
THE FIRST NORWEGIAN SETTLEMENT IN
GRIGGS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA.

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I.—CONDITIONS IN NORWAY CONTRIBUTING TO EMIGRATION TO AMERICA.

In examining the statistics on immigration into America during the last fifty years, we discover that during the years 1869 to 1883 there was an exceptionally large number of emigrants coming from Norway. This is especially large of the years 1869 to 1872, and also the years 1880 to 1883.¹ It was within these years 1871 and 1881 that the little bands that made the first settlement in Griggs county migrated to America.

The causes of this extensive emigration from Norway are not to be found in any political or religious conditions then existing. True, there was some political disturbance; the controversies between King Oscar II., and the democratic party concerning the interpretation of the constitution began about that time. But this conflict was not then of such a nature as to have any influence on emigration. There was also an awakening among the people to more liberal religious views; but religious intolerance could hardly have been the cause of any emigration, for a law respecting dissenters, in 1845, gave to all Christian sects the right to establish communities and to practice their own religion. Jews were given the same privilege in 1851; while universal religious liberty was granted in 1878 with the exception that Lutheranism remained compulsory for office holders.²

There were of course such general causes as the promising prospects in America, the over-population in the old country, the severe requirements for military services, the difficulty of making a living, the impossibility of the so-called poor ever acquiring real wealth or even of becoming well-to-do. Many adventurous and ambitious young men were undoubtedly lured over by the hopes of making a fortune in this country. It is also true that many who were able to make a fair living left their country knowing that their chances of ever becoming wholly independent were very small. And though the little farm would probably

¹In 1869 the emigrants from Norway numbered 16,068. During the following year up to 1878 there was a decrease; the year 1879 showed a marked increase. The year 1882 was the high water mark of emigration from Norway. During that year 29,101 Norwegians came to our country.

²Seignobos, Political History of Europe since 1814, N. Y., 1909, p. 559.

furnish the old folks with a living, yet it was in many cases necessary for the children as soon as they were of the proper age to leave home and make their own way. Many of these, instead of hiring out for the small wages that were offered them there, bade goodbye to their native land and crossed the ocean to seek a more promising future in America.

But the above mentioned conditions have existed during all the past fifty or sixty years, and they do not explain the enormous increase during the years 1869 to 1873 and 1878 to 1883. The forces which brought about this increase are to be found in the financial and commercial situation of the country. A superficial survey of the conditions gives us the impression that Norway just prior to this time (1869-83) was very prosperous. Seignobos in his history points out that the debt, which had been very heavy in 1815, was paid off in 1850, and that by 1870 the customs duties had increased so much that they were sufficient to cover the general expenses of the state, and that one-fourth of the merchant marine of Europe was owned by this little nation. And then he goes on to show that farming was becoming of more importance and that the number of landholders was increasing and the land was being divided up into small farms. The peasant or farming class increased from 45,000 to 510,500 during the years 1815 to 1835 and has been increasing much since.

Now, according to some of the leading writers in Norway at this time, the greater portion of emigrants during the years 1869 to 1883 were from the peasant, land holding classes. A very large number of those who left for America had been compelled to leave their farms (gaards) being unable to pay the mortgages on them. A. O. Vinje, an able writer on this subject, makes the statement that in many places the farms were entirely deserted, having come into the hands of the bankers through foreclosure of mortgages; none being able or willing to redeem these securities or to rent the land.¹ Thus we can see that this period of extensive emigration was at the same time a period of depression, which had been preceded by a period of seeming prosperity. This apparent wave of prosperity, which lasted until 1865 and in some places till 1868, and ended in the financial crisis which drove so many to emigrate, had its beginning, according to A. Garborg, in the increase in the value of lumber in foreign countries and in building of railroads from the coast towns to the forest areas of Norway. Thus the forests became at once an important source of national wealth, and this gave to the people of the forest districts a feeling of prosperity which gradually spread and affected the whole country. The

¹A. O. Vinjes Skrifter i Utyal, Christiania, 1887, iv., 190.

²A large part of the Norwegian timber was shipped to Holland to be used for piles in the erection of dikes. During the years 1833 to 1877 there was great activity in dike building in Holland. During those years the area of Holland increased from 8,768 square miles to 12,731 square miles, nearly four thousand miles being reclaimed from the ocean by the erection of dikes.

building of railroads over the country tended to produce the same effect. Many people had the impression that the railroads would make them all rich. Property of every-kind was rated at twice its former value; many speculated wildly. Then seemed to come a new condition of affairs; the standard of living was raised considerably. The price of land rose and the farmers consequently considered themselves richer. They began to make extensive improvements; built better houses and barns, and borrowed money on their farms to meet these new expenses. With all this the standard of living rose considerably and there came a demand of foreign goods; the small manufacturers began to disappear and the country was supplied from foreign countries. This was responsible for the large customs duties mentioned above. The building of the railroads, which was done by the government, increased the burden of taxation. All this gave the general appearance of prosperity, and everything went well as long as there was lumber left in the forest regions and as long as the farmers could secure loans on their farms. But the country was trying to keep pace with the other countries with much greater natural resources than her own, and sooner or later the reaction had to come. In a short time the forests were exhausted, the taxes had grown heavier, expense greater, while the capacity to pay was less. The average farmer had over-estimated his resources and soon found himself unable to pay the loans that were fast falling due. The mortgages were foreclosed and often left the man without money or home, and his only choice was the poor house or emigration. Hundreds and hundreds of families were in this way forced to leave their native land and start anew in this land of promise. That these conditions really existed can be seen from the following letters received from farmers in different parts of the country. The letters were addressed to A. O. Vinje, one of the leading writers on emigration.¹ One man writes in 1870: "You and the others that write about all this emigration to America seem to overlook the fact that it is the taxes and expenses that drive the largest part of the people to leave the country. They are already speaking about leaving farm and debt as soon as they can get the necessary money for the trip from their relatives in America. They themselves have nothing with which to pay the expense of the trip, for the debts on the farms exceeds the real value of the land, and the taxes of all kinds are increasing from year to year. A farmer from another part of the country writes: "When I bought my farm nine years ago, the taxes and expenses on it amounted to \$15, but this year they amounted to \$41." A man from a fruit growing district writes: My father paid all the expenses with the profits of one apple tree, but I have to pay \$35 besides."

¹A. O. Vinjes Skrifter i Utval, iv., 556.

Not only the farmers, but the merchants and business men in general who depended on the prosperity of the farmers, failed in this period of depression. Many a business firm went bankrupt and dragged down with them in the crash all their bondsmen.

Along about the year of 1870 the herring left the western shores of Norway, and thus a very valuable fishery was destroyed. This undoubtedly affected, to a great extent, the financial condition of the country and was one of the factors in producing the depressing times mentioned above. Many a small farmer living within reach of the sea, whose earnings on the land were insufficient to keep him and his family, would spend his winters on the sea fishing and thereby earn enough to keep the farm going. When the fisheries died out many such men were forced to emigrate.

Thus far we have examined the general conditions of the whole country. It will probably be well also to examine briefly the conditions of those particular districts which furnished the emigrants that made this first settlement in Griggs county, or, more accurately, the settlement in Sverdrup and Bald Hill townships in Griggs county. There were two districts that furnished these emigrants; the one was the county¹ (amt) in which Stavanger is located, the other was Ringsaker near Christiania. Both were farming districts which depended almost entirely upon the returns of the soil and the small profits derived from the cattle and sheep, so they were affected by the financial crisis that was affecting the whole country. Although some of the emigrants from these counties (amts) were well-to-do in the old country, yet the depressing influence of the increasing taxes and expenses and the general financial depression of the country was, according to the testimony of the pioneers themselves, the main cause of their departure from the country.

Some of the pioneers of this settlement had been reduced to poverty in Norway by being the bondsmen of some bankrupt merchant or business man. There was a law in the country requiring every man starting up in business to procure bondsmen, who, in case he failed, should meet the demands of his creditors. It had come to be considered very unkind for any man to refuse to be the bondsman of his friend, and so the many business men who failed during these depressing years lost not only their own property but pulled down into poverty with them a host of friends who were probably not much affected directly by the crisis. Such was the case to an astonishing extent in these particular districts.

Coming now to the more immediate forces which started these movements, we find that they were not all of the same kind.

¹The Norwegian "Amt" does not correspond exactly to the county here, but it resembles a county more than any other political division in this country. Norway is divided into twenty amts, and the amt is the largest purely political division of the nation.

The people in general had a fair knowledge of conditions in America. Some of their more adventurous young men had crossed the Atlantic some years earlier, and from those at home were receiving a good deal of information on the matter. Some of these men, after remaining in America a few years, and learning a little of the English language, went back to the old country, became the agents for some transportation company and induced large groups of people to come over to this country.¹ The people also gained much knowledge of America through the pamphlets distributed by the transportation companies. These pamphlets described in glowing colors America and the wonderful opportunities of this country.

II.—THE COMING OF THE FIRST SETTLERS.

Actuated by the conditions mentioned in a previous chapter, a group of emigrants, one of those who made the first settlement in Griggs county, set out from Stavanger April 10, 1881. They had some knowledge of the country; through their agent, who had worked in Chicago and in different parts of Illinois for three years, and through letters from some of their friends who had some years earlier settled in Minnesota. They had also read the pamphlets distributed by the transporting companies. When they started out they had no definite idea as to where they would settle. They bought tickets from the steamship company at Stavanger to St. Paul. They knew of Dakota with its free and unoccupied land, and their intentions were to push on to the frontier and take land. They were all neighbors, friends and relatives and numbered about thirty-five.² There were six families, some of which numbered as high as seven to ten members. There were also a number of young men. They sailed on the "King Sverre," an English ship of the Wilson company, to Hull. At Hull their baggage was examined for smuggled goods.³ From Hull they took the train to Liverpool, where they remained a few days in an emigrant hotel waiting the arrival of ships from other parts of Europe, whose passengers were to cross the ocean in the same steamer with them. On April 18 they commenced the journey across the ocean on the "Palmyra," a ship of the Cunard line. It had originally been a cattle ship, but had been turned into a passenger boat because of the great demand for transporting ships. The large ship was loaded to its full capacity with emi-

¹The large group of emigrants that left Stavanger in the spring of 1881 was led by such an agent, Etuel Hengstad. He came to America in 1872 and after remaining here three years returned to Norway. He became an agent for the Cunard line and received 5 per cent commission on all tickets sold to emigrants under his supervision. On the ship in which this group came across were other groups of emigrants in charge of similar agents.

²For names see Appendix.

³One of the emigrants had a large supply of tobacco (about four pounds) which he had taken with him for his own use. It was taken from him by one of the officers who made the search, on the claim that it was smuggled goods.

grants of many nationalities, a large per cent of whom were Norwegians from all parts of the country.

Five days out of harbor the propeller shaft broke, and had it not been for the cool, calm action of the officers a panic would have broken out on the deck. After two hours of signaling the attention of a small cattle steamer was attracted to the distressed ship. For five days the little craft tugged and pulled and finally succeeded in dragging the helpless ship into the harbor of St. Johns, Newfoundland.

For about nine long, dreary days the hundreds of emigrants lived on the ship while it underwent repair. After again setting sail, they finally reached New York May 20th, having spent over a month in crossing the ocean.¹ Before leaving the ship they were examined by the inspectors. The examination, according to the testimony of the emigrants, was very brief and seemed of little importance. In New York they exchanged their original tickets for regular train tickets. From New York they took the train to Chicago, where they remained three days. They arrived in St. Paul, the city to which they had bought tickets in the old country, May 18th. The cost of the trip up to this point was about \$50 per individual. They had taken advantage of reduced rates caused by a rate war between different railroad companies. The transporting company furnished them with board and lodging during the journey and during their stay in the different cities before they reached New York.

From St. Paul they took the train to Granite Falls, where some of their old acquaintances lived. Here they took out their first papers. At this place they also bought wagons and oxen. For the oxen they paid about \$160 a team. With one of the Minnesota settlers² as leader they traveled in covered wagons to Benson, Minnesota. The women and children remained in Granite Falls. From Benson they took the train to Fargo, where they again resumed their journey in wagons. They traveled along the Northern Pacific railroad to Valley City; then turning due north they were guided somewhat by the Sneyenne river, though they did not follow its winding course. During the first part of the travel north they stayed with a stray farmer here and there, but as they advanced they entered a region of utter wilderness, where they traveled for miles and miles without seeing a single human habitation and were therefore compelled to sleep in the wagons. While they were searching for a good place on which to make a settlement the United States surveyors were making the survey of the country and dividing it into sections and quarter sections.

¹For some reason or other no report of the ship's arrival at St. Johns had been received in England or Norway, so it had almost been given up for lost. The people in Norway had mourned over their friends on the ship as dead, and were filled with surprise and joy when they received letters from the emigrants, postmarked New York.

²Christian Arrstad.

The old Minnesota settler, who led the movement into Dakota, had corresponded with two Scotchmen, a Mr. Fieh and a Mr. J. Pitch, who had moved into Griggs county from Minnesota the previous year. These men had recommended the land in Griggs county as being of a very good quality. With the intention of taking land where these two men lived, the pioneers pushed northward until they reached section 22, range 58, town 145, in what is now Sverdrup township. Here they pitched camp June 12th, 1881. They lived in their wagons until they had erected huts on the land they picked out as their homesteads or tree claims. The huts of four Scotchmen and a few covered wagons of immigrants, who had arrived from Minnesota a few weeks earlier.

These settlers from Minnesota formed a distinct movement into the country that first year. They came from Fillmore county, Minnesota, and were nearly all of them neighbors and friends in that country. They had come from Norway along in 1870 to 73 and most of them from the same district in Norway, namely, Ringsaker, near Christiania.¹ During the first part of their stay in Minnesota they had been fairly prosperous as farmers, but the chinch bug had, during the latter years of their stay, done great damage to their crops, so many of them left their farms with judgment against the land.

These two distinct movements, the one direct from Norway and the other from Minnesota, made the first real settlement in Griggs county in Sverdrup and Bald Hill townships of that county. This has formed a distinct Norwegian community ever since.

The land in the county did not get into market before in April, 1882, and could of course not be filed on till then, so the settlers kept their lands by "squatting" on them. If two settlers selected the same piece of land for homestead the one who first moved on to it to live got the land. Those who took land along the river built log cabins, while those farther out on the prairies generally erected sod huts or dug-out cellar houses.

They had brought with them a few breaking plows from Minnesota. There were about one team of oxen and a plow for every two farmers. Each man broke about seven acres that summer. During the remainder of the summer they gathered hay and built dwellings and stables. In the fall many of the settlers went out working in the harvest fields and with the threshing machines in the country around Valley City.

The women and children, who had been left in Minnesota when the pioneers pushed into the frontier, arrived in the settlement along in July and in October.

The impression of the first few months of pioneer life in the settlement upon one of the men in the colony are set forth in

¹For names see Appendix.

some of his letters written to a friend in Norway. The letters were published in a Norwegian paper (*Bibel-Budet*) in December, 1881. They were published under the title "From a pioneer in Dakota" (*Fra en Nybygger i Dakota*). The first one is dated October 8, 1881.

"Dear Brother E.:

"The time has come when I can no longer refrain from greening you with a few words. Although the hundreds and thousands of miles between us make it impossible for us to meet and talk to each other as in days gone by, yet it is well that by letters we may learn of each others doings. It appears strange when I take my pen and sit down to greet my friends and brothers in the Fatherland in this way; strange sensations surge through my mind and my thoughts wander back among you all; it is as if I were sitting among you in your own homes surrounded by your families. Not only when I am writing do these thoughts and feelings occupy my mind, but often when performing my daily tasks, while alone in the woods, while driving my team of oxen, while working in my cellar house or while wandering over the wide prairies, etc., do my thoughts wander back to you and I often feel as though it is only a bad dream that we are so far apart.

"On the whole, however, I can say that I am getting along fairly well. I hope that through other of my letters you have heard of my work here in building my cellar house, of the oxen, and the location of the settlement. And lastly let me say, God be praised, I have been feeling well up to the present. In eight days I expect my family to arrive; I have had to be without their company the whole summer and it has been lonely at times.

"I am not certain whether you are one of those who asked for advice concerning America. On the whole it seems to be a good deal easier to make a living; but there are many hardships connected with the life of a pioneer, especially at first. I should like to see you and others come over, yet consider the matter twice before you leave the Fatherland and the place where your cradle stood. It is not a small matter."¹

"Dear Brother E.:

"I have just received your letter, thanks. Nothing gives me greater joy than to receive letters from friends and brothers in the dear Fatherland. It warms the heart to realize that we are remembered by you. God bless you all. We are still getting

¹Many of the pioneers were opposed to giving such advice to friends in the old country. They claimed that for those who were laboring under pecuniary difficulties in the old country, America was the only place; and that such persons should not "consider the matter twice" before coming.

along well; we do, however, wish that the winter was past, we are a little fearful of the cold, and there is but little money among us with which to purchase the needed provisions for the winter, as during the winter months it will be rather risky to undertake with oxen the long journey over the prairies of thirty miles to the nearest market. We are praying for a mild winter in our log and sod cabins, where some of us will have to put up with the bare earth as walls and floors. A pioneer life has many trials and difficulties which are not so easily overcome; if these were better known in dear old Norway it would probably act as a damper on the craze for America. We have no crop this fall, as we came here so late this spring, but must buy all our provisions until next fall, so it will be rather difficult to get through this first year."

Their first winter in Dakota was a period of hardship and sufferings. In the first place, as was mentioned in the above letters, their dwellings were very cold. Many of the huts were without wooden floors and in some cases even the walls were bare earth. Having raised no crop that fall they had not much with which to buy provisions for the winter. Then again they were compelled to store up all their supplies for the winter during the last part of the fall, for the nearest market was Valley City, thirty miles away. And to undertake a journey of thirty miles over a wild, trackless prairie with a team of oxen while the fierce winter of Dakota was raging over the plains would be almost utter madness. With a team of oxen twenty miles was considered a very good day's journey. Therefore in making a trip to market one had to spend two nights on the prairies. In going towards market there was the chance of striking some isolated dwelling before darkness fell; but as there was no fixed road, there was a great chance of having to spend a night in the wagon. On the journey back from market, one night's stay in the wagon was almost inevitable.

The main occupation of the settlers that first winter was the hauling home of timber from the woods along the Sheyenne river and chopping it up into fuel for the next summer. They also made some furniture for their huts. In many of the little homes they had only trunks for chairs during the first few months. Some made their brooms from tall grass cut in sloughs, and stuffed the pillows with the down gotten from cattails, of which there was an abundance in those early times. Many of the settlers cleaned their seed wheat that winter by spreading it out over the table and picking the weed seeds out with their fingers.

They were sociable and spent much time visiting each other. They had their religious services in the humble little homes. In fact the first services in the settlement, conducted by a minister sent out by the Home Missionary society, was held in a little sod hut which shortly afterwards was turned into a stable.

Toward spring they began to run out of food supplies; the one whose supplies were first consumed borrowed from his neighbors, until in the early part of the spring all their provisions exhausted and they were compelled to set out for market to procure something to eat. Below is an account of this trip to market as told by one of the party: "In the spring of 1882, just as the ice was beginning to break up, we set out, five of us, for Valley City with a team of oxen. On the first day we reached Sibley Crossing, which is about fifteen miles south of the settlement. Here we stayed over night with a Norwegian by the name of Anderson. The Sheyenne river was so swollen that his house was standing in water and the first floor was flooded. But we were comfortable up-stairs. The next day we left the oxen and were taken across the river in a boat by Anderson, and then continued our journey with the team of horses (Anderson had his barn on that side of the river). But, as the roads were very bad, we had to walk a larger part of the way, often wading through little swollen streams full of floating ice, which was rather cold. We reached our destination by evening. On the third day we had to carry the flour sacks and other provisions which we had bought about one hundred rods and then over a railroad bridge. We could not get the team into town because of the flood. Getting back to Sibley Crossing we again crossed the river in the boat carrying the provisions with us. On the fourth day we set out from Anderson's hospitable place and reached home in safety, to our own and our families' great joy."

In the following summer a few more families came to the settlement from the old country, also some from Minnesota.

During this summer (1882) the Great Northern railroad branch from Casselton, what is now known as the Hope branch, was built, and the little station, which is now the town of Hope, became their market that fall.

There were three harvesting machines in the settlement in the fall of 1882, which had all been brought from Minnesota. One was a harvester, the other was a wire binder and the third was a reaper. With these three machines all the grain was cut that fall. The grain was threshed by R. C. Cooper, an early pioneer who had considerable land in the township north of the settlement.

In the summer of 1883 a branch of the Northern Pacific railroad was built from Sanborn to the present city of Cooperstown.¹ In the summer a market was opened in Cooperstown for the buying of buffalo bones. The market was kept open for four years. At first the bones were sold at \$10 a ton; but the price gradually rose, so that when the market closed the price was \$20

¹Cooperstown was named after Hon. R. C. Cooper, one of the earliest pioneers of Griggs county, on whose land the city was built. It was largely through his influence that the railroad came into the county as early as it did.

a ton. Many tons were gathered up, hauled to town and sold during those four years. Every farmer sold more or less of this novel article. In several places in the settlement there were very large supplies of bones. One man found fourteen buffalo heads on his homestead and in most cases the whole skeleton was found with the head, and besides that he picked up many loads of scattered bones; and yet this was by no means in the most thickly covered district.

III.—OLD COUNTRY CUSTOMS IN THE SETTLEMENT.

Though the old country customs brought over by the early settlers have been gradually dying out, many of them are still in existence. While the greater part of these customs will pass away with the old pioneers who brought them over, yet there are some which have been so firmly planted in the minds of the growing generation that they will survive the old settlers for many years to come.

Of the things that will longest survive, the use of the Norwegian language is the most important. Though the younger generation uses the English language to a large extent in their conversations and correspondence with each other, the mother tongue is nearly always used in the home. The little child first learns to prattle in Norwegian; his English he generally gets when he begins to attend school. A large percent of the children are taught to read and write Norwegian. About ninety-five per cent of the children in the settlement over twenty years, can read and write that language to some extent. This common use of the language is due in a large degree to the active interest that has been taken in parochial schools. Ever since the first year of the settlement the district has had from two to eight weeks of such school each summer. Then there is a public library in which at least ninety per cent of the books are printed in Norwegian. These books are very much read during the long winter months. The numerous papers printed in that language, which the settlers take, all help materially to perpetuate the use of the language in the settlement.¹ Nearly all the religious services are conducted in Norwegian. One other factor which tends to perpetuate the use of this language in the homes is the steady influx of immigrants from the old country. These newcomers hire out among the different families and of course use the native language.

Another survival of the old country which promises to stay long with the people is the preparation of Norwegian dishes.² No family would think of allowing the Christmas, New Year's or Easter holiday to pass without preparing an abundant supply

¹At least fifteen different periodicals printed in Norwegian are taken in the settlement. About one-half of these are newspapers; the others religious papers and magazines.

²See Appendix.

of these old country dishes. Even those who use little or no such food ordinarily will prepare some for these holidays. They are as popular with the young native born population as with the old pioneers themselves; and that is the reason why they will not quickly pass out of use.

One interesting custom which has now almost entirely passed away, but a few years ago was very largely in vogue, was that of issuing special invitations to funerals the same as to weddings. The invited friends assembled in the forenoon, bringing with them cakes, sandwiches, etc., with which a sumptuous dinner was prepared.¹

There was also the interesting custom of observing two holidays in succession. Besides Christmas, for instance, there would be the second day of Christmas. The settlers are now gradually adopting the American plan of allowing but one day of rest for each occasion. They had many holidays which are not generally recognized as such in this country; as for instance Good Friday, Maundy Thursday, and Prayer Day on the fourth Friday after Easter. This last named holiday corresponds to our Thanksgiving day.

It is still a habit among the settlers to eat a lunch, consisting of coffee, sandwiches and cake in the middle of the afternoon, especially in summer when the days are long. Some also add lunch in the forenoon. This habit of eating five meals a day was acquired in the old country, and the settlers still maintain it.

The old Norwegian song book "Landstads Salmebog" is still used by many of the settlers at their religious services. Many of these old religious hymns are very dear to the pioneer; they are the songs that were sung at the church services in their childhood days in Norway. No service now would seem quite complete to them unless some of these songs were sung.

One of the most interesting old country survivals was that of wooden windmills. Many such windmills were erected during the first few years of the settlement's existence. They were utilized mostly in turning the grindstone; some few were also made to do the churning. They were very crude in structure and did not remain long in use. They were, according to the testimony of those who made them, modeled on the old Norwegian windmills which were in the old country used very extensively for turning the threshing machines. The old country windmills were simple affairs; the wings were fastened to a long shaft which extended from one end of the barn into the center of the building, where it was connected with the machinery. The drawback for this form of windmill was that the wind would have

¹This custom of bringing food and eating a meal before the funeral services was practiced in the old country because of the fact that the parishes were often so large that those living farthest from the place where the funeral services were to be held, were compelled to start out early in the morning (always traveling on foot) in order to reach their destination in time. To them a meal was very welcome after the long walk.

to blow from a certain direction to be utilized. By fastening the wings to the shaft on the top of a high framework a number of feet from the barn, this defect was eliminated. Those windmills in the settlement were of this improved form. The wings were made of thin boards fastened to poles which ran through the shaft. The wings were placed at an angle of forty-five degrees and fastened in wood at the top of a wooden frame six or seven feet high. The frame was placed on some elevated place and it could be pulled about on the ground to suit the direction of the wind. If the shaft was pointing north and south, a north or a south wind would turn the mill.¹

A great many spinning wheels were brought over by the immigrants and were for many years extensively used in the settlement. During the long winter evenings the women would be employed in carding, spinning and knitting. Often the men would do the carding of the wool. For many years practically all the stockings and mittens used in the settlement were home-made. Although nearly all the spinning wheels have now been stowed away as a relic of early times, there are still a few in operation. Knitting is still a very popular employment with some of the women, and a large part of the winter socks are still home-made.

It is only a few years since the making of tallow candles was entirely done away with among the settlers. This was another old country practice and was very commonly resorted to in earlier days.² Whenever cattle were killed, all the fatty parts which could be used for the food were melted and poured into several vessels half full of hot water. A number of cotton threads from six to eight inches in length were fastened to a small stick long enough to extend across the edge of the vessel used. If a large number of candles were to be made, several such sticks would be dipped quickly into the fluid and then hung up till the tallow on the strings had hardened. This process was continued till the candles had acquired the desired thickness. By employing several sets of strings at the same time, several dozen candles could be made by one person in a few hours.³

Of musical instruments the early settlers did not have very many. The favorite ones were the violin, the mouth organ and the accordion. The accordion was a popular instrument in early days; every family had one and at least half of the men could play it fairly well. While the mouth organ has lost some of its

¹The last of these windmills in the settlement was destroyed by fire. On a very stormy night the rope which held the brake either broke or was worked loose by the strong wind, and the wood in which the iron ends of the shaft turned caught fire from the friction and in the morning this relic of olden days was a pile of ashes.

²No candles were made the first two years because no one could afford to butcher any of their cattle and consequently had no tallow with which to manufacture them.

³In the old country candles were often made in molds, but in the settlement this method was not employed.

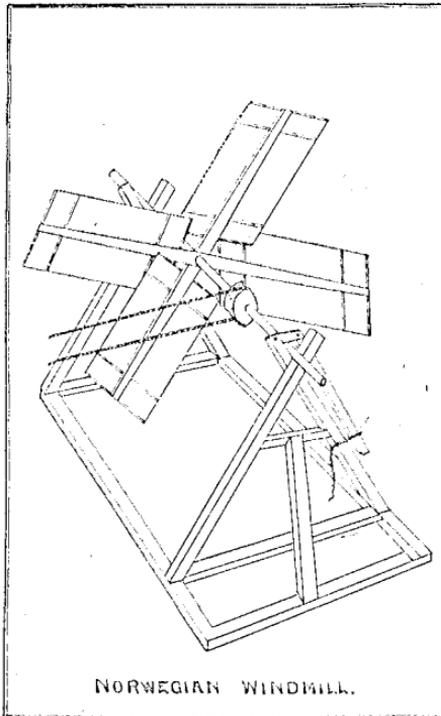
former importance, and the accordion has gradually gone out of use, the violin still retains its popularity, and its importance is growing in the settlement.¹

The pioneers brought with them a deep religious nature. Only a few months after their arrival in the country they organized a congregation and began work along religious lines. This work has been kept up ever since with unabated interest. The puritan traits that marked the early pioneers still prevail to a considerable extent among the settlers.

They also brought with them the spirit of frugality. Necessity in the old country had taught them to be economical and this spirit of frugality and economy still remains. They were possessed also of a spirit of generosity and neighborly kindness. During their first winter in Dakota, when supplies were scarce, they shared the last morsel with each other, so that when they were compelled to set out very early in the spring for provisions, they were all equally in need of supplies. During the early years of the settlement, and in fact during all the years of its existence, the people have been in the habit of helping the neighbor who is visited by misfortune. When anyone lost a cow or a horse or when he had the greater misfortune of losing his house by fire, the neighbors always stood ready to give him a helping hand. In many cases a list would be passed around and each one would subscribe a little to make good his loss. Along this same line was the practice which in the old country was called "Dogna;" it corresponds to what might be called a "working bee." If a man got behind with his work for some reason, or if he had some special work that had to be done which it was difficult for him to perform alone, he would call on his friends to help him, and on an appointed day they would all gather at his place and do the work. The work was always done gratuitously. Though this custom was never commonly practiced in the settlement, yet even in late years it has been resorted to more than once.

But that which will longest remain with the settlers is their nationality. Though they become good Americans, they will never cease to love and admire that rocky little country of the north, that land of mountains and fjords and waterfalls, which was the native land of their fathers. They always take a deep interest in the affairs of the fatherland, and are always anxious for its prosperity and welfare. They are kept in touch with the spirit of Norwegian patriotism by meeting and conversing with people coming over from the old country and by a reading of Norwegian literature.

¹The violins that they had were not the regular Norwegian or "Hardanger" violins, but the ordinary four stringed violin. The "Hardanger" violin, which is a purely Norwegian instrument, has four resonant strings which are placed beneath the regular strings and pass through the bridge.



NORWEGIAN WINDMILL.

IV.—AMERICANIZATION AND GROWTH OF SETTLEMENT.

In the previous chapter we saw how the settlers in some respects still retain the distinct characteristics of their nationality. Some of the forces which tend to perpetuate these characteristics were mentioned. It will be the purpose of this chapter to briefly discuss the extent to which the settlers have entered into the things pertaining to this country and to this government; to mention some of the forces which tend to Americanize the settlers and to gradually eliminate the old idea brought from Norway.

Among the first things to come before their attention was the need of gaining some acquaintance with the English language. Those of the settlers who had lived for some years in Minnesota had, of course, some knowledge of the language; but to those coming directly from the old country it was entirely unknown except what little might have been learned of it on the trip across the ocean. They very early began to come in contact with people of other nationalities; they soon began to have business intercourse with people who could not talk Norwegian, and thus they began to learn a little of the language. A few years after their arrival some of the settlers established an evening school, where those who were interested could get instruction in the

English language. Two of the young men who had enjoyed the privilege of attending a common school in Minnesota acted as instructors. Much interest was taken in the school especially by the younger men. But that which has had most influence in bringing the language into the settlement is the common school. Through the children who attended the schools the older people gained a better knowledge of the language. At the present time much literature written in the English language is read in the settlement. Nearly every family takes one or more papers or magazines printed in that language. Every one of the old pioneers can understand English to some extent, and many of them can read, write and speak it very intelligently. The English language is not yet generally used in the home; but the younger people use it occasionally in their conversations and correspondence with each other, although they seldom speak to the older people in that language. As the old pioneers pass away and the young native born generation step in to take their places the English language will undoubtedly be more extensively used in the homes, but the time when it shall have entirely eliminated the mother tongue is yet far distant.

The settlers have always taken much interest in the common school. As early as 1883 the first common school was established. They have furnished many of their own teachers. Some of these who were children when they came and some who were born in the settlement have become teachers. The settlement has had some of the largest and best attended schools in the county.¹

TABLE NO. 1.

	Township	No. of School	Number of Pupils enrolled			Per cent of Att'd'nce
			Males	Females	Total	
1898	Sverdrup	4	15	19	34	83
1898	Svardrup	3	11	13	24	85
1897	Bald Hill	1	10	14	24	80
1897	Bald Hill	3	13	13	24	92
1901	Sverdrup	4	24	7	31	93
1901	Sverdrup	3	14	13	27	94
1901	Bald Hill	1	14	10	24	83
1901	Bald Hill	4	13	15	28	97
1905	Bald Hill	1	11	9	20	89
1905	Bald Hill	4	13	15	28	87
1905	Sverdrup	3	9	12	21	80
1905	Sverdrup	4	16	16	32	92

¹See table No. 1.

The settlers have appreciated the value of an education, and a large per cent of the young people have enjoyed one or more year's work at some advanced school or college.¹

Coming from a country where democratic self-government existed to some extent, the pioneers had some knowledge of local self-government. Although the hard struggle to win a living from the land prevented them from spending as much time and energy as they wished in studying the civil government and politics of the country, yet from the first day they took deep interest in things pertaining to the government. As early as 1882, one year after their coming, they cast their first vote for the state and county officers. That same fall one of their number² was elected as county surveyor. In November, 1883, the members of the organ-

TABLE NO II.—SUMMARY OF VOTE FOR GOVERNOR IN THE TWO TOWNSHIPS.

		Republican	Democrat	Prohibition
1900	Sverdrup	19	16	11
1900	Bald Hill	17	28	4
1902	Sverdrup	22	21	1
1902	Bald Hill	17	22	2
1904	Sverdrup	16	9	24
1904	Bald Hill	19	18	12

ized congregation passed a resolution to respect the president's proclamation for a Thanksgiving day. In 1886 they organized Sverdrup township and elected three of their own number as supervisors.³ Two years later Bald Hill township was organized. In 1889 one of the Norwegians now living in Sverdrup township was elected to the first legislature of North Dakota.⁴ The pioneers have from time to time filled many county offices and have furnished many of the influential political leaders of the county. They have from early years taken a deep interest in national politics and every one of them have affiliated themselves with one or another of the political parties.

A few horses were brought into the settlement the first year by some of the Minnesota people, otherwise oxen were used. In 1886 some horses were introduced, but oxen were used in

¹This appreciation of education properly belongs with the old country ideas. Norway enjoys the distinction of having one of the smallest percentages of illiteracy of any country in the civilized world.

²Martin Ueland.

³Sverdrup township was named after John Sverdrup who was prime minister of Norway when they left the old country.

⁴Christ Bolkan.

TABLE NO. III.—ASSESSED VALUATION OF PROPERTY.

		Personal	Real Estate	Total
Bald Hill	1895	29,768	86,404	116,172
Bald Hill	1905	81,419	100,008	190,472
Sverdrup	1895	19,895	85,262	105,157
Sverdrup	1905	27,168	110,588	136,765

The great increase in personal property in Bald Hill during these ten years is partially due to the change in the method of taxing railroad and telegraph lines. The Northern Pacific railroad crosses Bald Hill.

different parts of the settlement till 1895 or 1896. A few buggies were used in the settlement from 1886 to 1895, but they did not get into common use before 1898 or 1900.

Of the original pioneer huts and log houses a few are still standing; most of these are used for granaries or wood sheds. Two of the original log houses have been remodeled and enlarged and are still used for dwellings; all the others have been replaced by modern buildings. The settlers have always been interested in trees, and many beautiful groves now dot the settlement. They have during the last few years secured a rural mail delivery route and rural telephone lines.

As a rule the Norwegians in this settlement have not very large farms; but what they have they cultivate thoroughly. Taking the two townships together, we have the following figures:

1888-1890—

Number of Norwegian land holders, 56.

Number of acres held, 10,127.

Average size of farm, 180 acres.

1904—

Number of Norwegian land holders, 84.

Number of acres held, 24,600.

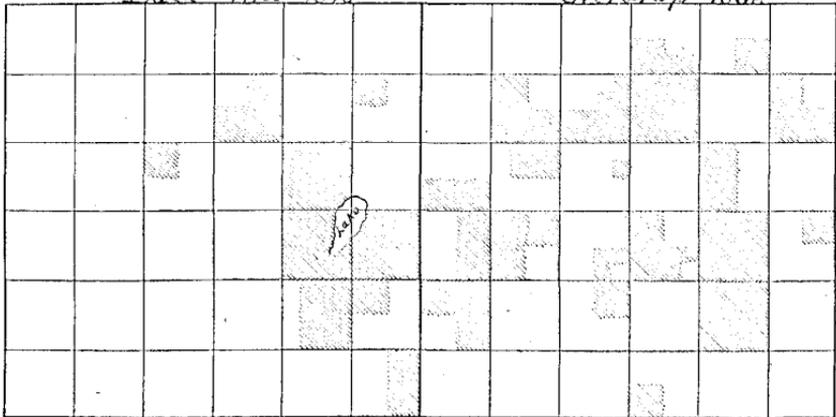
Average size of farm, 293 acres.

During these twenty-five years the pioneers have had many hardships and disappointments to contend with. There have been periods of drouth when their crops were very poor, and when many in the county were compelled to leave. The settlers were able to struggle through it because of their early training in being frugal and economical. But with all their hardships and disappointments they have struggled bravely up from poverty and are all well-to-do. Some of the old pioneers have rented out their farms and retired to a quiet life, and others have gone into business in neighboring towns, but the largest part of them are still living on their farms. All of the pioneers that came in 1881 are living.

Land held by Norwegians.

Bald Hill 1890

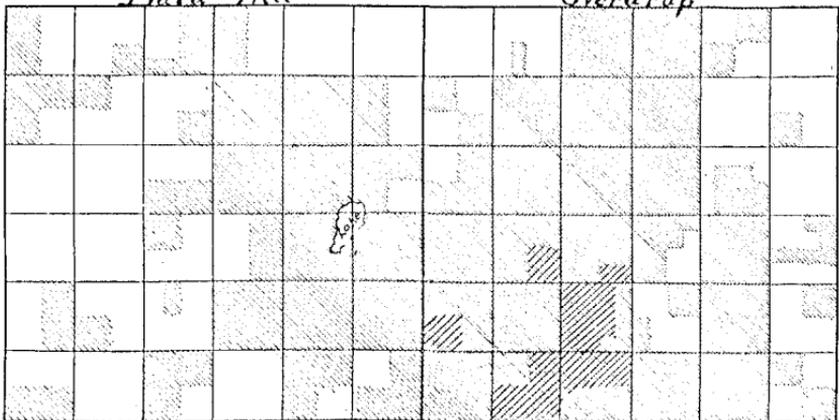
Sverdrup 1888



Nationality of Landholders 1904

Bald Hill

Sverdrup



Norwegians



Danes or Swedes



Though the settlers still retain some of the characteristics of their former nationality, yet they have in most respects become thoroughly American. While they cherish a fond remembrance of their native country, they admire and love the land of their adoption. They are not ashamed of being Norwegians, and at the same time they are proud of being Americans.

APPENDIX.
CENSUS OF 1890.

County	Total Population	Total foreign born population	Norwegian foreign born population	Per cent of foreign born Norwegian to total population	Per cent of Norwegian to total foreign born population
Barnes	7,045	2,798	1,150	16.3	41.1
Benson	2,460	974	462	18.7	47.1
Billings	170	56	7	4.1	12.5
Bottineau	2,893	1,721	348	11.3	20.2
Bowman	6				
Burford	803	291	17	2.1	5.8
Burleigh	4,247	1,177	107	2.5	9.1
Cass	19,613	7,740	2,428	12.3	31.3
Cavalier	6,471	4,052	680	10.5	16.7
Church	74	20	3	4.	15.
Dickey	5,573	1,716	450	8.07	26.2
Dunn	159	79	1	.6	1.2
Eddy	1,377	525	146	10.6	27.8
Emmons	1,971	802	47	2.3	5.8
Flannery	72	23	6	8.3	26.
Foster	1,210	494	101	8.3	20.4
Garfield	33	5			
Grand Forks	18,357	7,971	3,518	19.1	44.1
Griggs	2,817	1,338	822	29.1	61.4
Hottinger	81	13			
Kidder	1,331	249	24	1.9	9.6
La Moure	3,187	1,235	337	10.5	27.2
Logan	597	382	16	2.	4.1
McHenry	1,584	673	389	24.5	57.8
McIntosh	3,248	2,221	74	2.3	3.3
McKenzie	3				
McLean	860	365	4	8.6	20.2
Mercer	428	264	1	.2	.3
Morton	4,728	1,919	252	5.3	13.1
Mcuntraville	122	62	21	17.2	32.9
Nelson	4,293	1,890	1,098	25.5	58.6
Oliver	464	162	15	3.2	9.3
Pembina	14,334	9,144	390	2.7	4.2
Pierce	905	461	289	31.9	62.6
Ramsey	4,418	1,844	676	15.3	36.6
Ransom	5,393	2,031	947	17.5	46.6
Renville	99	66	5	.5	7.5
Richland	10,751	4,062	1,837	17.	45.2
Rolette	2,427	1,397	182	7.5	13.
Sargent	5,076	1,791	732	14.4	40.8
Sheridan	5	1			
Stark	2,304	916	113	4.9	12.3
Steele	3,777	1,567	1,118	29.6	71.3

County	Total population	Total foreign born population	Norwegian foreign born population	Per cent of foreign born Norwegian to total population	Per cent of Norwegian to total foreign born population
Stevens	16	8			
Stutsman	5,266	1,621	121	2.2	7.4
Towner	1,450	570	169	11.6	29.6
Traill	10,217	4,701	3,572	35.0	70.0
Wallace	24	3			
Walsh	16,587	8,559	2,523	15.2	29.4
Ward	1,681	698	382	22.7	54.7
Wells	1,212	570	81	6.6	14.2
Williams	109	42	22	20.1	.5
Unorganized	511	192	19	3.7	9.8

CENSUS OF 1900.

Barnes	13,159	4,357	1,630	12.4	37.4
Benson	8,320	2,132	1,045	12.5	49.0
Billings	975	253	24	2.4	9.0
Bottineau	7,532	3,246	908	12.0	27.5
Burleigh	6,081	1,494	116	1.9	7.7
Cass	28,625	9,025	2,548	8.9	28.2
Cavalier	12,580	6,153	782	6.2	12.7
Dickey	6,061	1,808	307	5.0	16.9
Eddy	3,330	901	259	7.7	28.7
Emmons	4,349	2,005	80	1.8	4.0
Foster	3,770	779	180	4.7	23.1
Grand Forks	24,459	8,483	3,308	13.5	39.0
Griggs	4,744	1,784	1,031	21.7	58.3
Kidder	1,754	550	26	1.4	4.7
La Moure	6,048	2,203	402	6.6	18.2
Logan	1,625	859	28	1.7	3.2
McHenry	5,253	1,849	541	10.3	29.2
McIntosh	4,818	2,302	43	.9	1.4
McLean	4,791	1,770	99	2.9	5.6
Mercer	1,778	834	40	2.2	4.8
Merton	8,069	3,381	285	3.5	8.1
Nelson	7,316	2,482	1,462	20.0	58.9
Oliver	990	368	29	2.9	7.8
Pembina	17,869	9,027	328	1.8	3.6
Pierce	4,765	1,798	590	12.3	32.8
Ramsey	9,198	2,866	1,026	11.1	35.8
Ransom	6,919	2,097	1,026	14.8	48.9
Richland	17,387	5,318	2,174	12.5	40.8
Rolette	7,995	2,165	262	3.2	12.1
Sargent	6,039	1,754	668	11.0	38.1
Stark	7,621	3,381	136	1.7	4.0
Steele	5,888	1,857	1,297	22.0	70.0
Stutsman	9,143	2,754	186	2.0	7.8
Towner	6,491	1,544	318	4.9	20.6
Traill	13,107	4,797	3,472	26.4	70.9
Walsh	20,288	8,047	2,269	11.2	28.2
Ward	7,961	2,445	606	7.6	24.8
Wells	8,310	3,195	627	7.5	19.6
Williams	1,530	416	47	3.0	11.5
Standing Rock Reservation	2,208	111	1	.94	.9

NAMES OF THOSE WHO CAME FROM NORWAY TO THE SETTLEMENT
IN THE SPRING OF 1881.

Ola Westley with wife and eight children.
 Valdemar Klubben with wife and two children.
 Sven Loge with wife and one child.
 Sven Lunde with wife and five children.
 Betuel Herigstad with wife and one child.
 Knut Haaland, single.
 Ola Stokka with wife and two children.
 Andrew Vatne, single.
 Sven Lima, single.
 Carl Herigstad, single.
 Lars Herigstad, single, stopped in Minnesota.
 Laurits Stai with family.
 Miss A. Oglund, single, stopped in Minnesota.
 Tobias Time, single, stopped in Minnesota.

NAMES OF SETTLERS WHO CAME INTO THE SETTLEMENT FROM
MINNESOTA.

Frithof Greenland with family.
 Mathias Fjelstad with family.
 Edward Stai with family.
 Simon Ouren with family.
 Christ Lea with family.
 Helge Larson (Yellow Medicine county) with family.
 Halvor Busrack with family.
 Martin Ueland (from Minneapolis), single.
 Lauritz Star with family.

LIST OF SOME OF THE MORE COMMON NORWEGIAN DISHES.

Lofsa.—Boiled and mashed potatoes with flour. Rolled out to a thin sheet and baked slowly on top of stove, the surface being kept moist with clear water while baking.

Flad Broed.—Mashed potatoes and graham flour. Made like the one above and baked crisp on a very hot stove.

Kringla.—Bread sponge thickened with flour, rolled out into long sticks and twisted into the shape of a B, boiled in water and baked in very hot oven.

Sand Bakkelse.—An equal amount of sugar, butter and flour, mixed and baked crisp.

Poorman's cake Fattigmand sbakkelse.—Eggs, flour, cream and sugar mixed, cut into fancy shapes and fried in lard.

Gome.—Fresh milk heated to boiling point, curdled with sour milk and boiled until it has assumed a brownish color.

Groena Groed.—Sweet milk and rice, boiled to mush and served warm with sugar, cinnamon and cream. A supper dish on Christmas eve.

Komla.—Raw grated potatoes and flour, mixed and made into balls and boiled in meat broth.

Floede Groed.—Milk, cream and flour, boiled to a mush.

Sylta.—Meat of hog's head boiled tender, chopped fine, spiced with salt, pepper, ginger, allspice and cloves and pressed into a solid cake.

Rolla Poelsa.—Sliced meat seasoned with salt, pepper and onions and wrapped up like a sausage. After being soaked in brine it is boiled.

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