

returned to Decorah. Mr. Engbretson then took up blacksmithing, which occupation he followed until 1870, when he engaged in the farm machinery business. He opened a store in 1871 and is still actively engaged in the farm implement business, having the largest establishment of that kind in Decorah. In 1895 Mr. Engbretson suffered an attack of paralysis but has completely overcome his incapacity, although he had to retire for a time. He has, however, long since become again actively connected with business affairs, giving close attention to his important and fast growing interests. As his means have increased he has become identified with other important institutions, being a stockholder and one of the organizers of the Decorah Opera House Company, and a shareholder in the Decorah Valve Company, the Winneshiek Hotel Company and also the Decorah Gas Company. Moreover, Mr. Engbretson owns very valuable realty, having built the Engbretson block on West Water street and in 1910 one of the finest residences in the city, for which he himself drew the plans. This latter place is so attractive and the plans Mr. Engbretson made worked out so well that they have been copied by others many times and to great advantage, giving high satisfaction. The result speaks well for Mr. Engbretson's ability along architectural lines and also the practicability of his ideas and the independence of his thought.

In 1887 Mr. Engbretson was united in marriage to Miss Thea Peterson, a native of Norway, who for some years has been engaged in the millinery business in Decorah, having one of the finest stores in the city on West Water street. A woman of rare ability, she has made a commercial success well worthy of notice. Of this union were born three children: Ruby, at home, who is employed as bookkeeper in the Decorah State Bank and is a graduate of Valder College; Myrtle, a graduate of the same college and a stenographer and bookkeeper at Freeport, Illinois; and Hartvig, a student in the Decorah high school who will graduate with the class of 1914.

The interests of Decorah are always nearest to the heart of Mr. Engbretson, who in many ways has given evidence of his public-spiritedness, which has induced him to serve for three terms as councilman from the first ward in this city, doing valuable service in that connection. He is now serving from the fourth ward in his fourth term, continuing to uphold measures of progress and fathering bills that will prove of lasting benefit. Both he and his wife as well as the children are members of the Norwegian Lutheran church, in the work of which they take an active interest. A man of progressive policies in all other walks of life, he has also joined the political denomination which styles itself by that name, believing in its platform and expecting from the realization of its ideals better living conditions for all alike. As a member of the Grand Army of the Republic Mr. Engbretson keeps in touch with the boys in blue who in the days of '61 carried to victory the flag of the Union. He is a member of Colonel Hughes Post, No. 138, of Decorah, and has served as vice commander of the post. Fraternally he is a member of Decorah Lodge, No. 443, B. P. O. E. Referring back to his political life, it may be stated that he served for one term as chairman of the county republican central committee when he was still in the ranks of that party, this fact giving an indication of the influence which he held in the local ranks of the organization. Mr. Engbretson has attained a success which none can begrudge him, for it has been entirely self-won, without favoring