884, he is a son of Ewald Elliott and Martha Christina (Christopher) Biermann, both of full-blooded Viking stock. The father was born in Christiania, Norway, on January 1, 1853, and was a son of Carl Henrik and Anne Mathea (Olson) Biermann. The mother of Fred Biermann was born in Springfield township, Winneshiek county, Iowa, in 1854, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jens Christopher. The father was educated at Nissen's school in Christiania and in 1870, with about fifty other young Norwegians, enlisted as a volunteer in the French army in the Franco-Prussian war. In the same year he came to America and a few years subsequent to that