THE NORWEGIAN ELEMENT IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF
WISCONSIN

BY

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE NORWEGIAN IMMIGRANT

As "a chapter in the History of Europe merges with one in the making of America,"¹ the early history of the Norwegians in Wisconsin has its beginnings among the narrow valleys and steep mountains of Norway. The economic, social, and political life of that country left its mark so distinctly upon its people that in order fully to appreciate and understand the Norwegians as a distinct type one must go back to their homeland across the seas. The region, land, and occupations they chose are largely reflected in their former life.

Dr. Kendric Babcock characterizes the life of the average Norwegian when he says:

"Nature is no spendthrift in any part of the Scandinavian peninsulas; small economies are the alphabet of her teaching, and her lessons once learned are rarely forgotten. Her children of the North, therefore, down

¹ Theodore C. Blegen, Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860 (Northfield, Minnesota, 1931), v.
to the stolidest laborer, mountaineer, and fisherman, are generally industrious and frugal, and when they migrate to the American west, to enter upon the work of pioneering, with its stern requirements of endurance, patience, persistent endeavor, and thrift, they start out in the new life with decided temperamental advantages over most other immigrants and even over most native-born Americans.”

Norway in its southern part is approximately two hundred and sixty miles in width and extends northward irregularly eleven hundred miles. The western shore line were it traced in all its windings of fjord and bay, would equal a length of half the distance around the world. The great plateau is interrupted by lengthy fjords which Samuel J. Beckett calls “sea flooded valleys” picturesque and beautiful.

Glancing at a topographical map of Norway, one realizes the vast amount of mountain and water which help compose that country. One realizes what land must mean to a Norwegian farmer when one stops to think that only one-fourth of all the land in Norway can be cultivated and even most of this is forested so that only about three to four per cent of all the land of the total area of 124,495 square miles is tillable, and again of this small amount the

larger part is meadow land. The following figures, which are based on an official publication of Norwegian agriculture, will probably point out the facts more vividly:4

**TOPOGRAPHY OF NORWAY'S LAND AREA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bare Mountains</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forests</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Meadows</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated Meadows</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain Fields</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bays</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow and Ice</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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</table>

Yet, with this scarcity of land, the predominant pursuit in Norway is agriculture with cattle farming and forest cultivation following. Most of the people of Norway in the early 1800's earned their livelihood from agriculture. In 1801, only eighty-six thousand out of a population of 883,440 lived in urban centers. In 1865 two-thirds of the population were engaged in farming, cattle raising, and lumbering. The leading cereal crops till the middle of the nineteenth century were oats, barley, rye, and potatoes. Small quantities of wheat were also raised.5

Statistics show that the great majority of Norwegian immigrants have sought homes in rural communities and

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4 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 3.
5 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 4; George T. Flom, A History of Norwegian Immigration to the United States (Iowa City, Iowa, 1909), 21.
engaged in farming and related pursuits. In fact more than eighty-eight per cent of our Norwegian immigrants have come from rural communities.6

It is quite easy to understand that the boundless expanse of inexpensive, fertile land in the American West captivated the imagination of people who had been squeezed into the few rods betwixt mountains and fjord and had eked out the scanty yield of their farms by grazing the high glacier-fed meadows and gleaning the spoil of the sea. "It is by dogged, persistent, indomitable toil and endurance, backed up by irrepressible daring," wrote William Archer in 1885, "that the Norwegian peasant and fisherfolk, three-fourths of the population, carry on with any show of success their struggle against iron nature." Because of a rapidly growing population and little fertile land, Norway, before industrialism set in was unable to take care of her excess population. American land, open, fertile, cheap, and waiting, was a magnet which drew the immigrant.7

It is interesting to note the change in pursuits in Norway. As before mentioned agriculture claimed two-thirds of the population in 1865; in 1875 it had fallen to 58.17%, and in 1891 to 48.65% while the portion of the

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6 Edward A. Ross, "Scandinavians in America," in Century, LXXXVIII, 296 (June, 1914); Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 296.
7 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 4.
total population engaged in industries and mining increased from 15.4 in 1865 to 19.39 in 1876 and to 23.04% in 1891. The industrial growth in Norway taken as a whole tended to put a damper rather than act as a stimulant to immigration as it provided work for heretofore unemployed people. 8

The fishing industry claimed 5.1% of the population in 1865, and in 1891 it had claimed to 3.58%. We find that a proportional large amount of the New England fisheries are conducted by fishermen who have come from Norway. Fishing engaged 5.1% of the population in 1865; 5.46% in 1876, and 8.58% in 1891. Navigation engaged 9.6% of the population in 1865; 13.63% in 1876, and 15.37% in 1891. The Great Lakes and the Atlantic drew a goodly share of Norwegian sailors. In fact, Billed-Magazin in 1868 advertised for Norwegian sailors. 9

In 1845 the total population of Norway was 1,328,471 inhabitants while the area is 124,495 square miles, or somewhat more than Illinois and Wisconsin. The population is very unevenly distributed, the north being rather thinly settled. 10

8 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 5.
9 Billed-Magazin, I, 73; Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 5; Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 22.
One element comprising 77,780 persons are the independent land owners or "bønder" which was the most powerful and influential element in the population of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It should be remembered that Norway never had a feudal system; and the "bønder" had behind them ancient traditions not only of independence but also of rigorous self-assertion. The rural aristocracy was the heart of Norwegian culture. Though the "bønder" were proud of their position, it carried with it no implication of wealth, and even a large number of this class due to difficult economic conditions sold their farms and moved to America. The younger sons of the bønde were barred by the oldel" system of land tenure from sharing the ancestral estate and these often came to America. The odel system has resulted in the holding of estates through many generations by one line in direct descent. This tradition gave to land both dignity and worth and explains why a Norwegian immigrant, although not engaged in farming, often insist on owning farms. 11

More important, however, in the study of Scandinavian-American History are the "husmand" or cotters who constituted 58,049 family heads or around 300,000 people, 25,047 renters, 47,000 laborers, and 146,000 servants. These figures represent—

11 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 5ff.
sent the population of rural Norway in 1845 when the migrations were ready to swing into full sway, and it was from these ranks that they were largely recruited. The cotters were found mostly in eastern Norway; they leased small pieces of land to work themselves and were required, usually under written contracts, to give a specified amount of service to their landlords, the bönder. These "bönder" were the owners of the "gaards" (farms) which were large enough to require the labor of and furnish some extra land for the support of the cotters. Small lots of land with cottages and other buildings, usually some distance away from the central building of the gaard were reserved for the use of the "husmand." Heavy demands were made of them by the "bönder," in fact so heavy that in 1850 they asked that their required services be restricted to five days a week and working days to eleven hours. One writer says that the only time that they had to work their tracts of land was on Sunday. The value of their services if they worked overtime (more than was required for their small hut and piece of land) was twelve cents a day in summer and less than half that amount in the winter.¹²

Though personally free, the cotters were really economic serfs. It was seldom that any of them were able

to win their way out of poverty. Politically and socially on a lower plane than the "bønder," the cotter had nothing which to look forward to. They lacked suffrage as they could not meet certain property qualifications. Although parts of Norway did not have coters, such as Hallingdal where the farms were too small to support them and each small gaard just supported an independent land owner or bonde, yet the husmand or coters were on the increase when the emigration movement began. In 1825 there were 48,571 coters; in 1855 the total had increased to 65,060 which proved to be the highest point in the history of the class. Poverty coupled with the heavy demands upon the time and services of the coters tended in many cases to embitter their attitude toward the "bønder." Herman Foss in his book "Husmands-Gutter: En fortelling fra Sigdal" (The Cotters Boy: A Tale from Sigdal) pictures very vividly the gulf between the cotter and the "bønde" and accentuates the virtues of the cotter while depicting his sad economic and social status. It was considered wrong for the sons and daughters of the bønde to intermarry with the children of the husmand." Much fiction was woven around the love of a bonde's daughter and a cotter's son and vice versa--resulting usually in a happy ending in America.

A Norwegian "gaard" (farm) consists usually of the owner's dwelling houses, which were usually quite roomy,
a side building with servants room, brewing kitchen, colender room, chaise house, wood house, a two story house on pillars which served as a pantry and store room, a threshing barn, a barn for hay, straw and chaff, a stable for horses, a cattle house. Wood was obtained in the forest. The "sater" or hill pasture was usually on the mountains nearby; during the summer months the cattle and goats were taken there to graze. A girl was usually left to tend them, to churn and make cheese. Milking was always a woman's job in Norway. Girls at a very early age were sent on the sater to "gjete" or watch the herd. Then if a gaard was large enough there were one or more "husmands" places, a small house, a barn large enough for a couple of cows and a small tract of land made up a "husmand's" place. 13

A Norwegian gaard always had a name, for example, "Hovde" or "Brye", besides which each person had a patronymic name (father's name). If Knut Olafson owned Hovdegaard, his son's name would be first his given name, Nils, followed by Knutson Hovdegaard. His daughter, Kari, would write her name Kari Knutsdatter (Knut's daughter) Hovdegaard. Given names were very limited, and the same name was sometimes used twice in one family. Cotters also often wrote their

13 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 8.
names in the same manner using the gaard name of the owner. In this way when they came to America the Norwegians had two names; Nils Knutson Hovde could use either of his two names. Usually if the gaard name was difficult the patronymic name was used. Cotters or laborers quite often used the patronymic name, which always ended in "son". The patronymic names are used by a great number of Norwegians as their official names, but in an earlier day in the pioneer community the farm name was used in Norwegian conversation; for example, a neighbor's name is Lars Christianson (the official patronymic name) but the neighbors call him Lars Langvag, the old Norwegian farm name.

Norway is a country of steep, rugged mountains filled with narrow valleys. Before methods of communication were improved each valley lived by itself as an isolated community. This isolation was acute in the early nineteenth century. It resulted in notable differences in the people of various districts, or "bygder", in dialects, customs, and temperament. Today the railroad and other means of communication have changed this, but until 1854 Norway had no railroad and communication was difficult. The early immigrant was of a group type. Due to difficulties of communication and travel, news of America seeped gradually from bygd to bygd. Then again as the early immigrant left

13 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 8.
Norway as a type, such as from Numedal, Telemarken, Voss, Gudbrandsdalen, Solør, or Stavanger, he settled in America in more or less bygd fashion; for example, the Solør "bygd" in Trempealeau County and the American Gudbrandsdalen in Vernon County. The people knew by the dialect and dress to which part of Norway an individual belonged. Their settling in groups in America shows their tendency to be clannish. Not all of them settled this way, however; multitudes just took land where it could be found in any kind of a Norwegian community. There have been organized in the United States approximately fifty societies whose members are bound together by their common origin in some Norwegian district. Each "bygdelag" cherishes the folk-tales, songs, dances, speech, dialect, and traditions of their background. These societies publish year-books, sometimes magazines, etc., in which a great deal of history is recorded both of Norway and of the Norwegians in America. Were one to attend a meeting, say a "Telemarkningslag," and then a "Hallinglag," the characteristics of the people would be more obvious to one. At the former there would be an abundance of laughter, dance and song; at the latter, prayer and a serious tone throughout.  

14 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 8-10. Author's knowledge through interviews with immigrants.
Besides the difference in bygder or sections, there are distinctions between "Eastlending" (East lander) and "Westlending" (West lander) which refer to more general differences in customs and types of people. The people who dwell on the west coast are under the influence of the elements; they dwell in the bleak, dark shadows of high mountains and are more isolated than those living in the east. "He who wishes to see this ice and stone nature of western Norway embodied in one great picture," declares Agnes M. Wergeland, "must read Ibsen's Brand, the most tremendous and most one-sided expression of this nature in Norwegian literature." She describes that period before modern transportation and communication began. The West, she says, was old-fashioned, the house small, low, and dark, with no modern improvement in house or farm implements. It stands as a sharp contrast to the "Eastland" with its sunny disposition and "broad expansive valleys that end in broad rivers." Dr. Wergeland believes also that the energy and spirit of the East is less than that of the West, and as a result many of the great men of Norway have come from the mountains and coasts, "the true home of the Vikings," whose surroundings materially aided in giving them "their courage, ability to fight with the unknown, their deep earnestness, their imaginative freshness, their salty humor." Norwegian emigration began from the south-
west coast.  

As far as the climate is concerned that portion of Norway from which the migration has been the heaviest, namely, the south and the west, has a climate very comparable with that of the upper Mississippi Valley, cooler summers and milder winters.  

"The Norwegian is above all democratic. He is simple, serious, intense even to bluntness, often radical and visionary, and with a tendency to disputatiousness."  

For centuries the rural population of Norway survived foreign domination, until in the nineteenth century it came into its own as the heart and kernel of Norwegian Democracy. The nineteenth century was one of policial awakening and reform in Norway. The "bønder" played a conspicuous part, beginning with the Eidsvold assembly of 1814, at which time at a church service in each parish the people promised to maintain Norwegian independence. The Norwegians first established their constitution as they wanted power to lodge in the hands of the people whether  

16 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 13; Oalf M. Norlie, History of the Norwegian People in America (Minneapolis, 1925), 17; "Norwegians in the United States," Literary Digest, LX, 39 (February 8, 1919).  
17 Babcock, Scandinavian Element in the United States, 17.  
18 G. Cathorne Hardy, Norway (New York, 1925), 241.
the country united with Sweden or not. 1814 is important because the constitution was saved even though the allies (Napoleonic War) forced Norway to accept Swedish Union. A government of the people was set in operation. The taxing and law making bodies were lodged with the people and were to be exercised through their representatives under a united monarchy. There was to be freedom of the press. Some other features were: the exclusion of Jews, religious freedom not completed (reform in 40's), manhood suffrage was not established. In 1837 the Norwegians passed a local self-government measure. Embers were slowly flickering to be fanned into a flame in the 50's and 60's—a period of reform in government. As a result of this, the early immigrant to the United States did not assert himself politically as much as the latter movement who were directly influenced by the agitation in Norway. The former tended to be more conservative. Thus we find some of the Norwegians in the early settlements of Wisconsin more conservative than those of the latter settlements here and in the Minnesota's and Dakota's. On the whole, however, the Norwegian immigrant had breathed the air of struggle and had the appreciation for self-government. This accounts for the Norwegian assertion in political matters. 19

19 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 16.
The Lutheran Church was the state church of Norway; as a result the nation was nearly one hundred per cent Lutheran. It was practically impossible to be outside of the church. Education, social life, and governmental affairs were carried on through the church. Dissension was slow, and as late as 1875 there were only 7,180 who did not formally belong to the state church. The important religious development in nineteenth century Norway was a great pietistic revival led by Hans Nielsen Hauge. This was significant in Norway and just as important in Norwegian-America on which it had left its stamp.

Since nearly everyone belonged to the state church, it followed that all must be confirmed in the Lutheran faith and thus must be able to read. Norway has compulsory education laws for this specific purpose. As a result of this law, they took the world's lead in literacy.20 Ellis Island furnished statistics in this line. Illiteracy in Norway was less than one per cent of the total population. Only one out of every 250 Norwegians was illiterate compared with one out of twenty of the German immigrant.21

This was the setting in Norway at the time of the

20 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 17ff; Norlie, History of Norwegian People, 22; Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 22.
migrations, a settling which is reflected again in Wisconsin in various ways and a setting that contributed so largely to the cause of the migrations.
CHAPTER II

THE MIGRATIONS AND THEIR CAUSES

The question, "What caused the Norwegians to migrate?" is similar to such questions as "What caused the World War?" and "What caused the depression?" in that for all three we can name a number of things which played a significant part but all of which leave unanswered certain questions. The immigrant himself may be blind to certain forces back of his decision and may also be blind to a larger movement of which he is a part. A Norwegian commentator in 1854 sensed the relationship between numerous small forces and large results when he said of emigration:

"It proceeds prosaically and unconsidered, like the great changes in the earth's surface, which are not studied until they appear as if they were a result of unexplained earthquakes or revolutionary changes. For this colossal movement is a result of innumerable small and unappreciated causes, which exercise on human life the same disintegrating and transforming power that the chemical elements do on the earth's crust." 1

1 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 159.
"The emigrant is a dissenter," Prof. Blegen maintains, "for emigration grows out of discontent and restlessness occasioned by burdens of some kind or the hope of improvement through change, usually both." He is also "a separatist," he goes on to say, "for his act means a sharp break with familiar conditions; he turns his back on his accustomed environment." Emigration is often attributed to the so-called "America fever." There is no doubt but that certain causes created in the minds of many people is a predisposition towards emigration that needed but an "America letter," an "America book," the influence of a returned immigrant, or some other type of immediate agency to bring it to a head.²

Professor George T. Flom lists the chief influences that have promoted Scandinavian emigrations to the United States in the order of their importance: the prospect of material betterment and the love of a free and more independent life; letters of relatives and friends who had emigrated to the United States and visits of these again to their native country; advertising of agents of emigration, religious persecution at home, church proselytism, political oppression, military service, and lastly desire for adventure. Fugitives from justice have been few and paupers and criminals in the Scandinavian countries are not sent

² Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 159.
out of the country; they are taken care of by the government. ³

It is important to study all these influences that were brought to bear upon the prospective immigrant, but, as Professor Blegen says, "the essential question in explaining his action is that concerning the background of the predisposition in question." An emigrant movement is based upon hundreds and thousands of individual decisions. In each case the primary problem is psychological.

He continues, "Norwegian emigration can be understood only by seeing it in its relation to other movements and forces of its time, for Norway, in the period when emigration took its rise, was the scene of stir and change; new political and religious forces were making themselves felt; the time was one of growth and transition; but Norwegian economic life did not keep step with other aspects of the scene." ⁴

It was a period of upheaval and protest in economics, politics, and religion. It took one form in Haugeanism, another in the battle of the "bonder" with officialdom and the struggle for political and economic reform; and another in emigration itself. ⁵

The first chapter pointed out the conditions in Norway as far as scarcity of land and the conditions of the cotters

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3 Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 86.
4 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 160.
5 Ibid., 161.
and laborers are concerned. This situation had been brew-
ing and growing for a long time. Conditions in Norway that
accentuated and helped bring on the migration movement were
economic situations such as an old pioneer speaks of:

"My father told me often of the terrible
crop failures of 1812, so far reaching and stern
that no one who lived at the time was able to
forget that year. The summer was cold and so
raw that about the middle of June (St. Hanstider)
there was ice on ponds and lakes so heavy that
one could drive across on it. The fall came un-
usually early with snow and cold. The corn
froze....The next summer (1813) the people
had to resort to bark bread (bark nearest the
wood on firs was used, first chopped fine, then
cooked, dried, and ground). Corn was sold by
the quart. The war had caused Norway to be
blockaded and consequently no help could come
from outside. My uncle, Kittel Foss, who was
before this famine a well-to-do man, at this
time had to take all of his cattle and sheep
to the cities to sell for what he could get
for them, and thus, lost nearly everything he
owned.

"In 1813 the money question loomed im-
portant. Six Rigsdaler were reduced in value
to one Rigsbankdaler and in 1816 one Rigs-
bankdaler was worth 60 shillings. In 1818 and
1819 began the period of the 'court' (equi-
valent to state bankruptcy). My brother Kittel,
who was the oldest had the right of Ode, but
he married an only daughter and consequently
he took her gaard. Leaving the gaard to my
father. When he was to pay for this, came the
court and he consequently had a difficult
time in paying his debt.

"The years 1836 and 37 were poor crop
years due to the cold. In 1837 as a eleven
year old boy I can remember snow falling on
the green fields. The corn froze that year
and the following year we had to live on 'bark bread' again. This was the last year that I ate 'bark bread'."

Professor Svein Nilssen, who edited a Norwegian Journal, published in Chicago in 1869-70 interviewed many of the prominent early settlers of Wisconsin and one of the things he asked these people was "Why did you emigrate?" The answers in most cases were hope of economic advancement in America. Hard times and the inability of a country to support the increasing population is an important factor. The founder of the fourth Norwegian settlement in America, at Jefferson Prairie, Rock County, Wisconsin, Ole Nattestad, from Numedal, tells in an interview with Nilssen his experiences as a farmer in Numedal and the difficulties of making any headway so that emigration to him seemed the happy solution. From Tinn, in upper Telemarken, came John Nelson Lurraas to Muskego, Wisconsin in 1839 and in 1843 he moved to Koshkonong. He says:

"I was my father's oldest son, and consequently heir to the Lurraas farm. It was regarded as one of the best in the neighborhood, but there was a $1,400 mortgage on it. I had worked for my father until I was twenty-five years old, and had had no opportunity of getting money. It was plain to me that I would have a hard time of it, if I should own the farm with the

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7 Svein Nilssen, "De Norske Settlementers Historie," in Billed-Magazin, I (Madison, Wisconsin, 1869), 82-3.
debt resting on it, pay a reasonable amount to my brother and sisters and assume the care of my aged father. I saw to my horror how one farm after the other fell into the hands of the lendsmen and other money-lenders, and this increased my dread of attempting farming. But I got married and had to do something. Then it occurred to me that the best thing might be to migrate to America. I was encouraged in this purpose by letters written by Norwegian settlers in Illinois who had lived two years in America. Such were the causes that led me to migrate and I presume the rest of our company were actuated by similar motives."

Such letter came from many districts in Norway. Below is cited an excerpt from one from Andreas Sandsberg at Hellen, Norway, September 12, 1831, to Gudmund Sandsberg in Kendall, New York:

"A considerable number of people are now getting ready to go to America from this amt. Two brigs are to depart from Stavanger in about eight days from now, and will carry these people to America, and if good reports come from these, the number of immigrants will doubtless be still larger next year. A pressing and general lack of money entering into every branch of industry, stops or at least hampers business and makes it difficult for many people to earn the necessities of life. While this is the case on this side of the Atlantic there is hope for abundance on the other, and this I take it, is the chief cause of this growing disposition to emigrate."

Thus the average Norwegian with his love of freedom and independence disliked a mortgaged farm, debts, and no

8 Nilsen, "De Norske Settlementers Historie," I, 6-7.
economic security. Then more urgent then this were the years of famine. The thirties were oppressive. Besides of being bad crop years a period of agricultural stagnation had set in. Lands were divided, until in various Norwegian districts, the patches were too small to support those who cultivated them. The numbers of farms in 1802 was 79,256; by 1820 it had increased to 93,621; in 1845 it was 112,930; and by 1860 more than 135,000; this increase was due to the passing of the Odel Law in June 26, 1821 and resulted in the breaking up of the Norwegian gaards. Many plots were too small to support a family and the owner, if he could get no extra work, had to face poverty unless he could emigrate. The thirties were years of famine in Telemarken. The people were forced to share the food of their cattle. It has already been quoted describing the scene in Hallingdal, and a historian of Numedal writes with reference to this period: "The need was terrible in many places. Cattle and horses starved to death for lack of fodder and in some parishes as many as one-third of the people went hungry." Little wonder under these conditions when reports came of the boundless fertile land available for settlers in the West that the people were ready to migrate. Then there came reports of good wages. Ole Rynning reported wages at fifty cents to a dollar a day in winter and twice as much in the summer and for servant girls from one to two dollars a week. In this period in Norway a servant girl
received from eight to ten specie dollars a year, an
ordinary laborer twelve to twenty cents a day with board,
and twenty to thirty-two without board. Wages did not
change very rapidly. In the period 1846 to 1850 wages
were reported for various parts of Nordre Bergenhus as
twenty-four to thirty-six cents a day for laborers in
summer. And from 1856 to 1860 in Stavanger amt laborers
received twelve to sixteen cents a day in winter and twenty
to thirty-six in summer.10

It was estimated that in the middle forties two-thirds
of the Norwegian gaard owners had mortgaged property.11
Borrowing was complicated and expensive as a tangle of
official transactions were necessary. In 1843 when borrow-
ing fifty dollars one had to pay eight shillings for the
official fees thereto attached.12 Many immigrant letters
carried this hatred for the loan system, writes one, "The
best thing about America is that we do not have"lensmand"
here."13

Military services were only a secondary cause of
migration. The bönder were required to serve until 1845
while urban and official classes were excluded but after
that all had to serve or pay a money exemption. Even this

10 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 169.
11 Nordlyset (Madison, Wisconsin, October 9, 1846).
12 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 171-172.
12 Ibid., 172.
was closed in the middle seventies. The bonde element disliked this service very much.14

Numerous immigrant letters and reminiscences will show that they came here in the interest of their children's future—that is many who were in good economic circumstances in Norway.15

Religious intolerance and persecution played a minor role in the migration movement as a whole although it was a significant factor in the genesis of the movement, the coming of the "sloopers" in 1825, but even here economic advantage was significant. Rasmus B. Anderson places religious persecution first. Flom and Blegen both disagree with this view.16

Southwestern Norway, from which the migration began, contained at this time a large number of dissenters from the established church, the so-called Haugeans or Readers. They were the followers of Hans Nilssen Hauge, a reformer from Smaelene, who, with only the education of a peasant, began preaching in 1795. He protested chiefly against the rationalism and the secularization then prevalent among the clergy of Norway. He advocated the right of laymen to preach, and laid special stress upon the spiritual priest-

14 Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 73-74.
15 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 174.
16 Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 174.
hood of believers. He did not leave or wish to leave the established church. His followers were looked upon with disfavor by the governing class and Hauge was persecuted and finally imprisoned in 1804 under the Conventicle Act of 1741 which prohibited lay preaching and the Monopoly Act of 1797, restricting coastal trading to those granted special royal privileges. Hauge was imprisoned from 1804 to 1814. He died March 29, 1824, leaving his followers with a specific issue for which to campaign, the repeal of the Conventicle Act. Haugeanism was really a pietistic revival, and Hauge was regarded as a martyr. The feeling that developed after Hauge's death among his followers was more strained in its relationship with the civil and religious rulers of the kingdom. 17

The followers of Hauge were marked with scorn, but seldom persecuted. There lived, however, in the region of Stavanger, in southwestern Norway a group of Quakers who had definitely broken away from the established church. 18

Lars Larson, the leader of the Society of Quakers was born in Stavanger, September 4th, 1787. He became a ship carpenter and served on board a merchant vessel. During the Danish War of 1807 he was taken prisoner by the English. He was released in 1814, but remained a year in the employ

17 Rasmus B. Anderson, The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration to America, 1821-1840, its causes and results (Madison, 1898), 48.
18 Ibid., 48.
of Margaret Allan, a prominent Quaker woman. He returned to Norway in 1816 converted, and organized a society of friends in Stavanger. R. B. Anderson says, "Quaker children were forced to be baptized and fined for not going to communion. Parents were compelled to have their children confirmed, and even the dead were exhumed from their graves and burned according to Lutheran ritual." This is an exaggeration but there was some persecution.

Since the headquarters of the Quakers was located at Stavanger and this body started emigration, one assumes that Norwegian immigration was started due to religious intolerance at home. The sect never gained any headway among the well-to-do and consequently those who did come might also hope to better their material condition as well as religious. There was a strong feeling among the common people especially among the friends of distrust of public servants.

Laws promoting religious liberty were passed in 1842, 1845, and 1851. Since 1840 there has been a steady movement forward larger opportunities for all citizens.

19 Knut Gjerset, History of Norwegian People (New York, 1915), II, 404; Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 47; Anderson, First Chapter, 46.
20 Anderson, First Chapter, 50.
21 Theodore Blegen, "Cleng Peerson and Norwegian Immigration", in Mississippi Valley Historical Review (March, 1921), VII, 306.
22 Anderson, First Chapter, 50.
It was not until 1840 that immigration to Wisconsin really began. The period of the 40's is the Wisconsin period. They, of course, did not come directly to Wisconsin but were more or less the result of what had been started in New York and Illinois. 23

In speaking of the migrations and their causes in the nineteenth century, the name of Oleng Peerson stands first and he is popularly known as "The father of Norwegian Immigration to the United States." He was the leader of the entire movement in the earlier stages and according to Svein Nilsson in Billed-Magazin he rightfully deserves the credit as the pathfinder and the most influential leader of the entire movement. Most authorities agree with this statement although a few like Rasmus B. Anderson's pictures him as a tramp with little influence and no significance, emphatically denying his importance.

Little is known of the early life of Peerson. He was born in 1782 on a farm called Hest Hammer in Tysvær parish, Skjold district, Stavanger Amt. His name was originally Oleng Pederson Hest Hammer. It was in 1821 that Peerson, then thirty-nine years old, became associated with the immigration movement. During the summer of that year he

23 Knut Langeland, Nordmandene i Amerika (Chicago, 1888), 42.
with a companion, Knud Olsen Edie, went from the island of Sogn to Stavanger and then to New York by way of Göteborg. 24

Cleng Peerson was a dissenter from the established church, yet he was not a Quaker either. He seemed to lack a religious temperament. Yet his trip to America in 1821 was financed by the Quakers who wanted him to investigate conditions and opportunities in America. In 1824 Peerson returned to Stavanger with such a vivid description of the opportunities in the New World that the people were stirred to the point that they made a resolution to emigrate. Lars Lersøn at once undertook to organize a party of emigrants. They bought a sloop and named it the "Restaurationen" (Restoration). They left Stavanger, July 4th, 1825, in all a company of fifty-two persons including the two officers. 25

Peerson was not on the "Restaurationen" he had returned to America in 1824 as an advance agent and had bought land for the "Sloopers." The New York Quakers were very kind to them also.

25 Anderson, First Chapter, 50.
According to the New York American, October 22, 1825, which contained the following clipping from the Baltimore American and quoted in full by Rasmus B. Anderson in his First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration (1) the passengers were bound for the state of New York, where an agent had already been sent for the purchase of land. They set sail from Cape Stavanger and after a voyage of fourteen weeks, arrived in safety. . . . Two agents were originally sent over by the company and funds appropriated to defray their expenses. That agent was Cleng Peerson. (2) Cleng Peerson was the advance agent of the 'Sloopers,' they were Quakers and complained of religious persecution and expected more to follow them. Thus Peerson was the trail-blazer in 1825, directly urging the enterprise and encouraging its backers. He arrived in 1824 for the purchase of land for his friends, he was attempting to arrange for the sail of their Sloop, and received the co-operation of a group of Friends in New York who housed them. 26

On November 8, 1843 the finance department of the Norwegian government trying to solve the problem arising with increased emigration, proposed that a committee investigate the problem and if necessary prepare a law to regulate it. On December 18th, 1844 the committee reported

26 Blegen, "Cleng Peerson," VII, 312; Anderson, First Chapter, 73.
to the King the causes, origin, extent, and nature of the movement. The conclusions of the royal commissioners were that the migration of the sloop-folk in 1825 led directly to emigration in 1836 and 1837 and consequently to the whole movement. The connection lay in the gradual dissemination in Norway of information concerning the enterprise initiated in 1825, in the special influence of emigration were letters of encouragement informing relations and friends in Norway of America—the "American letters"—which were read, copied and recopied and circulated among discontented classes of Norway, faith, desire for complete freedom and economic advantage rounded out the list. The Report concluded

"It must, however, be admitted without question that even though the first sprouts of the migration must be sought to a certain extent in imperfections in the laws, which have produced dissatisfaction among certain individuals, their growth in recent times is the result of other causes, especially the common need, effecting the great majority of the emigrants, of seeking a less difficult existence in a new country." 27

Unfortunately the land in the Kendall settlement was not the most fertile but rather rocky and barren. Cleng Peerson, adventuresome pathfinder that he was, remained in New York until 1833 when he started west in search of

land. He walked through Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and may have touched Wisconsin. He selected a site for the Norwegians in the Fox River region near Ottawa, in La Salle County, Illinois. Having found the ideal settlement, Cleng Peerson trudged back the two thousand miles to New York. In 1834 under his leadership an expedition set out from New York to settle in the Fox River region. Later on, in 1835, 1836, and 1837 they came directly from Norway but the initial move was started by the sloopers of New York.  

They paid five dollars an acre for land. Peerson bought land in La Salle County but he was never a real farmer. He lacked the patience and industry to remain in one place long enough to achieve success. He usually worked until a start had been made and the settlement was well under way toward civilization and progress, and then he left in search of a new location, new frontiers, perhaps new adventures. He was in truth as has been said, "A Viking who was born a few centuries after the Viking period."  

There was about him something of that scorn of older society, impatience of its restraints and its ideas and indifference to its leaders which the late Professor Turner said accompanied the American frontier.  

29 Blegen, "Cleng Peerson," VII, 320; Anderson, First Chapter, 176.  
Information concerning America was transmitted to Norway by letters. They played a very important part in the entire emigration movement, especially before books and pamphlets. They were copied and sent from one parish to another until they formed a regular chain. An example of such are Gjert Hoveland's letters which exerted a great deal of influence. He moved to Illinois in 1835 from New York:

"Nothing has made me more happy and contented than the fact that we left Norway and journeyed to this country, we have gained more since our arrival here than I did during all the time that I lived in Norway, I have every prospect of earning a livelihood here for myself and my family so long as God gives me good health...."

He goes on to tell about his arrival in 1831, at Kendall Orleans County. The first day of his arrival he got work from an American. In December he bought fifty acres of land. In March, 1832, he built a house and in the fall cleared the wooded land and in the fall of 1833 harvested fifteen bushels of wheat, six bushels of corn, fourteen barrels of potatoes. In July of 1834 Hoveland sold his New York farm of fifty acres and earned five hundred dollars in cash on the deal. There is government public land, he says, to be had at one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre. The country is democratic and there are

31 Elegen, Norwegian Migration, 64.
schools. "There is prosperity and contentment everywhere. . . . One must work for one's living." He had one dollar in taxes on fifty acres. There was religious freedom. All these things the prospective Norwegian immigrant wanted to know. As to further immigration he welcomes it by saying, "It would please me if I could learn that all of you who are in need and have little chance of gaining support would make up your minds to leave Norway and to come to America, for even if many more were to come, there would still be room here for all." He admits that he would enjoy a visit with some Norwegian friends but asserts that he does not wish to live in Norway. "We lived there altogether too long. . . nor have I talked with any immigrant in this country who wishes to return." Such letters were a tonic or a drug, Gjert Hoveland's neighbors and relatives thought, well if Gjert could do it and come out so well we can do it and the tide increased.

Besides the America letter a strong impetus to migration was the "America traveler" such as Knud Anderson Slogvig one of the Sloopers who returned in 1835 to give the people first hand knowledge. People came from all over to see him and as a result many got the "America Fever."33

32 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 72-73.
33 Ibid., 70.
Knut Langeland was one of those who traveled far to see Slogvig and according to his own statement the appearance of Slogvig gave him a severe case of "America Fever." 34

Slogvig as a result of his trip and popularity became the leader of a group of immigrations from the Stavanger Amt. In 1836 two vessels left Norway, the "Norden" sailing May 25th, with one hundred and ten passengers and "Den Norske Klippe" sailing June 8th with fifty-seven passengers, their prime motive being better economic conditions. 35

There lived at this time in Overhalla parish in the district of Numedalen a precocious, thinking man who had been imbued by the French Revolution. He had a burning zeal for social, religious, political, and economic reform. Freedom of thought, equality of opportunity, popular education and a general realization in private and public life of the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity were his motives. He had a large following among the laborers, tenants, and tax ridden countryfolk. Although elected to the first Norwegian national legislature his challenging attitude toward the officialdom of his age brought him much hostility and opposition. Embittered, he took his family and went to America. This man was Hans Berlien, and

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34 Langeland, Normandene, 17.
35 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 72.
his followers in Norway were known as "Berliener". His letters breathe a hatred for Norway, and although widely read were not given the greatest of confidence. Berliien was very anxious to establish a colony in America for Norwegians dissatisfied with conditions in the home country. He says in a letter to Norway:

"At last I can breathe freely. No one is here persecuted on account of his religious belief. Anyone is permitted to worship God in his own way, as his conscience dictates....Any occupation is free, and everyone reaps the fruits of his own industry. By wise agitation the Americans citizens are safe from oppression. The so-called free constitution of Norway has so far only served to oppress the people with a continually increasing tax burden for the benefit of the governing class, and to foster luxury and laziness. Such conditions must of necessity lead to general ruin." 36

Berliien predicted great migrations to American shores and though his predictions later came true very few migrated till the advent of Ole Rynning and his influence but the Berliien letter caught the public eye and attracted interest in America. 37

In 1837 Ole Rynning from Ringsaker, a minister's son, emigrated. His influence in early Norwegian immigration is as great as that of Oleng Peerson and possibly greater. It was unusual for a man of Rynning's type to join the

37 Billed-Magazin, 1, 34.
movement, condemned as it was by most educated people of the day. 38

Ole Rynning and several others selected the Beaver Creek site in Illinois. It was in late summer and the land looked good but in the spring it turned out to be completely inundated. A severe epidemic broke out and nearly wiped out the colony. "Only empty log houses remained, like silent witnesses to the terrors of the scourge, a dismal sight to lonesome wanderers." 39

How Ole Rynning came to write his book is told by Nattestad. Rynning had been on a long expedition, frost had set in and the crust of snow and ice cut his boots and his feet froze, consequently in the winter of 1837 and 38 he was laid up for quite a while. It was at this time that he wrote his famous "Rynning Bok." 40

In 1836 Ole Nattestad of Numedal spent restless days in the little valley home. Finally he and his brother Anstem went to Stavanger. The right of primogeniture gave the family gaard to their oldest brother and Ole had then become an itinerant trader but restricting laws forced him to abandon it. Ole went to Even Niebru a member of the

38 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 81, 89; Billed-Magazin, I, 84-85.
39 Langeland, Normandene, 29-31; Ole K. Nattestad, Beskrivelse Over en Reise Til Nord-Amerika (Drammen, 1839), 23, 25, 27; Billed-Magazin, I, 30, 84, 95; Anderson, First Chapter, 245-247; Gunnar Lalmin in Decorah Posten, (February 27, 1925).
40 Billed-Magazin, I, 95.
Storthing who advised him that "wherever he went he would nowhere find a people with as good laws as the Americans."

Cle Nattestad was disgusted because he could not work as a mechanic. "This information," he says, "had a magic effect on me as I looked upon it as an injustice that the laws of Norway should forbid me to trade and not allow me to get my living by honest work as a mechanic when I desired so little. I had confidence in the judgment of a member of the Storthing and I compared his remarks with what I had heard about America in the vicinity of Stavanger. Gradually I got to thinking of emigrating. While considering the matter on my way home, and the idea matured into a resolution. My brother Ansten did not have to be asked a second time."

The Nattestad brothers went to the Beaver Creek settlement in America. They remained here until in the spring of 1838 when Ansten went back to visit friends and relatives in Norway. He took with him Ole Rynning's manuscript, "True account of America," and his brother Cle's manuscript telling of his journey the preceding year and of his experiences in America. He also had letters from practically every immigrant to friends and relatives at home.

The fact that Ole Rynning wrote his book and that Ansten Nattestad took it over had a tremendous influence

41 Billed-Magazin, I, 95.
42 Elegen, Norwegian Migration, 95.
on immigration, especially from Kvedal (southern Norway) between Christiania (Oslo) and Hardanger. 43

Svein Nilsson reporting an interview with an immigrant of 1839, Gullik C. Gravdal, says:

"Hardly any other Norwegian publication has been purchased and read to the extent that is true of Rynning's Account of America. People traveled long distances to hear 'news' from the land of wonders, and many who before were scarcely able to read began in earnest to practice in the 'America book,' making such progress that they were soon able to spell their way forward and acquire most of the contents. The sensation created by Ansten's return was much the same as that which one might imagine a dead man would create, were he to return to tell of the life beyond the grave. Throughout the winter he was continually surrounded by groups who listened attentively to his stories. Since many came long distances in order to talk with him, the reports of the far west were soon spread over a large part of the country. Ministers and bailiffs ...tried to frighten us with terrible tales about the dreadful sea monsters, and about man-eating wild animals in the new world, but when Ansten Nattestad had said 'Yes' and 'Amen' to Rynning's account all fears and doubts were removed." 44

Ole Rynning's book is a booklet of thirty-nine pages called the "True Account of America for the Information and Help of Peasant and Commoner Written by a Norwegian who arrived there in month of June, 1837." It was

44 Billed-Magazin, I, 154.
published in Christiania in 1836.  

The book is divided into thirteen chapters (the fourteenth chapter dealing with religion was stricken out in Norway and tends to point to a larger part than is recognized by religious factors in emigration after 1825). His first chapter deals with the location of America in what general direction from Norway does America lie, and how far it is away. Chapter two tells how the country first became known. Here he discusses the Norse discovery and English colonies, the revolution, Cleng Peerson and the Sloopers. The third chapter is entitled "What in general is the nature of the country, and for what reason do so many people go there, and expect to make a living?" The soil is fertile, climate is mild and most of the land flat he says, but those migrating must not follow the mistaken theory that everything is ready for them. It is false. The fourth chapter settles the question in Norway that the "United States will soon be overpopulated" and "that the government is going to prohibit more people from coming. Rynning says that there

46 Ole Rynning, True Account of America, edited by Theodore Blegen, in Norwegian-American Historical Association Publications, Travel and Description, (Minneapolis, 1926), I, 15.
47 Rynning, True Account of America, 33-34, 69-70.
48 Ibid., 34-35, 70-74.
49 Ibid., 36-37. It was a common belief among Norwegian peasants that a plague like the black death had left America without people and that emigrants would find cultivated farms, houses, clothes and furniture ready for them.
is plenty of room for all as the United States in extent is more than twenty times larger than Norway with the greater part of the country not yet cultivated. The report that the government is to prohibit further immigration, Rymning says, is false and he goes on:

"The Norwegians in general have thus far a good reputation for their industry, trustworthiness, and the readiness with which the more well-to-do have helped the poorer on their journey through the country."

Chapter five deals with "where the Norwegians settled in the United States and what is the most convenient and cheapest way to reach them?" Rymning lists the settlements their location and the number of families in each. In chapter six he discusses the nature of the land where the Norwegians have settled, the cost of it, the cost of cattle and the provisions and wages. This was one of the most significant chapters as far as the information furnished. The prairies are described as being flat, clear and easy to break. Corn, wheat and buckwheat can be raised. Corn is the most profitable crop and yields from twelve to twenty-four barrels an acre. He goes on to tell of the abundance of wild game and says: "If a settler is furnished with a good rifle and knows how to use it, he does not have to buy meat the first two years." The price of government

50 Rymning, True Account of America, 77, 37-39, 75-78.
51 Ibid., 39-40, 78.
52 Ibid., 40-46, 79-86. This advice was very influential, a great number came with guns ready for game.
land he quotes at one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre but states that it is to be lowered. Rynning explains exactly how one goes about the purchase of government land and advises the people to buy from the government rather than private individuals. A settler has the first right to buy the land on which he settles, commonly known as a claim.

The price of provisions vary. At Beaver Creek a good team of horses cost from fifty to one hundred dollars, oxen from fifty to eighty dollars and corn from sixteen to twenty dollars, sheep from two to three dollars, a pig from six to ten dollars, butter from twelve to twenty-four cents a pound; pork from six to ten cents a pound, a barrel of wheat from eight to ten dollars, etc. In Wisconsin Territory, Rynning points out, the prices of everything are two or three times higher.

Wages were an important item. Rynning gave a capable working man's wage as fifty cents to one dollar a day in winter, and almost twice as much in summer. A servant girl gets from one to two dollars a week. In Wisconsin Territory, he goes on to say, daily wages are from three to five dollars.53

Chapter seven deals with religion and government.

53 Rynning, True Account of America, 79-86.
as no belief at all, and that it will be best shown who
has religion or who has not if there is complete religious
liberty. The government further does not hinder any one
from choosing his occupation. Rynning describes briefly
the form of government in the United States. Taxes, he
says, are low. There is no compulsory military service
in times of peace. The subjects which he discusses here are
those nearest the heart of the Norwegian citizen, the chief
reasons for their dissatisfaction at home. 54 Chapter eight
deals with the education of children, and the care of poor
people and points to the advantage of the American system
over the Norwegian system. 55 The next chapter deals with
the importance of acquiring the use of the English
language. 56 Chapter ten dismisses the idea of unusual
diseases, animals and Indians. 57 This is followed by a
valuable chapter on who should emigrate to America.
Prominent in the list are peasants, mechanics, tradesmen,
blacksmiths, shoemakers, turners, carpenters, wagon makers,
itinerant traders and servant girls. (This corresponds
largely to a similar list given in Billed-Magazin.)

Rynning invites women. He says they are respected and
honored far more than is the case among the common people

54 Rynning, True Account of America, 46-49, 86-89.
55 Ibid., 49, 89.
56 Ibid., 49-50, 89-90.
57 Ibid., 50, 90-91.
in Norway. "As far as I know," he says, "only two or three Norwegian girls have married Americans, and I do not believe that they have made particularly good matches. But there are many Norwegian bachelors who would prefer to marry Norwegian girls if they could."\textsuperscript{58}

Chapter twelve deals with the sea voyage and dismisses the dangers of the ocean.\textsuperscript{59} The last chapter gives guiding advice for those who wish to go to America concerning ships, fares, contracts with ship captains, money, the best time to leave, routes, medicine and supplies to take along. Then lastly a good guide for those who wish to leave the following spring. "For those who wish to leave next spring, there is a good opportunity to go with Ansten Knudsen Nøttetstad from Rollaug parish in Numedal, who is now on a trip back to Norway."\textsuperscript{60}

This book of information on conditions in America broadened the geographical scope of the movement in Norway. In the spring of 1839 over one hundred settlers stood ready to go with Ansten Nøttetstad.\textsuperscript{61}

Besides the Rynning book, there was Johan R. Reiersen's \textit{Veiviser for Norske Emigranter til de forende Nord Amerikanske stater og Texas} (A guide for Norwegian immigrants to the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{58} Rynning, \textit{True Account of America}, 51-53, 91-94.
  \item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}, 53-54, 94-96.
  \item \textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}, 54-59, 96-100.
  \item \textsuperscript{61} \textit{Billed-Magazin}, I, 154.
\end{itemize}
United North American states and Texas.) It was published in Christiania in 1844. The book is a study made by a pronounced Norwegian liberal, newspaper writer and friend of the people. The book contains ten chapters dealing with the following subjects in America: natural conditions in general; agriculture; general problems of establishing oneself on a farm; trade and industry; minerals and mining; public lands; geographical conditions in Illinois, Mississippi, Iowa, and Wisconsin; the government of the states and their relation to the union; the republic of Texas and Norwegian settlements in the West. The last chapter describes conditions and offers advice.

What does he say of Wisconsin that would induce immigrants to come to that particular state? As the land in Illinois was settled first, Reierson advised the immigrant that there was plenty of land to the north and advised the settler to go there.62

Wisconsin, he explains, is as yet not a state but a territory with nine and one-half million acres of land which is mostly rolling prairies. The winters are cold and severe and summers warm. Milwaukee with 6,600 people is the chief trading port with smaller places like Mineral

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62 J. R. Reierson, Veiviser for Norske Emigrer ter til de forenede Nordsamerikanske Stater og Texas (Christiania, 1844).
Point, Cassville, Green Bay, and Sheboygan scattered about. Reerson visited all the Norwegian settlements in America and among them he lists Wisconsin territory as the healthiest state. There is good water and not so much sickness. Most Wisconsin settlements are at the most four, and some two or one years old. The people often started with nothing and now own farms with houses and cows. They raise corn, wheat, and potatoes.

As far as character is concerned "in no land can one find a better example of religious, morally upright, intelligent, and enlightened people than Wisconsin in every place displays."

Reerson also lists the causes of the migration as: the dark outlook in Norway for the future of rising generations, coupled with the hope of independence and happiness in America; not room enough in Norway for the working and producing class; dissatisfaction with the administration of Norwegian law, especially as relate to debtors and creditors, where the regulation tends to ruin the former; a feeling that the state does too little to promote agriculture and the welfare of the common people, though it devotes large sums of money to other purposes; dissatisfaction with Norwegian officials and the clergy, which

63 Reerson, Veiviser, 122-123.
64 Ibid., VIII, IX, 123.
65 Ibid., XX.
form a caste that looks upon an ordinary citizen as an inferior; failure in Norway to realize the freedom and equality that the constitution of 1814 promised; the pressure of the "bondestand" of poor relief burdens; uncertainty of crops and sterility of the soil, and lastly idealization of America. 66

Reierson's book was widely read in Norway and exerted considerable influence upon the emigration movement. It contains a mass of information and is more detailed than Rynning's account though less compact. It is based upon first hand knowledge of actual conditions. 67

Emigration madness had gripped the people as letters were circulated more and more people read them. Knute Langeland tells how his imagination was fired by reading such a letter and a journal account of America. 68

The death of Cle Rynning in 1849 and the sad fate of the Beaver Creek settlement acted as a damper on immigration for several years. 69

Immigration was gaining a widened interest. Shippers aids made journeys to inland districts to enroll emigrants. 70

66 Reierson, Veiviser, a letter of December 12, 1843, V, VI; Christian Gierloff, Folket som utvander (Oslo, 1925), 99-101; Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 167.
67 Johan R. Reierson, "Norwegians in the West in 1844; A Contemporary Account," Tr. and edited by Theodore Blegen in Norwegian American Historical Association Studies and Records (Minneapolis, 1925), 1.
68 Langeland, Normandene, 20ff.
69 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 94; Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 132.
70 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 137.
To the railroads immigrant trade meant profitable traffic and sale of railroad lands, settlement of adjacent government lands and of a labor supply all spelling success for the company. Dr. Babcock points out the real problem of the Northwestern frontier after 1850:

"How to put more and ever more men of capacity, endurance, and strength, and adaptability into the upper Mississippi and Red River valley's, men who first would break up the prairie sod, clear the brush off the slopes, drain the marshes, build Railroads and do the thousand and one things evident to pioneer life, and then turn to the building of factories and towns and cities." 71

To the states of the northwest the achievement of such ends meant greater wealth, exploitation of resources, larger assessments, erection of public buildings, establishment of public institutions, greater expenditures for state improvement—in brief prosperity and growth.

The whole northwest is in fact one great, rich province, no considerable section of which has preponderant advantages over the rest of the area. Aggressive and well-planned efforts drew immigrants to desired places of settlement. Most of the states, especially after the Civil War, carried on extensive campaigns in this direction.

Wisconsin was one of the leaders in this movement.

In 1853 the Haertal Commission functioned very well, and

even though there was a lull in immigration to the United States; Wisconsin showed a fifteen per cent increase. 72

In the spring of 1854 up to June 20th, about two thousand Norwegians arrived at Quebec, the majority of them destined for Wisconsin. 73

It was not until after the Civil War that the state entered into active competition. In 1867 Wisconsin established a Board of Immigration composed of the governor, the secretary of state, and six other members; besides this the governor was authorized to appoint a committee of three for each county of the state to assist the board. The county committees were to secure a list of friends and relatives in Norway of the residents of each county for a mailing list. From 1867 to 1870 a great number of pamphlets were distributed in this manner. 74

Pamphlets were also distributed by railroad companies, land corporations, State companies, and other agencies. Many of these pamphlets often exaggerated new things. Wisconsin ranks rather high in the type of material they sent out due largely to Dr. Increase Lapham, an eminent Wisconsin scientist, who had published the "Geographical and Topographical Description of Wisconsin" in 1867.

72 Blegen, "Competition of the Northwestern States," III, 7.
73 Ibid., III, 9.
74 Ibid., III, 11.
Statistics were given accurately exhibiting the history, climate, and production of the state of Wisconsin. He discussed crops, the homestead law, land tenure, everything. 75

In 1871 the new offices of Commissioner of Immigration was held by Ole C. Johnson and by L. J. Aargerd in 1874 and 1875. It was suspended from 1875 to 1879. Ole C. Johnson was the most efficient commissioner that the state has ever had. The best proof lies in the census reports of immigration to Wisconsin for these years. 76

In studying the immigrant tide, especially in the period after 1850, one must attempt to evaluate a factor of somewhat different nature, namely advertising. Before this time immigration had been more individual but from this time on one finds mass immigration and although descriptive letters still played a vital part in inducing others to make a similar venture, the movement by this time had gained such momentum that it become profitable for steamship lines, land corporations, and railroad companies to become interested in the commercial profits derived from immigrants in such numbers and they thus fanned the flame of immigration for their own interests. Railroad competition for immigrant trade resulted in the development of comprehensive schemes

75 Blegen, "Competition of the Northwest States," III, 15.
76 Ibid., III, 17.
for securing such patronage. 77

Taking alarm at the proportions which emigration was assuming in the later 30's authorities in Norway made energetic efforts to discourage it and succeeded in bringing it almost to a suspension by 1840. 78

Following the publication of Rynning's book in 1837 Bishop Jacob Neuman published his letter of admonition warning and appealing to the people on religious, patriotic, and economic grounds to remain at home; as an alternate he offered migration to Finnmark. 79

His letter appeared in a pamphlet published at Bergen in 1837. It was a clever piece of argumentation and a fair example of an attitude of mind very common among Norwegian clergymen in Norway in the first half of the nineteenth century. The prevailing opinion seems to have been that the whole movement of emigration was harmful to the individual, to the community, and the home country, and a determined effort was made to stem the current, from the pulpit, and through newspapers and pamphlets by picturing the hardships of the voyage and the vicissitudes of life in the American frontier in as dark colors as possible. Jacob Neuman was one of the outstanding figures in Norwegian religious and

77 Blegen, "Competition of the Northwest States," III, 15.
79 "Bishop Jacob Neumann's Word of Admonition to the Peasants," (Ed. and tr. by Gunnar J. Malmin), Studies and Records (Minneapolis, 1926), I, 95.
cultural life at the time. His letter appeared in a vain endeavor to counteract the Rynning book. He says:

"I should like to mention my poor Bergen peasants, a few things that to the best of my knowledge, one must carefully consider if one wishes to take the doubtful step of settling as a pioneer in America. The emigrant must be strong, and healthy and in his prime. He must have enough money to pay for his voyage, for the purchase of land, implements, etc. ... Then there will be a longing for the father land. I understand you my dear Bergen peasants. You do not live for this earth alone. You live for heaven. Your devout spirit will follow you across the water...there will be no minister or church. ... A free Norwegian citizen should not migrate to escape taxes--taxes must be paid everywhere. Land there is in Norway in Finnmarken on the Northwest coast. In America laborers must do more strenuous work--such as canal digging or road building in the company of the scum of every nationality so that an honest man from Hardanger found it necessary to leave his co-workers in order not to hear their profane language and for fear of being abused or killed by them. ... in Troy, New York a whole hill sank into the water and everyone was buried. ... Stay in Norway and support yourself honestly." 80

In 1841 there appeared in Christiania an "America Pamphlet" widely circulated entitled "Information on Conditions in North America." This was probably put into print as a result of Neuman's efforts. This pamphlet consisted of a letter supposedly written by Haaeim of conditions in America. He gives a mournful account of the difficulties which he and many other Norwegians have en-

countered and expresses a desire to return to Norway and asks for a collection for this purpose. He says that some emigrate due to hatred of clergy and other authorities "When these people get together in one community you can easily imagine what goes on in these American forests."

He mentions that the nearest church is one hundred miles away and consequently here was the worst Heathendom in the world.

Haaeim was a Norwegian farmer who had emigrated and returned to Norway in 1842. He tells of his experiences in Illinois, telling of the crude houses and that the land was not plentiful except in the wilderness. "One who wishes to emigrate to America should not go to Illinois because all the land has already been taken and if you buy a piece of land from someone you pay two times the government price of one dollar and a quarter. One had best go to Wisconsin or Missouri territory. In these regions there is still land to be had but the best is already taken." He goes on to admonish: "I will surely advise anyone against coming, because one encounters so many difficulties he never expected on account of the many changes in the manner of travel, the many embarrassments caused by language which are very considerable in spite of the fact that there are some Norwegians in every city. Worst of all is sickness and orphaned children wondering around. Further he says
it seldom happens that the Norwegians settle in the vicinity of their countrymen.  

Another interesting and discordant note came in the 40's and 50's when a volume was brought out in Stavanger in 1860 by the director of the agricultural school of Stavanger amt. and may be read as a reflection of the view on emigration by a man professionally interested in modernizing agricultural methods in Norway about the middle of the nineteenth century. He advanced vigorous arguments against emigration by showing that farming was more profitable in Norway than in America.  

The fact that emigration was vitally a problem discussed in the press and among the people of Norway, the clergy, professional people and peasant folk for nearly one hundred years tends to point to the significance of the movement. Such movements are usually reflected in the literature of a nation and this was true in Norway. Wergeland, Bjornson, Aasen, and Vinge and Norwegian Americans Rolvaag and Boyeson reflected the spirit and feeling of the day. 

Bishop Neuman's word of admonition in 1837 was the first venture in this field. The patriotic, problem loving

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82 "Emigration as Viewed by a Norwegian Student of Agriculture 1850: A Budde's from a letter about America" (Tr. and Ed. by Sophie Boe), Studies and Records, (Northfield, 1928), III, 45.
Wergeland was soon in the thick and thin of it. His "Fjeldstuen" (mountain cottage) shows his hatred of emigration. He continued until his death when Bjornson took the torch and in "Valborg" and "Arne" displayed his feeling against emigration. Ivar Aasen in "Erringer" showed the same feeling. This was the national romantic period that is from 1845 to 1855 and the spirit of the day was against emigration in a patriotic, nationalistic way. Ibsen mentioned the problem very seldom except that he used America as a casting off place for his characters.

In 1880 Bjornson went to America—even before this Bjornson had become republican and "Den Nye System" published in 1879 pointed to America—and was very favorably impressed. The Bjornson of 1870 and the Bjornson of 1880 are two entirely different people. He had been pious and chiefly through his religious nationalism he hated migration but his religious view changed and he became a free thinker, a friend of emigration and admirer of America.83

These efforts were all made in the thirties and forties principally. Dissatisfied American letters were published continuously. It was this that aroused the Chicago Vossings to action and they made the first notable move to counteract the letters. In 1840 Anders Flaget sent a stirring

83 Arne O. Johnson, "Bjornson's Reaction to Emigration," in Studies and Records, (Northfield, 1931), VI, 133-139.
letter in the name of the Vossings of Chicago denouncing the falsehoods published in Norway. He said:

"While probably the best land in Illinois has been taken, those desiring land are now going to a state named Wisconsin, which lies northwest of Illinois. There is land there better and cheaper in price." 84

Flage's letter and others had a wholesome effect upon the people, and in the forties emigration to America was resumed on a large scale. Then came Lovenskjold's report, which led to the next notable step by the Vossings of Chicago now a large, compact, prosperous colony.

In 1847 Adam Lovenskjold, diplomatic representative at Washington of Sweden and Norway, made a survey of Norwegian settlements. The report he issued was very critical and opposed to emigration. The Vossing group decided not to let the document go unchallenged and in 1848 organized a correspondence society with the special object in view of going systematic enlightenment to Norwegian people concerning the status of their emigrated countrymen and of refuting false assertions regarding America and Norwegian immigration.

"We ask our friends to remember that Mr. Lovenskjold is the Norwegian government's servant and as such, in order to win favor and distinction he must carry out his purposes. Mr. Lovenskjold is plainly misinformed as to the Norwegian settlements." 85

85 Ibid., III, 30 ff.
In 1848 between four and five thousand letters were written to Norway by immigrants. Three Vossings went back to Voss in Norway in the winter of 1849 and 1850 and in the spring of 1850 eight hundred Vossings came to America.

On October 23rd, 1856 the Vossing Emigration Society was organized, having as its main object the collection of funds to help needy and worthy families to America. In 1858 a branch of this society was established at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin. In this way many families from Voss were helped in coming to America.

As soon as the strong tide of Immigration set in the societies having accomplished their purpose, went out of existence. With the coming of the Civil War and church struggle the splendid Vossing organization was broken up. 86

After the first decades Norwegian immigration had gained such momentum that it needed little urging or stimulation.

The following table of statistics will show the growth of the emigration movement from Norway: 87

87 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 19.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>1910-1915</td>
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</table>

The total emigration from Norway in the period from 1836 to 1900 passed the half-million mark, and by 1915 the figure had mounted to 754,561—which exceeds four-fifths of the entire population of Norway at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

From 1840 and on there is a rapid rise in immigration reaching its high mark in the period before the Civil War came in the fifties. The era of mass migrations came after the Civil War reaching its climax in the early eighties.

As the graph on the next page will indicate there were considerable fluctuations in emigration.

Once emigration was under way it naturally responded in its rise and fall to the swing of economic conditions in Norway and the United States. In business cycles economists find the central explanation of the fluctuations of emigration. A statistician says that "emigration increases when times are
poor in Norway and decreases when they are good," but even though times are hard in Norway, "this is not enough to cause people to emigrate if at the same time economic conditions in America are unattractive.

"It was no accident that Norwegian emigration, inaugurated in 1826, swung upward in the late thirties and early forties, for that period witnessed an unusual conjunction of favoring circumstances: a sharp increase in the age-group from 20 to 30 (people in welcome the desire for adventure might be expected to join hands with other motives) an unprecedented stir of religious and political discontent and agitation among the bonder; severe pressure of unfavorable basic economic conditions brought to a sharp point by special circumstances of undue severity; numerous collateral irritations that added to the irksomeness of these basic and special conditions; and finally the arrival of 'America letters' and returned immigrants, the influence of relations, the publication of 'American books,' the beginnings of a spirited controversy about emigration—these and other forces conspiring to bring into action the magnetic pull of the United States. Discontent became focused; emigration was a cutting of the Gordian knot....

"...Certain fundamental conditions seem to have given rise to an emigration viewpoint in the minds of many Norwegians."88

The sad news of Ole Rynning's death and the plight of the Beaver Creek colony in Illinois added to the intense agitation against emigration by the Norwegian government brought emigration down from 1840 to 1842. The upper swing in 1840 was in part due to the prevalence of potato

88 Elegan, Norwegian Migration, 175-176.
rot in Norway, coupled with high prices and favorable conditions in the United States. 89

The cholera epidemic of 1849 which was so dreadful in Norwegian settlements in America caused emigration to fall in 1850 and 1851.

Emigration dropped in 1858-59 to two thousand a year as compared with six thousand in 1857 because prospective emigrants were warned by relatives and friends against immigrating to America when times were bad after the panic of 1857. Emigration fell till 1860. 90

The Civil War disturbed comparatively little the conditions favoring Norwegian immigration, for the Northwest was never in danger of invasion, and nominal prices for farm produce ranged higher and higher. Furthermore, the Homestead Act of 1862 gave a new impetus to the immigration which sought farm lands.

The Panic of 1873 did not affect the Norwegian movement so immediately and seriously as might at first thought be expected, probably because the Northmen were seeking farms in the West, and also because the farmers as a class are about the last to feel the effects of a financial crisis like that of 1873. As the depression deepened, letters

90 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 91.
from America to northern Europe lost their tone of buoyancy and enthusiasm; the eastward flow of passage money and prepaid tickets ceased. There was the discouraging effect of reports of great grasshopper plagues in western Minnesota and Iowa. At the same time a series of good crops in Norway caused a rise of wages about 1873. There was also an increase in the Norwegian fishing industry and a wider exploitation of her natural resources. Consequently, the current of immigration lost its force for several years.

During the revival of prosperity from 1879 to 1884 emigration reached its high water mark in 1882. The totals stayed rather high until after the industrial and financial stagnation from 1893 to 1896. Emigration dropped more than half in these years but with another wave of prosperity in the upper Mississippi valley at the opening of the new century it took another boom with its high mark in 1903. With the exception of 1908 (which was low) emigration gradually went downward reaching a new low mark during the World War in 1918. The after war boom brought the total back to nineteen thousand in 1923.

After 1890 there was, of course, less free land. The first two great periods from 1840 to 1860 and 1870 to 1890 the western states had been anxious to get settlers. The railroads cooperated by reducing rates in order to get settlers for their lands. The new industrialism in Norway,
however, tended in the latter periods of the 1900's to absorb the surplus population.\footnote{91}

The migrations began from Stavanger in western Norway and spread like a plague into district after district. Haugesund and Ryfylke sent forth the next recruits. In 1836 came the first migration from Hardanger and Voss. The following year marks the beginning from Bergen. 1839 and 1840 drew from Telemarken, Numedal, and Voss; Hardanger also contributed in 1839 but sent none in 1840. A great number emigrated from Sogn in the period from 1842 to 1845; while in 1843 the movement was strong in upper Telemarken and Numedal and just began in lower Telemarken. The following two years it expanded into Sande, Bo, and the region of Skien. Satersdalen first entered the movement in 1843. Rygylke and Söndhaaland expanded north from Numedal to Hallingdal and then northwest from Sognefjord up to northern and the extreme interior of Sogn. Hardanger sent people again in 1846. In 1846 and 1847 the movement went to Hallingdal. These two movements (Sogn and Hallingdal) met in Valders in 1850.

In the meantime the movement has traveled also from lower Telemarken, Drammen and eastern Numedal (Sigdal) up through Ringerike, Hedeland and Land. The Region east

\footnote{91 Babcock, \textit{Scandinavian Element in the United States}, 68-70.}
of land; Taten, Hedemarken, and Solor furnished occasional emigrants from now on, but not in considerable numbers until many years later. From land and from Walders the movement grows northward into Gubbrandsdalen, Osterdalen, and Trondhjem, although from the latter two few came until after 1850. The northern coast district contributed very little until after the Civil War (Sondfjord, Norfjord, Sondmore, Nordmore).

Taking the migrations as a whole the heaviest migrations were from Telemarken, Osterdalen, and Voss, followed by Sandhorland, Hedeland, and Land, and then from the smaller districts of Hallingdal and Walders.

The map of Norway on the following page will show the districts mentioned. The distribution of these "bygds" in Wisconsin is a part of the next chapter.92

92 Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 376-379.
CHAPTER III

NORWEGIAN SETTLEMENTS IN WISCONSIN

In Wisconsin it is the Norwegians that have since the first days of Scandinavian immigration occupied first place in the period of coming. As far as the Norwegians are concerned, Wisconsin although it did not have the first settlements of Norwegians in the country nevertheless contained those Norwegian settlements that did the most significant things and harbored those Scandinavians who first achieved distinction in the new homes.¹

Wisconsin early became the objective point of immigrants from Norway. This significant position in Norwegian-American history Wisconsin continued to hold till 1860 when Minnesota took the lead. The graph and census reports on the next pages will indicate the Wisconsin period which had begun in 1838 and by 1850 she had 8,651 or over half of the

¹ Albert C. Barton, "The Scandinavian Element in Wisconsin" in Wisconsin Its History and Its People (Ed. by Milo M. Quaife), (Chicago, 1924), II, 107.
Norwegians in the United States. Minnesota had only seven Norwegians at that date. Illinois had 11,066 so that with Wisconsin the two had eighty-seven per cent of the Norwegians in the country. It is interesting to note that at this date although most of the Norwegian-born lived in five northwestern states yet Norwegians were reported in the population returns of twenty-eight states and four territories. If one follows the graph one will notice the steady upward trend in the forties and fifties.²

It was with Wisconsin that the chief events in early Norwegian-American History are associated. The principal of the great drama was enacted here. As all the paths of the Norwegian immigrant in that early day led to Wisconsin, so the threads of all subsequent Norwegian history in America lead back to Wisconsin. Whether in material welfare, in church, in politics, or in education it was in Wisconsin that the Norwegian made a place for himself in America and laid the foundation of all his later progress.

Not until eleven years after the sloopers of 1825 did immigrants arrive in groups. In 1836 as a result of the return of one of the sloopers, Knud Slogvig, two brigs, known as "Den Norske Klippe" and the "Norden" (on the latter was Bjorn Anderson father of the late R. B. Anderson) left

² Seventh Census of the United States (1850), xxxvi.
Stavanger with about two hundred passengers. In 1837 the "Ager" and "Enigheden" came and by 1840 the real migration had set in.

These immigrants at first did not come directly to Wisconsin. The sloopers settled in the Kendall settlement in Northwestern New York. They were dissatisfied with the rather barren land so when Oleg Peerson made his expedition into the west and settled the Fox River region in Ottawa county many stood ready to go with him. By 1836 a great number of the Norwegians of the New York colony had removed to the west. Henceforth most of the immigration from Norway was turned toward the prairie country, and whole companies of prospective settlers after 1836 went directly to the Fox River nucleus as it was easy of access and in the most fertile and promising region in which government land could be had at a minimum price.3

The basic reason for seeking the Northwest seems to have been the distaste of the majority of the Norwegian immigrants for a slave state and the increasing pressure into Wisconsin and Iowa. The immigrant was like all other human beings in his liking to follow the crowd, and his unfamiliarity with the English language accentuated his tendency to flock with his own countrymen. The crowd was

3 Quaife, Wisconsin—Its History and Its People, 115.
going to the fertile, unoccupied lands of Wisconsin, and the Norwegian Immigrant naturally joined in the movement. 4

Ole Rynning's unfortunate Beaver Creek settlement was abandoned and settlers sought land elsewhere. In this group were Ole and Ansten Nattestad.

While Ansten Nattestad was in Norway in the summer of 1836, his brother Ole left the Beaver Creek colony and crossed the line into Wisconsin. He was the first Norwegian to set foot on Wisconsin soil and also the first to settle there when he took a claim in Clinton Township of Rock County in July 1, 1838. He is the founder of the first Norwegian settlement in Wisconsin which is known as the "Jefferson Prairie Settlement" and is located in South-eastern Rock county. 5

Ole Knudsen Nattestad lived in Wisconsin a whole year alone. There were a few American settlers scattered here and there. The fertile land and woods with abundant deer impressed him very much. 6

Ansten Nattestad with his brother Ole's and Ole Rynning's manuscripts created such an interest in Norway that when it was announced that he would personally conduct a party of

4 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 114.
5 Anderson, First Chapter, 231ff.
emigrants from Drammen in the spring of 1839, throngs of people made known their desire to join him. In fact a considerable number were unable to secure accommodations on board the ship in which Nattestad was to sail. There were from 139 to 140 people the majority from Nattestad's home district in Numedal. They went in two ships, one leaving Drammen and going to New York and the other going by way of Goteborg bound for Boston.  

These immigrants were in better financial circumstances than most immigrants. Before they left they petitioned the church department requesting the ordination of a minister to serve them in America and to make assurance that their children would be brought up in their own faith. The request the first of its kind was granted.  

This group went first to Chicago and learning that his brother Ole had gone to Wisconsin Ansten Nattestad and most of the party went there. They all settled on Jefferson Prairie and consequently the settlement grew in a short time.  

In 1840 a few more came directly from Numedal in Norway to Jefferson Prairie. There the northern part of the colony was settled mostly by people from Numedal because when immigrants came they preferred to be with their kinsmen.  

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7 Billed-Magazin, 84; Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 119ff.
8 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 121.
9 Anderson, First Chapter, 253.
The same autumn a company from Voss came to this settlement. These Vossings went further south and as time went by and their friends came they settled near them. Hence Jefferson Prairie the first Norwegian settlement may be divided into two districts, of which the northern consists chiefly of Numedalinger, while the Vossings predominates in the southern part.  

The Jefferson Prairie Settlement embraces the south half of the town of Clinton, which is the southeast corner of Rock County and extends across the state line into the town of Manchester in Boone County, Illinois.

A part of the Ole Nattestad party went to Luther Valley or Rock Prairie, as it is sometimes called in the same county, lying a few miles west of Jefferson Prairie.

These two Norwegian settlements in Rock County were separated by settlements of other nationalities. From here and from Jefferson Prairie the Norwegians spread west to the Pecatonica River and to Mineral Point. The majority of the settlers in these places were from Numedal. There were a few from Hallingdal and Land.

Reiersen visited Rock County in 1843. It was at this time that two hundred immigrants signed a letter addressed to Bishop Sorensen of Norway asking him to send them a [10] Billed-Magazin, 84.


capable and pious young preacher. They offered a salary of three hundred dollars a year, a parsonage with eighty acres of land, and extra pay for all special services, baptism, marriage, and the like.13

To later immigrants this region became the gateway to the fertile lands of Wisconsin and the far west. Luther Valley, where the noted Reverend C. L. Clausen became pastor in 1846, remained for some time an important center of activity of the early church leaders among the immigrants.14

Thousands upon thousands of Norwegians followed in the footsteps of Nattested and Wisconsin soon became the objective of the majority of the immigrants from Norway. In fact so many wanted to come that it was impossible for them to secure passage across the ocean.15

Wheat was the main crop at Jefferson Prairie and Luther Valley. Distances to market were great, the nearest place being Milwaukee and that was seventy-five miles. It took eleven days for the journey with oxen and Kubberule over woods and swamps.16 Beloit soon became the important city and distances were then a little better.17

At the same time that the people from Numedal, Hallingdal, and Voss made Jefferson Prairie and Rock Prairie the second

13 Anderson, First Chapter, 255.
15 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 114, 118.
16 Billed-Begazin, I, 172.
17 Ibid., I, 182.
settlement in Wisconsin near Milwaukee was founded.

A considerable number of those who were unable to secure accommodations aboard the ship in which Nattestad sailed organized under the leadership of Johan Nilson Lurass and his companions went to Göteborg where they fell in with a party of emigrants from Stavanger. The two joined forces making the party about sixty people and hired an American captain, whose ship, loaded with iron, was ready to sail for Boston. They secured passage across for forty-two specie dollars per adult and arrived after a nine-weeks journey at Boston. The people of Boston expecting Eskimos to come from a land as far north as Norway, gathered curiously at the dock to see them. 18

These immigrants came to Boston, then went to New York and by canal boat to Buffalo and by ship to Milwaukee--seventeen weeks it took them altogether. Their destination was Illinois. It seems that some land speculators and business men were very anxious to have them settle near Milwaukee. These came on board the boat and inquired as to the destination of the immigrants. When the reply was Illinois, they were told that of course this was a free country and they could go where they chose but first, for their own benefit, they should look at the two men before

18 Billed-Magazin, I, 8, 172.
them, one was fat and blooming with health, he, they were
told typified Wisconsin. The other, thin, pale, and
malarial typified Illinois, where the swamp fever and
undescribable heat left settlers that way. The day itself
was hot (the Norwegians by the way came from a cooler
climate and usually landed here dressed in heavy woolen shawls
and warm clothes) so the story goes, and this added to the
argument against Illinois. Whatever happened they did decide
to remain in Wisconsin and were induced by persons interested
in the growth of Milwaukee to settle on a low, marshy region
around Lake "Muskego". Thus the second settlement in Wis-
consin was founded in 1839 in Waukesha and Racine Counties. 19

The story of how they chose this poor land must be told.
A committee of the immigrants was appointed to go with an
American to look for land that could be bought for one
dollar and twenty-five cents an acre. The summer weather
had dried up the marshes and the Norwegians took the large
swamps covered with tall grass to be prairies. There was
plenty of timber and the waters were filled with fish.

The fall rains demonstrated the poor choice but still
the settlers stuck and were joined by others from Tinn and

19 Billed-Magazin, I, 18 ff, 8.
from Illinois. The settlement grew and it became the stopping place for many later immigrants, who would remain in Muskego a year or two before going out to another settlement in Wisconsin. But in the years 1849, 1850, and 1852, cholera visited the settlement and caused such a mortality that the location came into disrepute. Most of those who were spared by the cholera epidemic emigrated to other settlements.

Frank A. Flower in the History of Waukesha County says:

"What was called the Norwegian settlement began in the southern part of the town in 1839, and grew rapidly until some of the newly arriving immigrants brought the cholera in 1842. Terrible and undescrivable scenes followed the breaking out of this fearful scourge, as the poor and ignorant people did not know how to diet or abate its ravages in the least. A hospital was finally established in the Old Heg barn on Muskego Lake. Graves were dug and kept open for expected corpses."

In the fall of 1839 Soren Bakke and Johannes Johannesen, men of means and intelligence, the former a son of Tollef Bakke of Drammen, a wealthy merchant and consequently was well supplied with money came to Fox River, Illinois. With the exception of a trip of investigation into Wisconsin in the fall of 1839, they remained in Fox River until the summer of 1840. Meanwhile they wrote home to their friends

20 Billed-Magazin, I, 10.
in Drammen with the result that a party of immigrants came in 1840.

Bakke and Johannesen came to Wisconsin in the summer of 1840 with the purpose of selecting a home for themselves and for others who intended to emigrate from Drammen. They did not like the Muskego location and selected their land on the shores of Wind Lake in a township that became known as "Norway." This is directly south of Muskego and the new site became the nucleus of the little settlement, which extended into several towns of Sauk (?) County, namely Norway, Waterford, Raymond, and Yorkville Townships, and the whole settlement has since been known as Muskego, although the original settlement in Muskego became practically abandoned. 21

In 1840 a group of emigrants who were influenced by Bache and Johannesen's letters and reports left Norway for Wisconsin. Most outstanding was their leader, Even Heg. He was a "man of marked ability, resourceful and helpful, a genuine leader among immigrants, and he won fame as a sagacious adviser to hundreds of immigrants who in the following years stopped temporarily at Muskego on their way to settlements farther west." 22

21 Billed-Magazin, I, 11 ff; Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 128; Anderson, First Chapter, 277.
Bakke with Even Heg and Johannesen bought a tract of land in the town of Norway. They afterwards sold their land to immigrants.

"Men like Heg, Bakke, and Johannesen, gave much aid to less fortunate immigrants; and Huskego was a congregating point for newcomers whose friends had been exhausted by the expenses of the journey. At one time in 1843 the swarm of such new arrivals was so great that every house in the colony had to accommodate from fifteen to twenty persons—and this was at a time when the settlement was ravaged by disease." 23

Even Heg's farm was the mecca for immigrants of the forties who came to Milwaukee. They would remain in Heg's large barn sometimes for weeks while they were consulting about which part of the country was best suited for location. This settlement in the forties was the journey's goal for the majority of the emigrants and it thus became a common assembling place and point of departure for most of the older colonies in America. Years later the settlers went directly from Norway to the newer settlements. 24

The Heg barn also served as a social and religious center for the community. Before the settlement had a minister Heg and Bakke would preach and conduct lay services. 25

23 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 128.
24 Billed-Magasin, 1, 11ff; Langeland, Nordmandene, 44.
25 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 131.
There seems to be some speculation as to whether or not this colony was not founded with the intention of providing a haven for Haugians. 26

The majority of the settlers at Muskego came from Telemarken. It happened that large tracts of land in Upper Telemarken had become the property of two wealthy lumbermen. The tenant farmers who were dependent upon work in the lumber mills for a large part of their means of livelihood were thus at the mercy of these lumbermen. Consequently when logging was suspended in the hard times, and wages, already low, were stopped altogether, there was much suffering, and emigration seemed about the only way out. 27

Muskego was the objective point for immigrants from Telemarken and after the land was taken up here it became a stoppage place for settlers before going further west. Even Heg bought land which he rented to immigrants until they could buy it. Heg also had a store in a dugout on an old Indian Mound "Inde Haugen". They had sided the dugout with boards and this strange abode served as bedrooms, kitchen, sitting room and store. The most necessary articles of merchandise were bought in Milwaukee and distributed from this mound. 28

26 Billed-Magazin, I, 12.
27 Ibid., I, 18ff.
28 Anderson, First Chapter, 298.
When Johannesen died in 1845, Bakke returned to Norway due to the illness of his father. Evan Heg became the real head of the colony. 29

The pioneer minister Claus L. Clausen, a Danish student of Theology was persuaded by Soren Bakke's father to come to America. On his arrival in 1843 he found that they needed a preacher more than a teacher and then he sought and received ordination by a German Lutheran Minister in October, 1843. He organized a congregation that same year and in 1844 confirmed the first class of children. The church begun in 1843 was dedicated in 1845 the first Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. A gift of 400 by Toleff Bakke of Drammen helped the Luskego settlers in the erection of this church. 30

To this settlement also goes the honor of having the first purely Norwegian paper in America. 31 The paper was the Nordlyset (The Northern Light) established in 1847. It was edited by James D. Reymert and the funds were supplied by Evan Heg and Soren Bakke. The first issues were printed in Evan Heg's log cabin. It was the political

29 Babcock, Scandinavian Element, 44; Anderson, First Chapter, 280ff.
31 The "Skandinavia" was published for the Scandinavian Colony in New York City earlier than Nordlyset according to Dr. Malon who discovered it in his research. One of its promoters was Christian Hansen and it was intended to serve the needs of Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes.
center of the community and became the organ of the Free Soil party. 32

In 1841 says Knut Langeland they held a meeting to decide if they should go further west but they decided to remain due to the fact that although Koshkoom had its advantages market distances were better at Muskego. 33

Reverend H. A. Stub on his visit to Muskego in 1848 said that this colony was the cream of Norwegian immigration of the 40's. 34

The name "Muskego" is Indian properly spelled "Musquigo" meaning swamp, cranberry and fish. 35

The land of Muskego was flat with many marshes.

Reierson writes of Muskego,

"It is rather expensive to clear the land, and the soil is less fertile than is usual elsewhere. A few families have purchased land, chiefly in small lots of forty acres each; only a few have larger tracts and as many own no land at all. In 1843 the population is from 1500 to 2000. The settlers came here because it was nearest Milwaukee. This misfortune combined with considerable indolence on the part of some and lack of enterprise on the part of others chiefly account for the unfavorable conditions in the colony." 36

The nearest market place was Milwaukee approximately forty miles away. 37

32 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 132.
33 Langeland, Normandene.
34 Albert C. Barton, "The Old Muskego Settlement", North Star (1921), III, 340.
35 Ibid., 343.
37 Martin Ulvestad, Normandene: Amerika deres Historie Og record, (Minneapolis, 1907), 23.
Muskego was the starting point and foundation for varied activity the first things of significant interest to the transplanted nationality such as the first call to and first regular ordination of a Norwegian minister, first Norwegian church, first confirmation, first really Norwegian newspaper, first steam sawmill built by a Norwegian, first election to state office by a naturalized Norwegian, first American home of important men, ministers such as Clauson, Stufe Hatlestad and Thalberg, editors such as Reymert, Langeland and Stanglands, a physician such as Stephan Henal, a martyr such as H. C. Heg and linguist Elias Mole. 38

The most important of all early Norwegian settlements was the "Koshkonong settlement" founded in 1849, taking its name from Koshkonong Creek and Lake, and centering in the southeastern part of Dane County, the southwestern part of Jefferson County, and the northern part of Rock County. The southeastern Dane area covered the townships of Albion, Christiania, Deerfield, Dunkirk, Pleasant Springs, and Cottage Grove. The village of Stoughton is nearly all Norwegian. As immigrants flocked in a second area was settled, embracing the northern townships Vienna, Windsor, Bristol, Burke, and Westport. After 1846 this area developed very rapidly. Norway Grove became the commercial

center and later De Forest and Morristown. All three are almost wholly Norwegian villages. In 1844 western Dane County began drawing Norwegians. They began settling in Blue Mounds Township and gradually spread to Primrose, Perry, Springdale, and Vernon Townships. Its commercial center was Mount Horeb. 39

The settlement soon overflowed into Columbia County on the north and Iowa and other counties on the west. As time went on it became a mother colony to many small colonies in Wisconsin and the Middle West. 40

The Koshkonong settlement was founded by two brothers, Gunniel and Knud Olson Vindig 41 of Rumedar. Bjorn Anderson, the father of the late Rasmus B. Anderson, was the first settler in Albion township. 42

The settlements name "Koshkonong", is the English version of the Indian word Kosh-kaw-a-nong, meaning "The lake we live near." 43

When dissatisfied at Muskego a settler was told to "Go farther to the west, first in Koshkonong do you find America." 44

40 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 141.
41 Ulvestad, Norge of Amerika, 324.
42 Billed-Magazin, I, 234.
43 Ibid., I, 226.
44 Ibid., II, 42.
The settlement was very prosperous due to the fertility of the soil of the area. They raised at first potatoes and corn but with the pouring of immigrants into the new Canaan they began to raise wheat. The farm produce had to be taken to Milwaukee at first and with wheat at twenty-five cents a bushel and the journey with oxen there was little profit. A little later they could take things to Janesville and in 1854 a train came to Madison.45

After the stress and hardship of the first pioneer years, the fortunate location which Professor Blegen maintains was due to the superior quality of land in the entire area rather than to any marked success of the Norwegians in securing the best lands within it. (An analysis of land entries indicates, in fact, that as usual the Americans, who were in the ground earlier than the Norwegians, made the best selections)46—made it the destination of thousands of pilgrims since 1840.47

The beginnings of Koshkonong settlement represent three elements in the stream of Norwegian immigration, from Voss, Numedal, and Stavanger.

The Vossings located their claims first in Deerfield and Christiana townships.

45 Billed-Magazin, II, 38.
46 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 142.
47 Babcock, Scandinavian Element, 46.
In 1840 Gunnell Olson Vindeg from Numedal settled in Christiana Township. Vindeg was a diligent writer of inducing "America letters."

The third element consisted of immigrants from Stavanger who had left the La Salle settlement in Illinois and in 1840 selected land in Albion Township of Dane County. 48

The rush to Koshkonong or "Kaskeland," as it was familiarly called, resembled a stampede. Svein Nilssen who came into contact with the early settlers says of it:

"In 1842 and the years immediately following people came streaming to this place from all directions and as a result all the tillable public land here was bought up in an unbelievably short time. We scarcely had time to orient ourselves in our new home before we were surrounded by neighbors on all sides."

The corn attained a growth here which was unknown elsewhere, it was claimed, and on the prairies grew grass which was man-high, while in the woods was timber and fuel in abundance, and the marshes afforded excellent grazing ground for the cattle. These and similar reports spread near and far setting people in motion and producing an excitement which somewhat resembled the gold fever occasioned by the discovery of California's rich mineral wealth. 49

48 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 142-143.
In 1845 a great number emigrated from Sogn and settled at Koshkonong.\textsuperscript{50}

Dietrichson was the outstanding pastor in this settlement being the first real representative of the Norwegian Lutheran State Church in America. Here also was built the first Norwegian Methodist Church in America at Cambridge.

Gunolf Tallofson who came in 1843 with his parents was the first Norwegian elected to the Wisconsin legislature from Dane County, that was in 1868. His homestead was at Primrose. On Blue Mounds Hill a large sign directed many travelers it read: "If anyone wants to meet with Norwegians come down here."\textsuperscript{51}

We have the purely Norwegian cities of Stoughton, Edgerton, Cambridge, Rockdale, Deerfield, and McFarland. The surrounding agricultural district is noted for its fine tobacco crops.\textsuperscript{52}

About forty miles west of Rock Prairie lies Wiota in La Fayette County, about which town stretches in all directions a Norwegian settlement of considerable size. Here extensive lead mines were being operated in the forties and they were the means of drawing to that locality a large

\textsuperscript{50} Blegen, \textit{Norwegian Migration}, 147.
\textsuperscript{51} Ulvestad, \textit{Norge og Amerika}, 24, 26.
\textsuperscript{52} John Goodkiw Gregory, \textit{Southwestern Wisconsin: A History of Old Crawford County} (Chicago, 1932), 11, 1010.
number of immigrants, many, however, just staying there temporarily while accumulating money to buy a farm. The mines were known as "Hamilton Diggings."

Lars Davidson Reque, an immigrant from Voss came to Wiora in 1842 but merely to earn money to improve his land in Deerfield Township of Dane County. That same year agricultural immigration began and in 1843 a great number of permanent settlers came. Many came from Voss but the settlers from Land in Norway later became predominant.53

Reverend Dietrichson mentions the settlement in his "Reise," commenting on the fact that a congregation had been organized of about one hundred members mostly from Voss, whom he says settled there for the most part in 1863.54

That same year a settlement was started north of Oconomowoc known as the "Rock Prairie Settlement." Here came the first settlers from Satersdalen in Norway.

In 1846 the "Winchester Settlement" was founded shortly west of Neenah. This became a "Telemarkenings-bygd."55

Walworth County, Wisconsin, containing in its southern

53 Phelps, Magazine of History, 324; Coon Prairie, compiled by Hjalmar R. Holand (Minneapolis, 1927), 18.
54 Flom, History of Norwegian Immigration, 196-204; Dietrichson, Riese, 57-57.
55 Coon Prairie, (1927), 18.
portion the beautiful Lake Geneva, had four distinct small Norwegian settlements which had begun in the early forties. Among them was Skoponong, extending north into Jefferson County. To this settlement near the close of the forties came a humble emigrant woman from Voss whose son, Knute Nelson was the well-known senator from Minnesota. Skoponong consists of settlers from Voss and Telemarken. The Skoponong settlement extends also into southeastern Jefferson County. In Walworth County, Heart Prairie, also Telemarken, White-water, La Grange, and Richmond Townships are Norwegians. Bonnet Prairie of Atsego in Hampton Township had a Norwegian settlement in 1845.56

Iowa County with Mineral Point and Blue Mounds attracted settlers moving west and northwest from Koshkonong and Rock Prairie settlements.

A survey of the entire situation in Wisconsin shows that in the forties the tendency was to fill up the lands in the southcentral portion of the state generally, with a very definite trend toward the west and northwest which near the end of the decade caused a flow into northeastern Iowa.

The importance of the individual as a leader appears to be declining by the end of the forties and the migration,

although not yet swelling into great numbers, begins to take on some of the aspects of mass movement. 57

As the lands of Koshkonong filled up there opened in the southwest a new settlement which was to be the mecca of Wisconsin Norwegians from Vernon, Crawford, Monroe, LaCrosse, and Trempealeau Counties. Extending approximately one hundred and fifty miles in width this wide area is sometimes referred to as the "Coon Prairie Settlement."

This important Scandinavian settlement originally occupied the ridge in Vernon County between the Kickapoo and Mississippi river valleys. From the two cities of Viroqua and Westby there has been a dispersion in all directions into some of the nearby valleys. According to the census of 1905 in Christiana Township 212 out of 217 foreign born were Norwegians, and the same is true of other townships. These were then and remain now almost a solid Norwegian settlement in which old country traditions are kept alive through the church making it the most outstanding Norwegian stronghold in the West. 58

The county is broken and hilly. Coon Prairie and West Prairie with their oak openings are a farmer's paradise and attracted a great number of early settlers.

57 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 151, 192.
58 Blegen, "Glen Peerson," in Mississippi Valley Historical Review (1920-21), VII, 429.
This is the unglaciated area of Wisconsin. 59

"Predominant in the town of Hamburg, Coon, and Bergen along the Coon River with its ridges on each side, and in the region extending eastward into La Crosse, is the Norwegian element; the spires of churches contributing in a high degree to the picturesque in what travelers agree in acclaiming one of the most charming valleys in the world." 60

Most of the Norwegian people in Vernon County came from Gudbrandsdalen although one will find a smattering of Hallinger, Telemarninger, Vossinger, a few from Beri and others. Gudbrandsdalinger predominate in fact so much that the dialect spoken is a form of that dialect—however, the children learn from each other and the people all talk alike whether Gudbrandsdal or Telemarken. A few of the older people will have purer dialects but a visitor will soon find that the people on Coon Prairie have gradually evolved their own dialect—mixed of course with an abundance of English words but one must remember that these are the second, third, and fourth generation Norwegians—mostly the third and fourth. The fact that Norwegian is still spoken exclusively in rural districts probably will bring out the pureness of the Norwegian settlement. Coon Prairie and Coon Valley is Gudbrandsdalen's largest bygd in America. 61

59 Gregory, Southwestern Wisconsin (Chicago, 1932), II, 1409.
60 Ibid., II, 1425.
61 Coon Prairie, compiled by H. Holand (Minneapolis, 1927), 15.
Hjalmar Holand estimated that in this "Alpland" of hills and vales between Eau Claire and Prairie du Chien live over one hundred thousand Norwegians. It is the densest populated Norwegian district in America, also one of the most prosperous. 62

Evan Gullord who came from Koshkonong settlement was the first settler at Coon Prairie. He came from Beri which lies on the west of Kjosen. Gullord was also the first to leave Beri for Koshkonong. They went on a steamboat to Coon Slough (Stoddard) and here Gullord got off and wandered all over Coon Prairie. His idea was to find land for settlers from Beri. He went to Galena to work in the lead mines. In 1847 and 48 several immigrants from Beri came to Galena and in 1848 all left for Coon Prairie. Other settlers soon came from Gudbrandsdalen, Heckkefjord, Sindre land and upper Telemarken. There are as many from Beri in this settlement as there are in Beri in Norway.

On the same ship as Ole Gullord had came two Gudbrandsdalinger Tjostul Amundson Cium and Ole Dalen, the first two to leave southern and northern Fron, also others from Gauldal, Ausdalen, and Oier.

This same boat also carried Helge Gudbrandsen Skare from Sigdal. He was dissatisfied with Coon Prairie and in
1849 went across the hills into the valley and was the first settler in Coon Valley. 63

Skares lived a year among the Indians before white settlers moved in. The valley, however, was filled in a very short time, as many of the settlers took the valley land before they took the prairie due to the lack of water on the ridge and prairies. When the settlement began the nearest market place was Prairie du Chien about fifty or sixty miles south but that was later supplanted by the new city of La Crosse a distance of thirty miles which became the market place. In 1858 a railroad was built through La Crosse and after that it became the central market place for the Coon Prairie settlement. The road to La Crosse followed the old Indian Trail. It was not an unusual sight in the seventies and eighties to see a caravan of wagons loaded with wheat one-half mile long on their way to market at La Crosse having to cross the steep five-hundred-foot elevation of Ramsrud hill with their heavy loads. 64

Due to the lack of water on the prairie, the settlers there had to drive water great distances. They soon learned to build dams by letting the water from higher places drain into it. This water of course was not for human beings. The prairie settlers had to drive their cattle everyday,

63 Coon Prairie, 3 ff.
64 Ibid., 22 ff, 139.
frequently, to the valleys for water. This early scarcity of water, before wells were dug can explain why a Norwegian farmer used to water in abundance took the valley in many cases in preference to the prairie.65

One fortunate thing about the Coon Prairie settlement was the fact that it was not visited by cholera. It was a healthy settlement.66

Wheat was for many years the main crop. Potatoes were also raised and the settlers always had a few cows. In 1854 a heavy frost fell on the 22nd of June so that everything froze except a few deep planted potatoes. The following winter was a hard one but the two following years were prosperous. The settlers started building a church and a school. Money seemed to have disappeared and the congregation had to pay twenty per cent interest on the money they loaned to build a church.67

The panic of 1857 brought bad years to the settlement. The price of farm produce fell and credit was nowhere to be obtained. An incident which illustrates this lack of money can be cited: Reverend H. Stub had hired a young man Peter Stigen to work for him on his farm. The young man heard that there was a couple of forties in Skogdalen

65 Coon Prairie, 39. Author's own knowledge through interviews with early settlers.
66 Ibid., 32.
67 Ibid., 31.
that had not as yet been taken. He could buy this for $1.25 an acre and was given a long time to pay but he had to pay seventy-cents to file the claim. Reverend Stub had no money to pay him but said that as Easter was approaching he would certainly get that much money in and that Stigen might have it. But Easter past and no money, the settlers brought a sack of wheat or some produce as their offering as they had no money.68

These hard times lasted for many years and were followed by the Civil War. True to their condition many went as volunteers, in order to earn enough to support their families. In the meantime the wife struggled along at home. The result of these hard years was a decline in the healthy condition of the settlement. From 1848 to 1855 there had been very few deaths. From that time on for the next ten years nearly two hundred people died—half of them however being under five years of age, which due largely to the struggle and hard work of the mother and lack of doctors.69

Among the first Norwegian pastors to visit Coon Prairie was Pastor H. Stub in 1854. He felt that this new territory needed him more than Muskego and that his services could be greater so he gave up his call there and went to Coon Prairie in 1855. Reverend Brand had visited the region

68 Coon Prairie, 31.
69 Ibid., 31.
in 1851. The congregation was organized in July of 1852. 70

South of Coon Prairie in Crawford County is a district of some three thousand Sognings from Lyste and Aardal. The first settlers came in 1850 and 1852 settling near Rising Sun. Some of them stopped on the way at Koshkonong. In 1853 a large settlement near Soldiers Grove was established. Their nearest market place was Prairie du Chien forty-five miles away. Davidson the first Norwegian governor of Wisconsin and Atley Peterson who became a member of the State legislature were the two outstanding men of the district. 71

In Walworth County there are four Norwegian settlements, one in the southern part in the Town of Whitewater and the northern part of the Town of Richmond called the "Heart Prairie Settlement," about four miles east of the city. Whitewater lies Shoponing, partly in Whitewater and extending north into Jefferson County as far as Palmyra then in the city of Whitewater and lastly six miles south-east of Heart Prairie lies the Sugar Creek settlement, extending from about five miles north of Delavan to three miles southeast of Elk Horn.

In La Crosse County we find the first settlers in Lewis Valley in 1850. In 1851 Mons Anderson moved to

71 Ulvestad, Normandene i Amerika, 33.
La Crosse and began operating what became the largest retail store west of Chicago.

Several Norwegian papers were published here including "Fædrelandet og Emigranter". Here also Luther College was founded in a parsonage at Halfway Creek in 1861. A large Norwegian Lutheran Hospital was established in 1902.72

North of La Crosse lies Trempealeau County with its large Norwegian population. The valley of the Trempealeau River occupies the central part of the county. Entering from Jackson County in the east the river describes a great bend to the north and then flows southwardly, forming a part of its course the western boundary of the county, dividing a few miles north of its mouth into two branches; and then spreading into marshes and sloughs on its way to the Mississippi.73

The early Scandinavians who came here had three things in view Wood, Water, and Hay, as necessary to the establishment of a home. If these were lacking the land was thought undesirable. Therefore they are found among the hills where they had a chance. Gullick Olson who came from the Bad Ax region in Vernon County and settled near Blair in 1855 was the first Scandinavian in Trempealeau County.

72 Ulvestad, Normandene i Amerika, 42.
73 The History of Trempealeau County Wisconsin compiled by Franklyn-Curtis-Wedge, ed. E. Douglas Pierce (Winona, 1917), ix, 155.
In 1857 a congregation was organized by Stub and in 1868 a church was dedicated. This county was religiously inclined therefore as soon as so many had located in a locality that it might be called a "settlement" a church was organized. 74

The Norwegian immigrants came to Trempealeau to get cheap lands and build themselves homes. In southern Wisconsin especially at Koshkonong the land was either bought upon by speculators, the price being higher than the immigrants could pay and so they went farther northwest.

Trempealeau valley and surrounding territory is the most integrated Solor settlement in America most of the settlers having come from Solor on the eastern borders of Norway.

The north Branch of Beaver Creek was settled in 1857 and Beaver Creek in 1858. The Settlement spread to French Creek Valley in 1859 and into the town of Gale into Hardie Creek Valley. Pushing across the ridges northward from Hardie Creek into south Branch Beaver Creek another Norwegian settlement was formed by Peter Larson of Coon Valley in 1861. In 1862 Tamarack valley across the extent of settlement but which in 1865 spread to Chimney Rock. A La Crosse pioneer Erick Larson came to Pigeon Creek in

74 History of Trempealeau County, (1917), 156.
1867 and took land long shunned due to an absence of trees and hay. Plum Creek was settled in 1874.

In this region the Solar element predominates but a group from Hardanger are found near Lodi. 75

Farming is the main occupation. Wheat raising and later dairying became the chief occupation. The lands of northern Wisconsin was spurned by the early settlers, they sought land that required no grubbing no matter what the distance from market. It was the age of prairie farming. The mind of the American farmer was set against the drudgery of land clearing, and he would not come back to it except under a kind of economic compulsion. The census of 1890 which notes the passing of the frontier established a convenient base from which to compute the pressure of that land shortage which gradually brought the vast and fertile land of Wisconsin into use for general farming. 76

In northern Wisconsin scattered Scandinavians are traced to the lumber industry and the railroads. Many came as laborers for the construction of railroads or for harvesting the first crop of lumber from the forests. Some have become permanent settlers. There is a decrease of Scandinavians born after the demand for lumbermen ceased in Ashland, Bayfield and Polk Counties. 77

75 History of Trempealeau County, 153.
76 Joseph Schafer, A History of Agriculture in Wisconsin, Wisconsin Domesday Book (Madison, 1922), No. 1, 1, 153.
77 Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VII, 432.
In Waupaca County extending westward into Portage County is located the more or less established Scandinavian settlement of Iola, Scandinavia, and Waupaca. 78

The twenty-nine counties of northern Wisconsin which Dr. Schaffer calls the new North has evidenced a growth in recent years in rural neighborhood. In fact, Northern Wisconsin was the only part of the state in which during the twenty years prior to the census of 1920 rural population had been increasing at all. 79

The immigrants were of all types but the table of nativities, extracted from the last census shows a very large number of Scandinavians. Of these the Norwegians were by far the most numerous. The Norwegians being 19,311 compared to 15,881 Swedes. The Germans had the lead with 31,169 and the Norwegians followed. In Barron, Bayfield, Chippewa, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Polk, and Portage Counties are found according to the census of 1920 a high per cent of Norwegians. 80

Shawano County also has approximately 25,000 of Norse descent. In the southern part of the county are Navarino, Jerusalem, and Lessor, ten miles north are found Green Valley, and Wittenberg.

76 Historical Review, VII, 429.
79 Schaefer, History of Agriculture in Wisconsin, I, 145.
80 Ibid., 147.
The first settlers here came in 1866 and settled near the Wolf River. Johannes Gynten the first settler worked in the forests and speculated a little in timber land. He took claim to a worthless sand flat in the midst of a very good county even though the first settler. 81

Navarino was selected because of the Fir wood and its nearness to the Wolf River. The land was sandy north to Jerusalem. Seven or eight miles north of Jerusalem lies Lessor which was the first Norwegian settlement in Shawano County. It has an excellent location and lies five miles from Green Bay. Ten miles north of Lessor is Green Valley settled in 1871 (south of Oconto River). On Oconto River at this time logging was at its height and attracted many Norwegians from surrounding territories. 82

As has been pointed out previously the Norwegians are sectional. By 1840 only three men had left the northern half of Norway. In the 1860's immigrants came from Helgeland and Telemarken to Dunn and Burnett Counties in Wisconsin. The people from north Norway are more spread about. There are approximately 100,000 Norwegians here most of them coming from Helgeland. Just south of Grantsburg is a Norwegian settlement with Borden, Norland the home of most

81 Hjalmar R. Holand, "Norske pionerer og Settementer" in Decorah Posten (January 23, 1920). 82 Ibid.
of the settlers. These and the followers went to Knut Anderson's Hotel at Grantsburg in 1860. They were turned from Minnesota due to the Indian War. 83

The first settlers came to Burnett County from Koshkonong and settled near Grantsburg in 1852. The market was at St. Croix Falls thirty-five miles away. Settlers took land near Timberland, Webster, and Marshland. By 1866 these settlers had been thriving and writing home glowing letters resulting in 1000 immigrants mostly from Nordland coming to America and a great number settling in Burnett and Dunn Counties. 84

About ten thousand Norwegians settled in Dunn County. They were a mixture from all the valleys of Norway. The settlement extends north into Barron County. The Red Cedar River runs through Dunn County and at Menominee there is a large sawmill. One-fourth of the residents of Menominee are Norwegians. Dunn County has thousands of valleys but not so high as in Vernon and Trempealeau County.

The first settlers in the county came to work in Knapp, Stout and Comaphy's sawmill. The lumber industry played a significant part in bringing these people to Dunn County. Thousands of penniless immigrants got their first start here in the sawmills. The company bought all which the

83 Holand, "Norske pionerer og Settlementer" (Feb. 24, 1920).
84 Ibid., (March 5, 1920); Ulvestad, Normandene, 31.
settlers had to sell from logs to potatoes, cabbages or hides. The company used "Due bills" as they operated a store also. In the seventies this was the world's largest sawmill. Most of the workers were Norwegians. 85

Just halfway between Eau Claire and Menominee is Elk Mound, a Norwegian settlement among the hills and valleys. Ten miles north of Elk Mounds is Colfax the center of the settlement. The first settlers here came from Vernon County to Eau Claire. A few came from Minnesota fearing the Indians. 86

Nearly all the settlers around Colfax worked for the first year on the sawmills at Eau Claire and Menominee and did very little farming. 87

The land question was becoming more pronounced in the later 1800's. On the south side of the Chippewa River and on the high land immigrants from Gudbrandsdalen had settled but the land on the south side of the river which were very susceptible to flood were not taken so quickly. A few Trondere from Soknedalen lived here. This settlement is a very Norwegian minded place. Ole Dahl settled in Bloomer in 1854. Meeting some immigrant in La Crosse County in the same year he induced them to come to the Chippewa region. All the land north and south was gradually taken up, and

85 Holand, "Norske pionerer og Settlementer" (March 12, 1920).
86 Ibid., (March 12, 1920).
87 Ibid.
most of Minnesota likewise. Yet the Chippewa bottoms had few due to the fear of floods. In the seventies many immigrants came from Soknedalen and first worked in the sawmills in Menominee and later took land in the bottoms. In 1880 however, a large flood occurred and the settlers sat for days in the hills and watched the destruction. Floating logs destroyed almost everything. Several hundred thousand had been gathered in northern Wisconsin to be sent to the sawmill at Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls. In 1884 a larger flood occurred immediately after the harvest but it took the oats and wheat out of the granary. The dams in Chippewa now prevent any more such catastrophes. The bottoms are now a prosperous well built settlement.88

In Barron County the first Norwegian settler located near Rice Lake in 1863. He lived alone with the Indians for a long time. Settlements were established near Canton in 1870, Prairie Arm in 1871, and in 1874 quite a number went to Rice Lake where they found only the French and Indians but the Norwegians were soon in the majority. Eau Claire was the nearest trading post at a distance of about sixty miles.89

Buffalo County got its first Norwegian settlers from Lyster Sogn. They came from Vernon County and settled here

88 Holland, "Norske pionerer og Settlementer" (April 2, 1920.)
89 Ulvestad, Nordmandene i Amerika, 26.
on July 4, 1856. The valley in which they settled became known as "Norskedalen" as many more settlers arrived from Lyster. Raising of wheat was the chief occupation. Buffalo County lies in the western part of Wisconsin and is bordered by the Mississippi. The whole county is made up of narrow valleys and rugged hills of five hundred feet elevation. The soil is good and the farmers were prosperous despite the hardships of cultivation. In the northwestern part of the county between Mondovi and Dodena there is a colony nine-tenths of the settlers being from Lyster in Sogn. In the 50's many people from Lyster came to Spring Valley and Blue Mounds in Dane County. It was hard to get good land there as it was expensive and scarce. The Sognings agreed to send a man out to look for land. Upon his return they took the old military road from Madison to Prairie du Chien crossed the Wisconsin on a Ferry-boat and drove down through the Kickapoo Valley to Coon Prairie. From there they went to Sparta and Black River Falls on July 6, 1856. They settled at their destination in Buffalo County. They were the only white settlers for two years. The friendly Chippewa Indians would borrow or buy or trade tobacco or syrup from the Sognings. 90

90 Ulvestad, Nordmandene i Amerika, 31.
Dunn County has a settlement near Ladysmith, Green County near Mauston, Langlade near Echo, and Waupeca near Antigo. There was however a very interesting settlement at Ephraim in Dunn County. This was taken by Nils Tank in 1850. He founded this settlement seventy-five miles south of Green Bay and bought 969 acres of land and later 9,000 acres a little farther south. Tank wanted to start a communistic settlement and he wanted a whole Milwaukee congregation to come up, which they did. Here was established the first Norwegian High School in America. A severe forest fire occurred and over a thousand settlers were burned to death. The settlement was moved to Sturgeon Bay, thirty miles from Ephraim.

91 Ulvestad, Nordmandene i Amerika, 40, 42 f.
92 Hjalmar R. Holland, Den Sidste Folkevanding (Oslo, 1930), 91, 106 ff.
CHAPTER IV

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE NORWEGIAN IMMIGRANT

There was much hustle and bustle in the small huts in Norway's narrow valleys when members of a family or perhaps a whole family were preparing for their great adventure to cross the sea. They had to prepare food and clothing to take on the lengthy journey.

Those intending to leave in the spring would have a large supply of flat bread made. A large part of this bread was made of oatmeal, part of it was oat and barley meal mixed. The finest was made of bolted rye, but only a small quantity of this was in use by immigrants. Generally one or more female experts were engaged to make this bread for a family's use as it was slow work often requiring several weeks to supply enough for a large family. After mixing and working the dough carefully, it was rolled out on a large wooden board with a creased pin or "Kjavle" as it was called, into a thin circular sheet just the size of an iron slab resting over a brisk fire or fireplace, called
"peise". The iron slab was called "Takken". The thin sheet of dough was then dexterously rolled in part on a long slender stick and spread out carefully, perfectly even, on the takken and allowed to bake, first on one side, and then on the other. It was watched all the while and kept from sticking to the slab until thoroughly done. It was placed in a pile to be packed in wooden casks or barrels just large enough to fit the size of unbroken sheets, about thirty inches across and four and a half feet deep. In this was also placed the takken which served the family in some way in the new home as they knew that such an article could not be brought there. Some lefse was made for the journey prepared in the same way omitting only the hardening process effected by the dexterous turning of a long slender wooden stick in the hands of an expert baker. It was rolled up like an ironed handkerchief.¹ (These foods are still in use in Norwegian communities, the latter more so than the former. It is usually made of potatoes.)

Butter was taken over in little tubs. Stocks of cheese, skim milk cheese, white and brown from cows milk and from goat's milk. The brown was called "primost" made from the whey remaining from the white cheese. Another cheese made from cow's milk was called "pult ost" a soft mass

having a strong disagreeable odor which often penetrated the whole ship (often called "Dutch Cheese").

All passengers traveling steerage had to carry their own provisions and also prepare their own meals as best they could. Hence the matter of providing the necessary stove for such a voyage was an important item, as they had to fit out for twelve weeks as a rule and a supply of food and drink had to be made ready, not only sufficient in quantity but also of proper quality to resist the effects of the dampness of the ocean bottom climate on board the ship and, to keep from spoiling.

The fitting up of an ordinary ship for carrying immigrants across the sea was of a very plain and often quite rude nature. On a temporary floor built in the hold of a vessel a two story row of spaces for beds was constructed along the whole length of both sides of the ship, usually wide enough for four persons to sleep in. On deck a moderately sized shed fitted up with a number of fireplaces for cooking was erected, also an outbuilding on each side of the ship near the rail. This completed the alteration necessary for the comforts of the passengers, who always had to furnish their own bedding as well as their own food. Below the floor was a large room reserved for

2 Erickson, "Emigrant Journey," VIII, 90.
3 Ibid., VIII, 88.
the multitudes of heavy chests packed to the brim with clothing and bedding and other trappings belonging to the immigrants. Many of them took along quantities of seemingly worthless trash; as they could not sell it and they preferred to bring it with them to their distant future home, even at considerable cost, as only a few hundredweight of baggage was carried free for each passenger. ⁴

In another part of the hold were stored many large casks of fresh water enough to last for three months in case the voyage should require that length of time. A smaller cask was filled and hoisted on deck for daily use. ⁵ The provision boxes and smaller chests belonging to the passengers were placed in rows in front of the beds and made fast to prevent them from slipping off. ⁵

For some reason not made known the emigrants vessels did not come into the dock but anchored some distance away. This was expensive and inconvenient to the emigrants. The chests and trunks were often handled carelessly and the officers of the boats were overbearing at times to the poor emigrants. ⁶

The emigrants came either by way of New York and the Erie Canal, by New Orleans and the Mississippi, or by the St. Lawrence.

⁴ Erickson, "Emigrant Journey", VIII, 81.
⁵ Ibid., VIII, 84.
⁶ Ibid., 83.
The routes taken by the early immigrants varied. A Norwegian statistician has estimated that of the total of 18,200 emigrants from 1836 to 1850, 12,200 went direct from Norway to America, and of these about 11,960 landed at United States ports and 240 at Quebec. About six thousand went via the more important European ports of departure outside Norway, such as Göteborg. A marked difference appears from 1831 to 1853. Direct shipping from Norway reduced emigration by way of other European ports and Quebec received a larger part of the total Norwegian emigration than New York and other American ports. In this period 27,510 emigrants went direct from Norway to New York and Boston, and 660 by way of Havre, Hamburg or other ports to New York. From 1884 on the tendency is toward Quebec as the initial destination of emigrants. It is estimated that out of 46,900 Norwegian emigrants from 1884 to 1885, all but 2,800 took the Quebec route—44,100 went direct to Quebec, 520 direct to New York or Boston, and 2,280 via Havre and Hamburg and other intermediate points to New York. The swing to Canada was due to a trade development that made it possible for shipping companies to reduce passenger fares but the emigrants were bound, as before, for the American West by the way of the Great Lakes, with Milwaukee or Chicago as the goal before dispersing to the settlements. For ship owners the lumber industry at Quebec
made possible a very profitable triangular trade: emigrants and ballast from Norway to Quebec; lumber to some British port; and a return from England to the original starting point. The main reason for this rapid development of emigration traffic combined with Canadian and English commerce was the repeal in 1849 of the English navigation laws, making it possible for foreign merchant vessels to engage in unrestricted commerce with the British Colonies. As early as 1850 Quebec customs house returns showed that the Norwegian trade was becoming brisk, out of ninety-six ships docked, forty-four were Norwegian almost all of which came in under ballast and departed with an "outward cargo" of lumber for London, Cardiff, Belfast, Hull, Yarmouth, or other British ports.\(^7\)

In 1853 Celias Stangeland of Norway, Racine County appeared in Norway as an emigrant agent for a certain transportation company which carried people from the port of Quebec to Milwaukee, or Chicago. His influence was strong on emigration and on turning the current of travel largely over the route to Quebec through the St. Lawrence River instead of via New York and the Erie Canal. This proved to be a wholesome change. The tired immigrants escaped the two weeks of canal boats.\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Blegen, *Norwegian Migration*, 351 ff.

\(^8\) Erickson, "Emigrant Journey," VIII, 67-68.
When the immigrants arrived at Quebec they were transferred without much delay to large river steamers that carried them to Montreal which is at the head of ocean navigation on that river. Then passage was taken on a canal steamer some twenty-five miles to a place called La Cheni. On a lake steamer the immigrants were taken through Lake Ontario, in the western part of which liners took the passengers to the city of Lewiston, and from there both passengers and baggage were carried about seven miles to Niagara Falls on large stage coaches, then to Buffalo by rail, on steamers via the Great Lakes to Milwaukee or Chicago. The trip from Quebec required seven days. 9

As has been mentioned before the Commissioner of Immigration for Wisconsin had a deputy commissioner at Quebec and a commissioner at New York for the purpose of getting immigrants to settle in Wisconsin. Stangeland was stationed at Quebec through the influence of Senator James Reymert of Muskego.

During the whole season that the immigration office was open, a constant strife and persistent war went on between the agents of various lines. 10

In 1852 at the agency at Quebec came twenty-eight Norwegian ships with 5,484 persons. All except forty came

9 Erickson, "Emigrant Journey," VIII, 68.
10 Ibid., 69.
directly by Norwegian vessels while the others came via Liverpool. The great bulk were laborers and farmers and came from country districts. 11

A few who couldn't pay the fare west were taken along with the others who paid accompanied by a competent interpreter. 12

During the summer of 1854 there was a severe cholera epidemic at the seaports and quite a number were placed in hospitals at Grosse Isle, the regular quarantine section situated on the St. Lawrence River. Families were often separated in this manner. 13

The lot of the immigrant was hard, especially when exposed to attacks of sickness among strangers in a strange land with no home, no means, and no friends to assist him. 14

When an immigrant ship started on its voyage from a port in southern Norway it was usually noted that most of the passengers would eat fried salt pork, potatoes, bread and butter at every meal, settling the repast with coffee. The constant frying of old fat produced an intolerable condition.

It was a happy day for the passengers when they stopped at Grosse Island and a number of rowboats would

12 Ibid., 79.
13 Ibid., 74.
14 Ibid., 75.
come alongside offering for sale fresh wheat loaves, milk, eggs, and butter, after eating salty fried food for several weeks. It was the first loaf of bread that many of them had ever seen. 15

The usual time required by a sailing vessel to cross the sea was from six to nine weeks and under adverse winds as much as twelve. The vessels often ran out of food and water.

Upon their arrival here the primary object was to buy land. Quite often they lacked money. In this case they would often go and work in the lead mines at Wiota, Mineral Point or Dodgeville until they could get enough to buy land or they would go to the lumber camps and sawmills to work until they could get a farm started. 17

The Norwegians settler with little means often took the left over lands rather than going into debt too heavily for his new home. The first immigrants from Norway looked for woods, hay and water and were at first adverse to prairie lands. The valleys seemed to fill up first even when lovely prairie land lay waiting. 18 But even with left over lands, Dr. Schaefer says:

16 Ibid., 75.
17 Sophie A. Boe, "Lars Davidson Reque" in Norwegian-American Studies and Records (Northfield, 1931), VI, 40.
18 Filled-Magazin, 1, 19; Schaefer, History of the Agriculture in Wisconsin, No. 2, 1, 5.
...the Norwegians by their thrift, physical vigor, and enterprise, were destined to become one of the determining elements in the building up of Wisconsin agriculture."

As soon as the land was opened wheat was generally raised. Wheat for a number of years was king in Wisconsin. Up to the time of the Civil War Norwegian farmers raised mostly wheat. After the Civil War in the late sixties a drop in the price of wheat and short crops due to the policy of unrotated wheat forced the farmers of the south-east to turn to something else.\textsuperscript{20}

On the other hand the price of tobacco increased. The Norwegians found the Americans raising tobacco, and as the Norwegians were prominent in this region they readily learned the art of tobacco culture from their American neighbors. They were very well adapted to the industry for not only were they industrious and painstaking but they were also able to employ in the light work involved in tobacco raising their large families. It gave them an excellent start and from that time to the present the culture of tobacco has been closely related to the distribution of the Norwegians.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Schafer, History of the Agriculture in Wisconsin, I, 18.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 37; Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VII, 426.
NORWEGIAN born population in Wisconsin according to the 1930 census reports
TOBACCO produced in Wisconsin according to the 1930 census
The Norwegian farmer accustomed to cattle raising in Norway entered very readily into dairying. It was a very convenient industry as it fitted in so nicely with tobacco production and it supplied the regular living income to the people, leaving the returns from the tobacco for capital investment. At the present time however the tobacco industry has declined very rapidly and dairying has taken its place.22

The cooperative creameries, cheese factories and other like projects abound in the Norwegian communities. Even in the early fifties the farmers of Primrose in Dane County started the cooperative venture by selling and buying together certain products.

Many Norwegians went to northern Wisconsin. They worked in the mills and on their farms.23 The last decade has seen a growth of Scandinavians in northern Wisconsin. The north woods in earlier days was filled during the winter logging season with Norwegian farmers attempting to earn a few dollars. They walked the distance, leaving home in fall and returning to their homes in the spring. In the meantime the settler’s wife took care of the farm as best she could.

Market distances were very great in the early settle-

22 Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VII, 432.
23 Schafer, History of the Agriculture in Wisconsin, I, No. 1, 141.
ments and before the advent of railroads and horses, oxen and wagons or crude "kubberuler" were used. It often took several days to go to market.

The hardships endured by the Norwegians are similar to those met by other pioneers. The first houses were "huts" of clay mud or small log cabins. Here often many families crowded together.

A dark chapter in the annals of the Norwegian's history of Wisconsin is that of disease. Cholera appeared in 1832 spreading from Quebec to Montreal, came by the immigrant to New York and Buffalo and to the little settlements of the West. The small houses and crowded conditions made the field for an epidemic a fertile one. Often there were from fourteen to fifteen people in the room. Lovenskjold says that they lived, cooked and slept in the same room.24

Cholera swept over Muskego like a scourge claiming hundreds of lives. There were few doctors and sanitary conditions were deplorable. Beside cholera there were fevers that sapped the much needed vitality of the settler. Muskego's bad location made it unhealthful until the land had been open to cultivation. Koshkonong had its share of

24 Adam Lovenskjold, Beretning om de Norske Settere i Nordamerika, efter den norske generalkonsuls, Adam Lovenskjolds, til Departementet, under 15 October 1847 indgivne Beretning, om hans i afujte Sommer i de nord amerikanske Fristaters vestlige Provindser, i de norske Settlementer Aflagte Besøg. (Bergen, 1848), 15.
this scourge also. 25

The Coon Prairie settlement of Vernon County escaped these epidemics and was a very healthy settlement until the hard years came in the latter fifties and early sixties. When the death rate among children grew in leaps and bounds due largely to the mothers being overworked and not able to care properly for their children. 26

Tuberculosis has made many inroads into Norwegian communities due to the small cramped houses. The second and subsequent generation have to pay for the seeds sown by the first. There are more Norwegians with T. B. in Wisconsin than any other nationality. 27

The lack of trained doctors was a great handicap to the pioneer community. Usually one or two amongst them served the purpose to the best of their ability. Billed-Magazin in 1868 urged Norwegians doctors to emigrate. 28

As far as social life is concerned the church was the center in the average Norwegian community. Around it revolved all interest. It kept the people in the Norwegian fold.

26 Coon Prairie, compiled by Holand, 32.
27 Ross, "Scandinavians in America," in Century (June, 1914), LXXVIII, 262.
28 Billed-Magazin, 1, 79.
The Norwegian assimilate very readily and made fine citizens, however, they cling to their traditions more than do many other nationalities. It used to be improper for a Norwegian to marry outside his own nationality. This today has largely disappeared. One finds that where a Norwegian settlement touches a German settlement that the Norwegian will disappear much faster. The children grow up and intermarry and assimilation is accomplished.29

A settlement of nearly pure Norwegian stock is slow in giving up its national color. The church luteisk supper and language and tradition hold them together. This past year, 1935-1936 a family moved into a Norwegian community, the children who were not able to speak Norwegian and who did not understand it learned to talk and understand it at the regular English school session from the other children which tends to prove that the language is still alive.

Norwegian is disappearing in the school ground quite rapidly, at the time that the author attended public grade school in the latter 1920's a punishment was imposed for Norwegian spoken in order to make the children speak English instead of Norwegian at school.

Although it may be true that every Sunday Norwegian is preached in more churches in America than in Europe yet no foreign immigrant assimilates as fast as the Norwegian.

Of supreme importance in Norwegian life is the Norwegian press. The Norwegians have had a fine set of newspapers published in their own tongue. "Scandinavin" of Chicago is very popular in Wisconsin and discusses politics and all other phases of life. "Decorah Posten" of Decorah, Iowa, is the most popular among the rural farmer class. It devotes more time to Norway, to farm problems, and less to politics. "Jed armen" a supplement of Decorah Posten which contains a serial provides reading matter during the long winter months for the Norwegian farmer.

The press probably reached its zenith in such works as Symra published by John Wist and _______. What Norwegian culture the Norwegians have they usually have as a result of the press.

The Norwegians however did not appreciate to any extent Borgeson, Bjornson and Anderson, they would rather read "Husmands Gutten" or Gutten fra Norge by Foss and Lee respectively. It was hard for Rasmus Anderson to sell his Norse Mythology to the average Norwegian.

Outstanding men in Norwegian life in Wisconsin are such as Colonel Hans Christian Hegg the leader of the fifteenth Wisconsin regiment which was composed nearly
entirely of Norwegians. He had previous to this served as state prison commissioner at Waupun. He left this job to form the regiment as he felt that the leaders of the war would be the leaders in the years to come. He, however, was killed at Chickamauga.30

Rasmus Anderson born in the town of Albion was probably not only the most outstanding Norwegian in Wisconsin but in the United States. His varied career touched all fields. A professor, diplomat, author, and student he was one of the most interesting personalities of early Wisconsin history. His numerous letters indicate his active life. When the church conflict raged he was in the midst of it. In politics he was also an outstanding figure.

CHAPTER V

THE NORwegians IN WisCONSIN POLITICS

The Scandinavian usually entered the field of politics rather slowly; he took out his "first papers" which would enable him to acquire land and not in order that he might be able to vote. He was too busy building and paying his debt, learning English and gradually adopting American customs, to give much time or attention to public affairs. The clearing of woodland, the opening of the prairie, and the transformation of a one-room shack into a frame dwelling, required severe labor and all his energies. Not until the leisure of some degree of success was his did he yield to his natural inclination for politics of the larger sort.¹

The Norwegian of all the Northmen has the strongest liking for the political arena, a result probably of his thorough training at home. The nineteenth century, as has been pointed out previously, was a period of political

¹ Babcock, Scandinavian Element, 140.
awakening and reform in Norway. The most important political body of the century, the Eidsvold assembly of 1814 pledged to Norwegian Independence and Constitutional liberty was well represented by the Bonde or farm element.2

A great number of people, especially the cotters and laborers, did not have suffrage privileges. Property qualifications were required. This being the case and a large number of our early emigrants being recruited from these classes, their interest in politics was not as great as it might have been. The men of Eidsvold had created liberal institutions suited to the most democratic society, but during the great European reaction, 1814-1830, it became evident that the old spirit of class prejudice, desire for special privilege and the antipathy to the common people still prevailed in higher social circles. The officials showed strong bureaucratic tendencies, and continued to rule in the old spirit, even under the new constitution.3

The "Bonde" element in the hard times after 1815, suffering need, paying high taxes, and feeling that he had not derived the advantages that he had anticipated from the constitution launched a strong political protest. Antagonism was also directed against officialdom and the

2 Babcock, Scandinavian Element, 140.
3 K. Gjerset, Norwegian People, 11, 465.
clergy—reform in politics as well as in religion was a part of its purpose. In 1830 a "bonde" leader Jon Neergaard published a book that presented a bonde platform, "An Odelman's Thought on the Present Condition of Norway." It was an attack on the official class and a call to the bonde to employ political means to improve their status. The book pointed to the high taxes and the numerous foreclosures. The book was distributed widely in Norway, and Neergaard agitated for the election of bonder to the Storting. In 1830 they had a paper, the "Statsborgeren," edited by Fedor Selvold, and later by Veggeland. In the election of 1833 the bonder outnumbered the official class in the national parliament. With Neergaard and Ole Gabriel Ueland as bonde leaders, the first great reform bill was past—the local self-government act of 1837. Ueland, himself a Haugean, rose to great prominence; and in the long struggle of the "bonder" he was a consistent spokesman and leader of his class, advocating economy, reduction of taxes, trial by jury and the democratic reforms in state and church. The movement gained great force and ultimately in the middle eighties brought about the triumph of the principles of responsible ministries and real parliamentary government. Thus most of the immigrants had breathed the air of struggle for and had the appreciation of self-government.4

4 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 164-165.
"This fact coupled with a native independence and a sense of democracy bred by traditions and surroundings, and the Scandinavian adaptability, may help to explain the readiness with which, once the barriers of language had been overcome, they adjusted themselves to and participated in self-government under American institutions."

The author in interviews with several prominent politicians was told that the older Norwegian settlements were more conservative whereas the more recent settlements tend to be more liberal which is due largely to the fact that at the period of latter migration the political questions in Norway and the assertion of the lower classes was much more alive and a part of the people. Election returns bear this out. The more recent settlements of Minnesota and Dakota are far more liberal than the first settlements of Wisconsin.

The Norwegians did not, however, take much part in politics, the first few years. Lovenskjold in his report says that due to their "general ignorance" they are termed "Norwegian Indians" by the natives.

Rader in his account was convinced that the Norwegian Indians knew little of American politics and were confused at issues and the prey of local politicians.

5 Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 19.
6 Ibid., 257.
The term Democrat had a lively appeal, the vote getters identified the party with true Democracy to gain Norwegian support for delegates to the constitutional convention of 1846. The Whigs or loco-foco's went into Norwegian territory and it ended up in the Democrats offering in certain places to give one hundred dollars towards the erection of a certain Norwegian Lutheran church, the Whig candidate in this one instance had offered two hundred dollars. The Whig succeeded in getting the Norwegian vote. 7

The Norwegians, however, were opposed to the first Constitution and peculiarly this opposition centered upon the most democratic provisions of the constitution, the "Women's Law" allowing married women to hold separate property, the "Money Law" to outlaw paper money, and exempt from debt twenty-four acres or values up to one thousand dollars. The constitution was too "farfetched" and offended the prejudices and common sense of the people. Copies of it were printed in Norwegian. This was the Norwegin's first stand in politics. 8

If opposition to this constitution was due to conviction and not to the pressure and influence of the loco-foco's it is an interesting example of the conservatism

8 Ibid., 62.
of the immigrant group. The force of the frontier suggests that the first constructive movements in frontier states as conservative, in their adherence to frontier democracy as opposed to the tendencies in eastern innovations.9

To the next constitutional convention in 1847 went a Norwegian representative, the first in the state, James O. Reymert of Luskego settlement as a representative of Racine County. He served later in the assembly from Racine and then in 1857 from Milwaukee County. He was a candidate for presidential elector on the Free Soil ticket in 1840. He was well-educated and the editor of the first Norwegian newspaper in America, "Nordlyset," which appeared in 1847 as a Free Soil organ. This paper served as a stepping stone to get him elected.10

Reymert arrived in New York in 1842 at the age of twenty-one. His knowledge of language served him to an excellent purpose. He became a medium of communication for all classes. He taught school for a while, receiving ten dollars a month and "boarded around." He was paid in worthless "Scrip" and all he ever realized out of his three months teaching job was seven dollars and a half. He settled down on a farm in Racine County.

9 Still, "Norwegian Americans and Wisconsin Politics in the Forties, VIII, 62.
10 K. Langeland, Normandene, 95, 96.
He is known as the author of the article on suffrage in the Wisconsin Constitution, and with him originated the important clause in that instrument that "No distinction shall ever be made by law between resident aliens and citizens in reference to the possession, enjoyment, or descent of property." The importance of this provision was appreciated by thousands of foreign emigrants who found themselves thereby secure versus an escheat to the state in case of death.

The Common Schools, right of married women, homestead exemption, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, the abolition of the usury law and of capital punishment were objects of his special attention. In the convention Reyment was active as he was in later legislatures in furthering the interests of immigrant groups. Although not active in debate he advocated a six months' residence as a qualification for voting, saying "as to foreigners the sooner they were entitled to vote, the better citizens they would make." The Norwegians supported the second constitution. 11

E. H. Innes was an early attorney of Pierce County and served one term in the state senate. In those early days, if a person wished to have his name changed he must apply to the legislature. Such an application was before the

senate on behalf of some Norwegians. Objection was made that there was too much time taken up by such private bills. But Innes interposed with the remark, "The good book says that the leopard cannot change his spots nor the Ethiopian his skin, but it nowhere says that a Norwegian cannot change his name." The bill passed.12

The press was the medium through which a great deal of influence was asserted on the Norwegians. The scarcity of the printed word on the frontier increased its effectiveness. To the Scandinavian the foreign language press served to quench in part the thirst for something to read and of these "Emigranten" is probably the most representative.13

As before mentioned the only paper previous to "Emigranten" which was established in 1849 as "Demokraten" was Nordlyset. The last mentioned assumed free soil garb and proved very popular among the land hungry Norwegians but hard times and financial difficulties forced it to be abandoned. The democrats also had many adherents among the Norwegians and they worked against the paper.14

Evans Hegge who, had helped finance the enterprise and Reyment sold the paper to Knud Langeland. As an editor Langeland was excellent as he was well versed in political

14 Carl Hansen, "Fressen til borgerkrigens Slutning," in Norsk-Amerikanernes Fest Skrif (Decorah, Iowa, 1914), 93.
affairs and he defended himself and his party ably against his Whig rival "De Norskes Ven" (The Norwegians Friend) which was printed at the same time in Madison. Langeland's "Demokrater" was first published at Racine and later moved to Madison. Unfortunately Langeland showed a political flightiness and tactlessness that eventually proved to be his downfall. The paper lasted a little over a year.

In the same manner "De Norskes Ven" edited by Ole Tugerson lasted only about half a year. It exemplified a vain effort to establish a Whig paper among the Norwegians. 15

1851 was a banner year for the Norwegian-American press. Four Norwegian papers were established and preparations were made for a fifth. Two religious papers and three secular; "Den Norskes Ven" which has already been mentioned; "Scandinavia" was established in New York as a republican paper the "Frihedsbanneret" (Freedoms Banner) in Chicago also a republican paper. "Frihedsbanneret" was first edited by John Auritsen who was a "red republican", very radical, "Skandinaven" according to an editorial in "Emigrantens" was also considered a radical paper. 16

Dr. Kendric Babcock says that "in the good old days" before and during the period of the Civil War "to find a Scandinavian voter in the Northwest was to find a Republican."

15 Hansen, Festschrift, 13.
16 Ibid., 14.
The explanation for this statement can be found in the nature of the emigrants themselves. They came with an endowment of natural independence, and innate respect for government, a deep sense of justice and the question of slavery aroused their interest and their horror. There were no slaves in Norway, nor had there been such a thing for hundreds of years. It was this one thing therefore, that kept the stream of migration flowing into the Northwest rather than into the south and southwest. That this point was of great significance is further shown by the fact that the clergy of Norway and officials opposed to emigration used this issue to keep the people from going to America. 17

Cle Rynning in his America book discussed the problem which was to color the political thinking of Norwegian for generations. He says twenty-three years before the outbreak of the war:

"An ugly contrast to this freedom and equality which justly constitute the pride of the Americas is the infamous slave traffic, which is tolerated and still flourishes, in the southern states. Here is found a race of black people, with woolly hair on their heads, who are called negroes, and who are brought here from Africa, which is their native country; these poor beings are bought and sold just as other property, and are driven to work with a whip or scourged like horses or oxen. If a master whips his slave to death, or shoots him dead in a rage, he is not looked upon as

a murderer. The children born of a negro
are slaves from birth, even if their father
is a white man. The slave trade is still per-
mitted in Missouri, but it is strictly for-
bidden in Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin ter-
ritory. The northern states try at every
congress to get slave trade abolished in
the southern states; but as the latter always
oppose their efforts, and appeal to their
right to settle their internal affairs them-
selves there will in all likelihood come
either a separation between the northern
and southern states, or else bloody civil
disputes." 18

The Rynning book was more widely read than any other
in Norway so the ideas of slavery were imprinted on the
mind of the Norwegian before he came to this country. It
foreshadows the position that the Norwegian immigrants were
to take on the issues involved in the slavery controversy
and their affiliation with the Republican party that lasted
long after the Civil War. As the author was told by a
politician who had covered all sections of Wisconsin,
"The Norwegian cannot be appealed to through the emotions
as the Irish, he can be appealed to only through justice,
is it right—if he feels that a cause is just and right
he will support it." This was as true in the slavery
controversy as it is today. It was first a moral, then a
political conviction, not the sentiment of individuals,
but the well-reasoned opinion of the whole community. The

18 Ole, Rynning, Sendfærdig Beretning om Amerika til
Colysning of nyta for Bønde og Kenigmand (Madison,
republican party was represented as the party of high "moral ideals" as they liked to call it long after it ceased to merit that noble description. From the earliest adventure in politics until 1865 the Norwegians were solidly republican. Being bound together on this great question, then so dominant, they naturally maintained unity on other political questions as well as on slavery; and once they had their ideas fixed, the Norwegians were slow to change. New people coming to the older settlements were soon indoctrinated with anti-slavery sentiment. Thus the Norwegians became so closely affiliated with the republican party. 19

"The Norwegian immigrants were unaccustomed to a purely secular press; they preferred to have their politics through religious sources." Langeland says that many of them considered it a sin to read a political newspaper. 20 After the failure of "Nordlyset," "Demokraten," and "Den Norskes Ven" propaganda was spread in the form of speeches of anti-slavery leaders of Chase, Seward, Hale, and Giddings, translated, of course into Norwegian and printed with non-political matter in "Haanedstidende," a paper which Langeland undertook together with four clergymen, Clausen, Blegen, Norwegian Migration, 100; Babcock, Scandinavian Element, 157-158; Babcock, "Scandinavian Element in America," American Historical Review, XVI (January, 1911), 308.

19 Langeland, Normandene i Amerika, 96. "Den første indvandrebefolkning bestod af folk fra landsbyerne, som for en stor del ikke var vant til at læse andre end Deres Religionsbøger. Og mange af dem ansåd det end og før en Synd at læse politiske Blad."
Freuss, Stub, and Katlestad in 1851.  This pastoral group, however, decided that its paper should be clear of all political taint and should be conducted as a strictly religious magazine. In order that the same ministerial element might have a political voice, the Scandinavian Press Association was established which sponsored "Emigraten." The political views as brought forth in an editorial were Democratic.

"In regard to politics, our views and principles are Democratic--Such being our views, we declared ourselves democrats knowing that the majority of our people coincide with us in our strong prediction in those principles. ... We do not pledge ourselves to follow it through thick and thin. ... In as far as the Democratic party will permit itself to be guided by true Democratic principles, and adopt the corresponding practice of abiding by them, the party has our hearty cooperation, but as soon as it betrays those principles, we stop short and care not a straw for any of the too common party denunciations that may be hurled against us." 23

"Emigraten" requested Congress to enact a law immediately permitting every person in need of land to be given a quarter section, not yet taken, and to forbid other persons who did not need the land to annex it. "No Public lands should be open to Speculators" was one of their mottos. 24

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21 Langeland, Normendene i Amerika, 98.
23 Ibid., 97.
24 Ibid., 98.
As the election of 1852 approached the readers of "Emigraten" and the protestant Scandinavians, one and the same body, were urged to keep religious comments out of a political newspaper. This aroused some antagonism as the "Southern Standard" retorted that

"We do not suggest that Christians should belittle politics; they are as much interested and concerned as are any of others and their influence is great for they are 'The salt of the earth.' God-fearing pastors have a right to their political views; they have the privilege to express themselves at the proper time and place without being molested. But it is hoped that they have enough sense not to defame the pulpit by speaking of politics in their sermons; politics have no place in the church and its services."25

"The dangers of a political Christian were listed September 3rd, 1852 in Emigraten: (1) Such an ardent campaign as the coming one will make them slight their religious duties in favor of the political. Many will forget their prayer sessions; they will fail to read their Bibles; political interests will disturb them while in church and will even keep some from attending at all. Whosoever is elected president, let the individual make sure that he continues to be a consistent, firm and praying Christian. (2) The second danger lies in the fact that a Christian may lose his self control; circumstances will arise that will make him disregard his better judgment and he will say or do things that will mar his religion record and bring criticism upon the church to which he belongs. (3) There will be temptation to gamble. So many even Christians make bets or wagers on the outcome of the election. Such minor beginnings can have very bad results. The fact that

some states consider betting a crime and others even throw out the oath, having made a wager shows the anti-Christian nature of such practice. (4) In every campaign there is much slandering and misrepresentation. Each party discredits the other. (5) There will be a great temptation to use money illegally. Christians should avoid such frauds as vote buying. There is a middle of the road position one must take, the firm Christian attitude of a Knight of Right and Justice. We are less concerned about the outcome of the election and more about the tactics of the election." 26

Thus the influence of the pastors is seen on the papers. They came out clearly for Franklin Pierce in the election of 1852. As a result of their agitation a few voted for Pierce in 1852, as had a few in 1848 for Cass but by 1856 almost to a man the Norwegians were Republican. 27

Elias Stangeland tried to start a Norwegian Democratic paper in 1856 "Den Norske Amerikener" in support of James Buchanan in the election of 1852.

The Civil War made the Norwegians even more steadfast as Republicans. For the purpose of the study of Norwegian votes the author has selected typical Norwegian Townships, Bergen, Coon, Christiania, Hamburg and Harmony in Vernon County; Preston, Pigeon, Unity, Albion and Summer of Trempealeau County; and Albion, Christiania, Deerfield, Primrose, Springdale, Blue Mound and Deerfield of Dane County and watched them

27 Ibid., 110; Langeland, Normandene Amerika, 110.
through this entire period. The support of Lincoln was not nearly as strong in 1860 as in 1864 throughout, and in the Towns of Coon and Harmony (Vernon County) only one democratic vote was recorded in each, while in Christiania the vote was 102 for Lincoln and seven for McClellan. 28

It was not until new questions relating to tariff, currency, and labor arose that the Norwegians began to desert the republican ranks. Only four times have they deserted in very large numbers, usually returning to their old party. The first break was in connection with the greenback movement which began with the depression following the panic of 1873. The republicans still maintained their majority in Norwegian districts but a few more deserted. 29

Rasmus B. Anderson, who was known as the "scholar in politics" although an ardent supporter of Lincoln grew tired of the constant waving of the bloody flag in every campaign. He calls himself Republican but he voted for Tilden in 1876, Hancock in 1880, for Cleveland in 1884 and again in 1892. During that period he was a Democrat and after that he became a conservative again.

The Republicans in 1877 in order to get Norwegian votes put up Warner, who was of Scandinavian descent for Secretary of State. He was supported by some of the Scandinavians

29 Babcock, Scandinavian Element, 163.
but others thought that he was not representative enough and wanted John A. Johnson.30

Rasmus Anderson, in the 1870's, urged the younger Norwegian-Americans to form themselves into a sort of mutual admiration society and do everything possible to raise one another before the people and to support the present leaders of the Norwegians of their country.31

The second defection from the republican ranks occurred after the widespread development of agrarian discontent in the late eighties. A few here and there joined the Populist, People's and Farmers' Alliance party.

In 1890 quite a number of Norwegians deserted the republican ranks. The controversy was the "Bennett Law," the chief issue of the gubernatorial election of 1890. The Wisconsin legislature passed an act, approved April 18, 1889, concerning the education and employment of children. The fifth section of this act was known as the Bennett Law. It provided that:

"No school shall be regarded as a school under this act unless there shall be taught therein as a part of the elementary education of the children, reading, writing, arithmetic, and United States history, in the English language."32

30 Mr. Bishop to R. B. Anderson, August 24, 1875; E. D. Coe to R. B. Anderson, August 21, 1875. All letters cited in this chapter are to be found in the R. B. Anderson collection in the library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
31 L. R. Larson to R. B. Anderson, March 9, 1877.
32 Joseph Schafer, Four Wisconsin Counties, Prairie and Forest (Wisconsin Demesday Book General Studies II) (Madison, 1927), 130; Section 5, Laws of Wisconsin 1889, Ch. 519; Babcock, Scandinavian Element, 166.
The last four words of the Bennett Law, "in the English language," stirred up a bitter political fight in Wisconsin as it made the Catholics, German Lutherans, and some Norwegian Lutherans fearful of their right to educate their children in their parochial schools. The author, however, in checking the votes of typical Norwegian townships in Dane, Vernon, Trempealeau, and Jackson Counties found that more of them still maintained Republican majorities, although votes in many instances were more varied. The town of Hamburg for example registered 109 votes for Peck and only 95 for Hoard but at the same time Cleveland received 102 to Harrison's 136. 33 This and two more towns in Trempealeau County, Pigeon and Unity show a small majority for Peck. The author would say that the influence of the Norwegians however has been overexaggerated. The Lutheran Church did take a stand against the Bennett Law and in some Norwegian localities it seems to have affected voting but in most cases the change is negligible. 34

Another objectionable feature in the law was a provision that required children between the ages of seven and fourteen to attend some public or private day school so many days

33 Joseph Schafer, Four Wisconsin Counties (Domesday Book) II, 130; Section 5, Jews of Wisconsin, 1889, Ch. 519; Babcock, Scandinavian Element in the United States, 166.
34 Wisconsin Blue Book (1891).
a year in the city, town or district, in which they happened to reside. This was a stab at the parochial school as the Catholics, and German Lutherans maintained parochial schools in which religion and secular instructions were given. The children do not attend public schools but the children from several districts attend one parochial school. The author feels that the Norwegians did not object to this clause either because they nearly always had two separate terms, one for the Norwegian and then the regular English term. The objection, that the Norwegians naturally would have had was the fear that they might not be permitted to have their own parochial schools for a short session every year, in which Norwegian and religion were taught. The author, representing one of the most integrated Norwegian communities in America, has never been able to find one single person who has objected to the American schools, speaking particularly of the older settlers, most of them born in Norway, but on the other hand they do not want the Norwegian language to die and are also anxious supporters of the Norwegian parochial school.

Governor Hoard was defeated but not by the strength of the Norwegian votes going to the Democratic party.

35 Anderson, Autobiography (Madison, Wisconsin), 596.
36 Ibid., 597; authors own knowledge through interviews with old settlers.
In the presidential election of 1890 Harrison had the majority in all Norwegian localities. The Norwegian townships especially in Dane County showed a Republican increase although the Prohibition Party gained many converts. 37

Rasmus B. Anderson had been at this time under Cleveland's administration minister to Denmark. In 1888 with the election of Harrison he of course lost his position. The Democratic Scandinavians pushed Anderson for Vice-Presidential Candidate with Cleveland in 1892. Rasmus Anderson at that time was the foremost Scandinavian in America due to his political, literary, diplomatic and professional career. It was felt that the Democrats needed to be strengthened in the Northwest and Anderson would be the man to unite the Scandinavians and draw their vote. 38

P. O. Stromme, editor of the Norden, urged the Scandinavians to support Anderson for Vice-president in an article in "Norden", June 6, 1891. The Norden was a democratic paper. Many encouraging letters were sent to Anderson. Anderson had many requests to speak in Norwegian for Cleveland's cause in 1892. 39

37 Blue Book, 1891; Letter J. A. Johnson November 7, 1886 to R. B. Anderson, Denmark.
38 William S. Tupper, "R. B. Anderson for Vice President," (May 22, 1891) (copy of editorial sent to democratic papers found in R. B. Anderson collection of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin).
39 Paul Steensland to R. B. Anderson, June 22, 1891; Letter of C. J. Neel to R. B. Anderson, August 19, 1892; Letter of E. B. Cable, Western Campaign Commander to R. B. Anderson, September 13, 1892.
The most influential newspaper in the latter period especially from the political standpoint was the "Skandinaven" which was established in Chicago in 1866 and still continues. It had its origin in the low church people who opposed the state church. John Anderson and Knud Langeland were the first editors. This paper had a wide circulation in Wisconsin and exercised considerable influence over its readers. One of its mottos previous to the election of 1900 was that "True Republicanism stands for True Americanism at home and abroad." It pointed out that good times would continue with Republican leadership and elaborated on the virtue of McKinley and Roosevelt. That the Norwegians agreed with their policies was clear in the election returns. Theodore Roosevelt was a popular-hero among the Norwegians due to his democratic tendencies. A tinge of the Civil War still hangs on, as is shown in an editorial criticizing Bryan for his attack on the Republican party for not allowing the Philippines to vote when "his own party barred the negro in the South."40

La Follette had appeared on the horizon of Wisconsin and was receiving the wholehearted support of the Scandinavians. La Follette was born and reared in Dane

40 Editorial in Skandinaven, July 25, 1900 (Quoted by Agnes I. Larson, Editorial Policy of "Skandinaven") Studies and Records (1934), VIII, 121 ff.
County. He got his political start here by gaining support of the farmers, a great number of which were Norwegians as Dane County has more Norwegians than any other county in Wisconsin. He learned to speak and understand the language, a thing not uncommon among "aliens" living in and amongst Norwegians. In Vernon County in 1902, he carried 173 out of 182 votes in the town of Joon, 118 out of 132 in Hamburg, 219 out of 233 in Christiania; likewise in 1904 in the town of Joon, La Follette received 296 votes and Peck 13, Christiania La Follette 283 to 20 for Peck, and Hamburg 188 to 25 in La Follette's favor. But in that same 1904 election those same townships while giving a strong majority to Republicans in the State Senatorial nominee did not follow out in the congressional vote due to the fact that the candidate did not suit them Christiania voted 153 Democrat to 146 Republican and Joon 127 to 176. This shows that they will desert the rank and file of the Republican party when they are dissatisfied. 41

The "standpatters" carried scarcely a single district in which the Norwegians were numerous enough to exert a decisive influence upon a contest between the parties or within party lines. The Scandinavian counties all supported La Follette. 42

41 Blue Book (1903), (1905).
That Norwegians were still interested in the politics of the fatherland was demonstrated in 1905. The Norwegian Storting unanimously declared the union with Sweden dissolved and at the same time invested the cabinet of Norway with regent authority to insure the conduct of the government during the crisis and referred a special referendum to the people on August 13th and the move was approved. Norwegians in the United States began immediately urging the recognition of Norway. A petition was circulated and sent to Oyster Bay. Senator Dolliver of Iowa called on President Roosevelt to encourage the recognition of Norway. On October 27, 1905 Sweden recognized Norway and on October 30th the United States followed. The waiting on Roosevelt's part was a wise move as otherwise although getting the praise of the Norwegians he would have entailed the wrath of the Swedes—by caution both were satisfied.43

In the election of 1912 Wilson and Roosevelt polled about the same number of Norwegian votes, Taft having the majority in each case.44 In 1916 Wilson had about the same following but the Republican vote had increased. Harding had an overwhelming majority in 1920 as did Blaine in the state gubernatorial election.

44 Blue Book (1913), (1917), (1921).
From 1922 on the battle in Wisconsin was more or less in the Republican party, the progressive element having the majority in Norwegian centers. The 1928 election is interesting. Schmedeman and Kohler—the vote being the closest in History in the Norwegian townships elected. A great number went into the Democratic fold. In 1930 La Follette carried them almost to a man. Then again in the 1932 presidential election and gubernatorial election, these same townships went democratic, the town of Coon in Vernon County in 1930 cast three Democratic votes for governor case in 1932, 261 against fifty-nine Republican ones. The same selection prevailed in the majority of Norwegian settlements. This merely shows that they will fluctuate from the progressive or republican ranks. After the formation of the progressive party, they stand solidly behind it in state politics and tend to support the most progressive candidate in national politics.

Prominent politicians of Norwegian birth or descent in Wisconsin are men like James D. Reymert, who has already been mentioned as a member of the second constitutional convention and later the assembly in 1847 from Racine and 1857 from Milwaukee County. The Norwegians were rather slow into

45 *Blue Book* (1931), 663, 510.
getting into politics. In 1868 there were only two Norwegians in the Wisconsin Legislature; in 1869, three; in 1871, 4. Since that time the number has increased.

One of the members of 1868 was Knut Nelson born in Voss, Berger, February, 1843. He came to America and settled in Wisconsin in 1849. A member of the state legislature in 1868 and 1869, he, however, moved to Alexandria, Minnesota in 1871 to become congressman, governor and senator from that state.

Norwegian born, James O. Davidson rose to prominence in Wisconsin. An immigrant in 1872, he settled in Jackson County and was elected to the Wisconsin legislature of 1893, 1895, and 1897; twice chosen State Treasurer; elected Lieutenant Governor with Robert M. La Follette and upon the election of the latter to the United States Senate he succeeded him as governor in January, 1906. He served two terms.

Niels P. Haugen was a Wisconsin representative in Congress from 1887 to 1895.

Rasmus B. Anderson who has before been mentioned represented the United States at the Danish Court from 1835 to 1869, being at that time a democrat.

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46 Blue Book (1895), 136ff.
47 Editorial in Yor Tid, (August, 1905), 535.
49 Who's Who in America (1914-15).
CHAPTER VI  

NORWEGIAN LUTHERANISM IN WISCONSIN

Closely interwoven in the life patterns of the Norwegian element was the Lutheran church. It was essentially a part of them and a study of the early Norwegian element without understanding and appreciating the religious influence would be worthless.

The Norwegian immigrants came to America with a rich heritage of doctrinal controversy, which sprang up in the soil of Norway, and when transplanted on the prairies of the Mississippi Valley they increased their growth rather than being stunted. In Norway they were held together by the strong bonds of the state church. There existed under the cover of one church the orthodox state church (high church), the pietistic or laymen's movement (low church);
and finally "grundt vigian" between the two.\footnote{1}

Elements which have a shaping influence in early rationalism in the Norwegian Lutheran church are the geography, social and civil revolutions, religious reforms, fraternalism, a combination of religious and social reform groups, and finally emigration.

Parallel with the political upheaval of the nineteenth century was a religious revival which swept over all of Norway. There had been a period of orthodoxy which had bred a deep respect for doctrine and the things that were held sacred and which also put the stamp of churchliness upon the solid and unchanging people of remote rural districts.\footnote{2}

It was intellectual orthodoxy and not the kind that had power to change men's hearts. All this dead formalism met had its nemesis in the aggressive and moralistic pietistic revival.

Early pietists were Thomas Von Weston who with six fellow pastors distributed Bibles, tracts, pastels, and hymn books among the people. Another important event of the pietistic period was the introduction of the rite of Confirmation into Norway. The ordinance of January 13, 1736 pro-

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vided that young communicants should formally renew their baptismal vow before the first communion, after being catechized in church in the presence of the congregation to prove that they had mastered the Christian fundamentals. In order to pass this test the Confirmands had to have a memorized knowledge of the five parts of Luther's small catechism with appended tables of duties and prayers.

Pontoppidan's Explanation of Luther's Catechism called "Sandhed til Gudfroygtighed" the next book for all Confirmands. Stories from the Bible called "Bible History" were memorized or retold, and portions of the Bible and New Testament were read. To qualify children for this rigid examination a compulsory education law was passed, January 23, 1739. This was a valuable training and was taken seriously as it was a life long boon to have "stood first" on the "church floor." This same process except for a few minor changes is followed by the Norwegian Lutheran Church today. The author memorized the same books, went through the same ritual in Wisconsin in 1928 as the Norwegian boy or girl did in 1739.

The Conventicle Act forbidding laymen to preach was passed in 1741.

3 K. Gjerset, History of the Norwegian People, II, 334.
4 Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 6.
In the 1770's and 1780's rationalism gained ascendancy at University of Copenhagen. As Norway had no University at this time and her pastors were trained at Copenhagen they were affected. It was a movement to reform the clergy, to make them ready serve as teachers to the pupils. The new pastors really took a great interest in the enlightenment and education of the people. The Bishops, however, were still orthodox and their spiritual life not at all what it should have been.5

Rationalism did not gain much headway in Norway among the lay people due to reverence for church and "the word" from days of orthodoxy, ability of common people to read devotional literature, hostility of bishops, placidity of the people, difficulty of travel, few rationalistic pastors, and lack of understanding and appreciation of the rationalistic tenets.6

The clergy of Norway owed their appointment to the Danish Crown and were first of all state officials with no sympathetic contact with the people.

Hans Lilson Næsje felt that the clergy were not leading men to God and he did not let the fact that he was unordained and uneducated stop him. He went out as did

5 Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 7.
6 Ibid., 9.
St. Francis of Assissi to preach the word of God "in the full conviction of his earnest soul." For eight years he carried on in spite of difficulties beginning in 1756 he walked ten thousand miles and preached four times a day. His was a simple message of sin and grace. The whole of Norway was awakened. Many laymen began to preach.⁷

Hauge denounced wickedness. Especially strong was his denunciation of the clergy who were not doing their full duty. It is important to remember, however, that Hauge never broke from the state church but he advised his followers to be loyal to it.

Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession requires that no one should publicly teach in the church of administer the sacraments unless he be regularly called. The clergy held that Hauge had violated this act. He was arrested in 1804 and kept in jail as has been mentioned before until 1814.

There was a sharp cleavage in Norway between the laity and the clergy. The city population including the clergy was strongly mixed with foreign element. They assimilated the Danish language and culture while the rural population spoke their own tongue and adhered to their old customs. The union with Denmark fostered a distant aristocratic spirit among the cultured classes.⁸

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⁷ Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 10 ff.
⁸ Ibid., 14, 15.
As has been mentioned in the previous chapter the bonder did not assume political leadership until 1845. Gabriel Ueland of Stavanger a leader of that movement was a Haugean. With the assumption of a national tinge Haugeanism and the clergy came into open conflict.

At the same period Grundtvigionism awakened in Denmark. It was an academic awakening with emphasis on means of grace, an overemphasis on apostolic creed and baptismal creed. It taught a conversion after death. It was a religious awakening, different from Hauge's, yet it appealed to Haugeans. ⁹

In America there was no government force to hold together these divergent forces. Among the early immigrants were friends of Hauge. They were free to try out anything that they wanted and consequently went to extremes in lay preaching. They met in cabins, singing, praying, reading a sermon or listening to a lay preacher. One of the most prominent of these was Elling Eielsen. He was born in Voss in 1804 and came to America in 1839, settling in Fox River. In Fox River settlement were to be found Haugeans, Quakers, Mormons, and Methodists. ¹⁰

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⁹ Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 18.
¹⁰ J. L. Nève, Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America (Burlington, Iowa, 1913), 338; Rohne, American Lutheranism, 38.
Everyday life in the country in Norway was quiet and somber except what Professor Robine calls "social good times" at weddings, celebrations of childbirth, and funerals which often consisted of drinking, fist fights, and general hilariousness. During Eielson's youth the pastors duty had ended with his sermons and special duties and they did not try to uplift the morals of the people. They lived apart and kept entirely apart from the people and even their word from the pulpit went over the heads of the people. With Eielssen the situation was quite different. No matter where he spoke or what the local conditions were he would invariably accuse the people of living "I dans of drik of sus of dus" (in dance and drunkeness, riot and revel.)"

"Eielson traveled from place to place and had a very wide influence. Shortly after coming to Fox River he walked to New York City for Pontoppidan's "Sandhed til Gudfrigetighed" (Truth unto Godliness). This was the first Norwegian book printed in America (1842).

Settlers increased and Jefferson Prairie and Muskego were established. Heg, Bakke and Johannson all had Haugean tendencies. Evan Heg acted as preacher at Muskego and services were held in his barn. But these people were a con-

11 Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 41.
tress to the low church, anti-clerical Fox River settlers. With the more conservative stood the mass of immigrants decidedly friendly toward pastors and their work. This was exemplified at Muskego and even to a further degree at Koskonong. The people had different religious backgrounds in Norway. Against the anti-clerical Stevangerings of Fox River stand the Numedalians, Vossings and Telemarkenings, all having brought a certain respect for the clergy.12

Claus Lauritz Clausen came to Muskego in 1843. He came as a teacher but the colony really needed a preacher. Clausen sought and received ordination from Reverend Krause October 2, 1849. Eielsen objected to Clausen being ordained yet he became ordained himself October 15, 1843 as a licensed lay preacher. Dietrichson discusses Clausen's ordination and says even though he was not ordained by a bishop his ordination in immigrant America was proper.13

The first seeds of dissension were sown between lay preachers Eielsen and the lay preachers of Muskego before any ordained pastors came. The people of Muskego preferred the constructive work of Eielsen to that of Clausen.14

The Norwegian settlers were religious minded and when a few of them got together their first thoughts were of a

12 Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 42.
13 Dietrichson, Reise, 30.
14 Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 49.
church and a pastor. The settlers of Rock Prairie, Jefferson Prairie, Rock River and Hamilton signed a letter on February, 1844 which was sent to Bishop Sorenson at Christiania asking for a pastor, promising $300 a year, offerings and 50 acres of land.

J. W. Dietrichson was sent and on his arrival he chose for his headquarters Koskemong, he served five separate settlements. Dietrichson was the first representative of the State Church on American soil. Clausen and Dietrichson were friends from the beginning but Eielsen the very low church representative disliked Dietrichson as much as the latter despised him. Eielsen's ordination was a convenient question on which to quarrel. Dietrichson set out to prove that Eielsen's call was irregular. Dietrichson asserted that Eielsen had stolen names or gotten them under false pretenses. Dietrichson, however, cited only one witness to this and he even put a question mark after that one's name, so he could not have been very sure of his name and consequently could not have known him very long. He had only been in America from August, 1844 to May, 1845. If Dietrichson's assertions are true it seems as though he should have been able to cite more than one witness, as the other signers of the case evidently regarded Eielsen as their called pastor and accepted his services as such. Dietrichson was furthermore too anxious to find substantiation for accusations brought against Eielsen by himself and to which influential
Haugeans had taken exception. The charge against Eielsen's character were petty and showed only Dietrichson's dislike for Eielsen. Eielsen had shown both to Dietrichson and to Clausen his certificate of ordination.15

These accusations did not stop Eielsen, he established a congregation and his followers were known as "Ellingdianerer". This was the first break in the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, and had Dietrichson and Eielsen tried to be friends it may never have occurred.16

Dietrichson realized that he would have to force the people to declare themselves either for or against the Norwegian Lutheran Church and its order. He devised a plan by which there were four conditions of membership. He presented the following to his members. (1) Do you desire to become a member of the Norwegian Lutheran congregation at this place? (2) Will you to that end subject yourself to the church order that the ritual of the church of Norway prescribes? (3) Will you promise that you shall not call or accept any other minister and pastor than such as can clearly establish according to the Norwegian Lutheran Church order that he is a regularly called and a rightly consecrated pastor? and will you show the pastor then called by you and the congregation to spiritual rulership the attention and

15 Dietrichson, Reise, 31ff; Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 88.
16 Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 69; Neve, Brief History, 389.
obedience that a member of a congregation owes his pastor in all things that he requires and does according to the ritual of the church of Norway? (4) Will you by signing your name or by permitting it to be signed, here make acknowledgement that you have joined the congregation with the above named conditions?  

Dietrichson wanted by the means of such a questionnaire for membership to make sure that he could press unbroken on America soil the ritual and teachings of the church of Norway. He was only twenty-nine years old at the time.

The pastor was given forty acres of land, a parsonage, three hundred dollars a year and those requiring ministerial services such as marriages, funerals, confirmation and baptism gave the pastor what they deemed proper. The offerings of the three major church festivities, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost were to be given to the pastor. The last two provisions are still the same, the pastors are now usually given a large parsonage but no farm.  

Dietrichson went back to Norway in May, 1845.

Elling Eielsen in the meantime "possessing an iron will" and a constitution insensible to hardships, set out on foot at four o'clock in the morning with his kit, axe

17 Dietrichson, Reise, 45ff.
18 Rohn, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 73; Dietrichson, Reise, 50.
and camping utensils and traveled from settlement to settlement. He deemed it sufficient to gather his followers without bothering about such claptrap as organization. Eielsen made two converts, Paul Anderson and Cle Anderson.19

The need of organization was soon felt. A meeting was held at Jefferson Prairie, Rock County, Wisconsin, April 13 and 14th, 1846 and the "Evangelical Lutheran Church of America" was organized. The church was opposed to ceremonies. Paul Anderson and Cle Anderson were ordained ministers. Both had attended American school and although they worked harmoniously with Eielsen for a while they held the idea that Eielsen was dangerous. The old constitution drawn up by Eielsen, Anderson pointed out was opposed to God's Word, aristocratic and tyrannical.20

Eielsen although an exponent of Haugeanism in America lost much of his masters mild forgiving way, for Eielsen was stern and severe. In his veneration of the Scriptures as the inspired word of God he yielded not one part or tithe to his bitterest assailants. It was a typical Lutheran battle fought in America, each party contending for what it conceived to be Lutheranism and therefore historic Christianity.21

19 Theodore Egen, "Overnight over den Norske-Lutherske Kirkes Historie i Amerika" in Norsk-Amerikernes Festskrift; (Decorah, 1914), 219; Röhne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 74.
20 Ibid., 211.
21 George Stephenson, "Church History", in Studies and Records (1927), II, 194ff.
The second division in the church occurred between Eielsen and his co-workers at Middleport, La Salle County, Illinois, September 29th, 1848. An amendment was past that the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" unite with the "Franchise Evangelical Lutheran Synod of New York." Some joined Eielsen and the old constitution and others sided with Andrewson and Anderson. The Franchise Synod, however, emphasized Americanization, opposed slavery, had no regard for strict confession, utilized the Lord's Supper, baptism and absolution. Anderson and Andrewson later divorced themselves from the Franchise Synod and joined the Northern Illinois Synod and formed a Scandinavian conference which lasted until 1860 when the "Scandinavian Augustana Synod" was formed. A meeting was held at Andrewson's church at Jefferson Prairie. The two nationalities worked in perfect unity but as membership increased, the Norwegians asked permission to make a synod of their own, to which the Swedes willingly gave their consent.

In 1850 F. A. Rasmussen came to America and worked as a parochial school teacher in Eielsen's congregation, first at Neenah, Wisconsin, than at Jefferson Prairie, Fox River and Lisbon, Illinois. The congregation of the last named

22 Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism, 391; Eggen, Festskrift, 212.

23 Neve, Brief History, 391.
place called him as minister in 1852. He was ordained in 1854 and helped Eielsen for two years, Eielsen had no organizing talent and placed no value on form and order. Rasmussen had a clearer view and pointed out many things in the old constitution that needed improvement. This offended Eielsen who looked with suspicion on the young assistant. Their relationships were broken after a strong meeting at Primrose, Wisconsin in 1856. Rasmussen and his friends left Eielsen. In 1862 Rasmussen joined the Norwegian Synod. For the second time Eielsen stood alone and for the third time the church was divided. Eielsen had congregations in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota and no one to help him.  

The discontent with the old constitution continued. In 1874 it was decided that the ministers should meet in Minneapolis and decide the matter. An amendment was proposed but Eielsen objected although the amendment was temporarily adopted. The name of the Synod was to be changed to "Hauge's Norsk Evangelisk Lutherske Synode." In the meeting of 1875 Eielsen drew his best friends together at a meeting at Jackson, Minnesota, and organized a new "sanfund" on the basis of old constitution and under the old name. Then when the next meeting of Hauge's Synode came around Eielsen came. The delegates naturally expected an explanation for his behavior. He gave none. He later sent

24 Eggen, Festschrift, 213; Neve, Brief History, 393.
a letter accusing the Synode of high church tendencies and too much formality. The Synode declared the bond with Eielsen broken and we have the fourth split in the Norwegian Lutheran Church. Eielsen died in 1863. His friends continued his work under the old name and constitution. There was considerable peace in the Hauge Synode in the seventies.

In the nineties a controversy arose between N. J. Bergslund, Professor of systematic Theology at Red Wing seminary and Reverend A. S. Meland, a former professor there and now a pastor. Meland accused the professor of false doctrines but the Synode found no heresy in Bergslund's teaching.

The official organ for the Hauge Synode was "Budbaereren" (Messenger) founded as a monthly in 1863 with Reverends C. Hansen and C. A. Bergh editors. A Sunday school paper "Barnevennen" (Children's Friend) was also published. The church college and seminary was located at Red Wing, Minnesota.

The Norwegian Synode was founded in 1853 by a corporation of pastors C. S. Clausen (Long, Prairie, and Rock River), C. S. Freus, A. C. Freus, N. A. Stub, G. F. Dietrichson, N. A. Brandt and J. A. Otterson—all ordained in Norway. From the very beginning this synode represented rigid Lutheranism. It sustained relations with the faithful in the Norwegian

25 Egen, Festskrift, 213; Neve, Brief History, 393.
26 Neve, Brief History, 394; Egen, Festskrift, 227.
27 Neve, Brief History, 395.
State church. The official name is "Synoden for den Norsk-
evangeliske-lutherske kirke i Amerika," but it is shortened
to "Synoden" by which name it is always referred. 28

The Synode made common cause with the German Lutherans
of the Missouri Synod and decided to use its seminary. Lars
Larson was sent there in 1857 as a Norwegian professor.
But when the Civil War broke out and the Missourians
sympathized with the south, the Norwegians opposing secession
and slavery took offense and withdrew from St. Louis. They
opened their own seminary at half-way Creek near La Crosse
with Larson and Schmidt as professors and clever scholars.
In 1862 it was transferred to Decorah, Iowa. 29 A. C. Preus
was head of the Synod from 1853-1862, and was succeeded by
H. A. Preus. In 1872 the Synod took part in the forming
of the Synodical Conference (Missouri and Norwegian Synods)
and belonged until 1883. This was for a long time the
largest Scandinavian body in America. 30

Controversies existed with the Synod Rasmus B. Anderson
went as a delegate to a meeting of the Norwegian Synod in
1868 representing Reverend Otterson's East Koshkonong
Church. The controversy was slavery—the final chapter
of that much discussed issue. They came to the conclusion

28 Eggen, Festschrift, 216.
29 Neve, Brief History, 396; Eggen, Festschrift, 216.
30 Neve, Brief History, 396.
that "slavery is not a sin in itself" but as the Synod had declared at Luther Valley, Rock County, Wisconsin in 1861 "although it is not according to the word of God a sin to own slaves, still slavery is an evil. . . we will work for its abolition." Reverend Cleusen was the leader of the opposition and when the item "slavery is not a sin" was adopted Cleusen, two of his representatives and R. B. Anderson stood up and stated that they severed all connections with the Synod and that the action taken by the Synod was an insult to truth and a lasting disgrace to the Synod, and then they marched out.31

Anderson lists the Synod leaders as A. C. Preus, H. A. Preus, J. A. Utterson, Laur Larsen, and E. J. Luis.32

The most violent controversy within the Synod arouse the question of predestination. It was pointed out that the Missouri Synod was bringing forth Calvinistic doctrines. Schmidt attacked Walther's theory of election which was contained in synodical records of 1877 and 1879, F. A. Schmidt had been sent to St. Louis as a Norwegian professor in 1872. He left St. Louis and returned to Madison. There ensued a ten year fight which divided the Synod into two opposing camps. The Synod as an immediate step left the synodical conference in 1883 to prevent division but

32 Ibid., 102.
the fire had been lighted. A schism occurred ten years later which rent families and congregations in twain.

A schism occurred seven years later. Schmidt and his followers, one-third of the Synod withdrew and formed a "brotherhood". What more than anything else carried the battle to such extreme was the Missaourian teachings concerning predestination which was feared would fall as a blight over Norwegian Christian child learning, especially the books nearest the heart of the Norwegians, Pontoppidons "Sanhed til Gudfrugtighed." The Missourian book called the "Kongoerdie formelers lare" like the "Kongoerdiebook" was strange to the Lutherans and as before mentioned they clung to what they had and were slow in accepting anything new.33

After the fight began the anti-Missourians had to get their paper as the Synoden paper the Evangelical Lutheran Kirketidende was under Missouri control. Dr. Schmidt began "Lutherske Vidnesbyrd" in 1879 and 1880. When the battle got to the point where Kirketidende couldn't devote their entire time to the fight N. Halvorsen started Nødtregent Forsvør (Necessary Answers) published until the schism of 1888.

The argument was built on misunderstanding, both sides had a biblical truth. The final break, the sixth and

33 Neve, Brief History, 397-8; Eggen, in Festschrift, 230, 231.
largest split in the church, took place at Stoughton, Wisconsin in 1887.34

In 1886 the anti-Missourians sent delegates to the yearly meeting of the Augustana Synod. The conference and Hauge's Synods were also at peace so each appointed a committee which met to discuss the article of union and a constitution for a new organization. They met together with the Augustana Synod and anti-Missourians in 1889 and adopted uniting articles and a constitution. Hauge's Samfund didn't join but the other three united in the so-called "Forerede Kirke" (United Church) in 1890.35

A meeting of 1890 showed that the new church was not faring so well. It was decided that Augsburg seminary was to be the training school for ministers with George Everdrup as the president of the school. Augsburg seminary, before the union had been the property of the conference and was to be transferred (according to agreement) to the united church. The trustees refused to accede to the demand and the Synod lost the building but retained the endowment. St. Olaf's the other college of the United Church was owned and controlled by a closed corporation and had had to be recognized by a special vote. The Augsburg group was jealous

34 Leggen, in Festskrift, 232.
35 Ibid., 230, Heve, Brief History, 299.
and maintained that this was breaking the articles of union. There was, however, nothing in the articles of union restricting the church as to what schools it might own and run. This was the first cause of a rift in the "United Church." 36

At a meeting at Kenyon, Minnesota in 1891 the question of incorporation was brought out and the battle was on. Professor Sverdrup and Oftedal were opposed to it but the question passed with a big majority. At a later meeting in 1892 the most important in the History of United Church in Dawson, Minnesota they were deadlocked for a week. Sverdrup and Oftedal left and it was feared that the friends of the conference would go with them but they did not. The two professors resigned as professors in the United Church's service but remained at Augsburg. The church decided to move its school and the friends of Augsburg rushed to her rescue, and were known as "Augsburgs Venner."

Sverdrup and Oftedal came to the next yearly meeting of the "forende Kirke" in St. Paul in 1894 as also did Sverdrup and Oftedal. They were not seated as delegates and they together with the "Augsburg Venner" organized under the name of the "Lutheran Frikirke," (Lutheran Free Church). This was the seventh split in the Norwegian Lutheran

36 Egen, Festschrift, 234.
Church in America in 1894.37

This church had no constitution. Its leading principles were the rule for the rank. The churches can interpret as they please. Their central thought was the sovereignty of the individual church. The "Samund" lacked they felt, the backing of the Scriptures. "Menigheten er efter Guds ord den ratte form for Guds rike paa Jorden." (The congregation is according to God's word the correct authority of God's Kingdom on earth.")38

Deploring the worldliness of the church Rev. R. O. Sundeborg withdrew from the "United Church" to form a pure congregation known as the church of the Lutheran Brethren. He later retired and joined the United Church again. The church organization still exists with about one thousand members.39

The Norwegian Lutherans divided on the question of doctrine, church practice, preserving Lutheran faith as inherited from the fathers "keeping the word intact" yet in all matters concerning the general management of church affairs they contained as conservative, this had its roots in their national character. In 1870 their were eight separate synods, one more added in 1887 when the anti-Missourian brotherhood was formed.

38 Ibíd., 246.
39 Neve, Brief History of the Lutheran Church, 403; Vertz, The Lutheran Churches in American History, 306.
The "United Church" of 1870 paved the way for further union. In 1905 the Haagen Synod proposed to the other Norwegian Lutheran bodies that the question of union be once more discussed and if possible that a union of all Norwegian Lutherans in America be effected. Committees were appointed by several bodies and conferences and discussions began. Agreement as to activity of the laity and concerning election and predestination was necessary. As the conferences proceeded the opposing parties approached common ground.40

They agreed: (1) as far as Predestination was concerned the accepted explanation would be Pontoppidons "Sandhed til Gudfrygtighet" question 548; (2) that article II of the formula of concord was to be the pure and correct doctrine of God's Word; (3) but since in regards to the doctrine of election two forms have been used, both having been recognized as correct in the orthodox Lutheran Church, the first that the doctrine of election comprises the entire salvation of the elect from the calling to glorification and each election "to salvation through sanctification by the spirit and faith in the truth," while others like Pontoppidon define election as the decree of final glorification with

40 Hertz, Lutheran Churches in American History, 310.
the spirit's work of faith and perseverance as its necessary postulate and teach that "God has ordained to eternal life all those who from eternity he foresaw would accept preferred grace, believe in Christ, and remain steadfast in this faith unto the end." Neither doctrine corrupted the word of God and thus should not disrupt church unity.

The church rejected the doctrine that in election God acts arbitrarily and without motive, and picks out a certain number indiscriminately to be saved or to comprise the elect. All theories of election that did not give to all a pure and equal opportunity for salvation were rejected. "God will have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." 41

In 1916 all bodies adopted articles of union. Their doctrine rested on the unconditional consent to canonical books of Holy Scripture as the infallible word of God and to the confessions of the Lutheran Church. They promised one another to have fellowship with no church body that did not share the Lutheran faith and confession. The organization includes all but the Norwegian Lutheran Free Church of approximately thirty-thousand members, the Eielsen Synod of fifteen hundred members, and the Lutheran Brethren of one thousand members. The organization embraces nearly

41 Neve, *Brief History of the Lutheran Church*, 405 ff.
ninety-five per cent of all the Norwegian Lutherans in America. 42

Then controversies in the church kept the Norwegians so occupied especially the pastors and divided their strength as far as schools are concerned that it definitely hindered their progress.

In the early period there was a very strong anti-Catholic feeling. Many of the Rasmus Anderson letters speak of the great issue that was to soon come to a head with Catholicism. Rasmus Anderson himself for a number of years was very anti-Catholic and invoked the wrath of that body in some remark made in his Peabody Lectures in 1877. 43

Rasmus Anderson was always in the center of the struggle. On the common school issue which was one of the topics of the day for the Norwegian Lutheran meetings, Anderson supported the common schools as also did "Skandinaven" the foremost Scandinavian paper. 44

L. R. Larson in a letter to Professor Anderson speaks of the fact that he delivered a Seventeenth of May address for the Norwegians of Eau Claire in which he said,

"...men who today are reflecting credit on the Norwegian name were not those who said our common schools were the machinery of the devil, but such men as Professors Borgeson, Anderson,

44 Anderson, Autobiography, 593.
and Hendrickson who though not forgetting the
source from which they sprang were essentially
American. That statement waked a hornet's
nest as I knew it would. Praise of Professor
Anderson has the same effect on some men that
shaking a red rag has on a bull." 45

It seems that a strife existed between Anderson and
Synoden. Anderson exposed Steensland, an agent for the
Texla Insurance Company as a grafter. A lawsuit was started
against Anderson. Mr. Steensland had the whole synod behind
him for a friend of Anderson says, "You are now as you always
have been hounded and persecuted by those fossils." 46 Some
Norwegians rushed to Anderson's defense and started sending
a dime a piece to help his cause. 47 Letters of encourage-
ment pured in to Anderson, some telling him not to let
"Intolerant and bigoted ministers and their own anxious
followers" defeat him. 48

As far as Synoden's reaction to the common school ques-
tion is concerned Mr. Larson writes from Sau Claire,
"Synoden recently met here. For a few days our city was
overrun with Norwegian ministers. ... on the whole the
Norwegian ministers are not a very liberal minded broad-
gaged set of men. The everlasting common school question
was up to discussion....a great diversity of views were

45 L. R. Larson to R. B. Anderson, July 11, 1877.
46 Jens J. Johnson to R. B. Anderson, November 2, 1881.
47 Lester Sigmond Stellock to R. B. Anderson, November 5,
1881.
48 Lester C. Shelby, Ole Jorgenson, Iver Christiansen to
R. B. Anderson, December 6, 1881.
expressed. Some few were warm supporters.... A large number opposed them root and branch while the majority favored a tame support and did not think open opposition wise."49

In the average Norwegian Lutheran Church the women sat in the left side and the men on the right, this practice has been discontinued except in a few places. The author's experience has been that it still continues. (Upper Coon Valley Norwegian Lutheran Church). The most important part of the Lutheran service was the sermon. The pastors were expected to preach on the text for the day, thereby assuring church goers that he would, in the course of a year, touch upon all the cardinal points in the order of salvation. The Synod emphasized a public doctrine and a holy life, the Haugan Conversion and sanctification.50

The church services were preached in the early days exclusively in Norwegian but as time passes they are changing to English. Rural communities always retain their "Scandinavianism" longer than in urban centers. The Norwegian language is kept alive through the church. At the time of the author's confirmation in 1925 the majority of the confirmants were confirmed in Norwegian, this necessitated their learning to read Norwegian.

For this purpose Norwegian parochial schools were

50 Rohne, Norwegian Lutheranism, 57.
established and usually lasted about four or six weeks every summer. Here one learned Norwegian reading, spelling and had a little literature through the reading classes. The great share of the time was spent on religion. After one had passed from the primer class, learning the first steps in reading, one went to Martin Luther's Little Catechism and a more advanced reader. Then one finished his parochial education with the book of Explanations, Bible History and a more advanced reading book.

As there were in the early days, there still are a number of old settlers today who not understand and appreciate an English sermon. It sounds better to them in Norwegian. The process of Americanization in rural centers will be slow until the first and second generations have disappeared and the children have become educated beyond the eighth grade or leave the home community. The author's experience is that unless the children attend high school chances are when they remain at home that the Norwegian influence is greater than the American.

The pastor's work must be mentioned. They were a significant element throughout Norwegian American history--more important in pioneer times than today. The first
pastors were regular circuit riders, some even worked from one settlement to another performing the necessary rites and preaching on the people.51

When Norwegian is replaced by English in the churches then the process of Americanization will be over.

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