Biography of Torkel T. Fuglistad

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The parents of the pioneer were Torkel C. Fuglistad and Inga Fuglistad. The pioneer is Torkel T. Fuglistad. He was born in Bjerkrem, Stavanger, Norway on March 13, 1856.

Mr. Fuglistad left home because he wanted to become rich quick. He came to North Dakota because there was a man by the name of Paul Hjelm Hanson who had just been traveling along the Red River Valley before it was settled, and he wrote in the Norwegian papers telling of the rich soil and the great opportunities of that new territory. Another reason why he came to North Dakota was because his brother-in-law, Andrew Aarestad had come to North Dakota a year before.

Mr. and Mrs. Fuglistad left Norway the last part of June, 1883. They took a small boat to Germany where they went aboard an ocean liner. After about three weeks on the ocean they reached New York City. Here all the immigrants were shoved into a room where there were benches all along the wall. Mr. Fuglistad had bought a loaf of barley bread which they were sitting eating. They put the barley bread between them. Torkel was about to take a slice of bread, but lo!--the bread was gone. Yes, it had been stolen right under their noses. A while later Mrs. Fuglistad was sitting knitting with a big ball of woolen yarn at her side. All of a sudden she noticed that the yarn was gone. That had been stolen also. These were the first experiences they had in the wonderful land of America.

They next took a train to Buffalo where they took a steamer on the Great Lakes to Duluth. They were shown to a baggage room in which they were to stay during their trip. It was very uncomfortable, for most of the nights while they were sleeping, they were awakened and had to move their beds to another corner because their ship had come into port and they had to load or unload some baggage.

When they reached Cleveland on Lake Superior, there was a lady on board who was very sick. Mr. Fuglistad called for a doctor and a doctor came instantly and led the sick woman into town. She left her baby who was about one year old on board without any one to car for him. No one seemed to pay any attention to him, so Mrs. Fuglistad took the child. She bathed and fed him. They thought they would have to take the child with them to North Dakota, but luckily the father of the child happened to be in a town where the ship anchored. The father came aboard and claimed his child.

It took five days to reach Duluth and from there they took the train to Valley City where their brother-in-law had come to meet them. They again took the train that came as far as two miles northeast of Hannaford. They came to Cooperstown August 13, 1883.

On the sixteenth of August when he went to Cooperstown to file his homestead, he had to have a ten year old girl who could talk both the Norwegian and American languages fairly well to interpret for him. He could neither talk nor understand the American language. When they asked Mr. Fuglistad what section his land was in, he didn't know. He asked

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the little girl. She knew the section their land was in as she lived in the same section.

His homestead is in Range 59 and Township 145. His first house was a sod house. When they went to town for provisions, they had to use oxen and a rough wagon. His nearest neighbors were Elling Froiland, Jens Bul, and Andrew Aarestad. The early farm machinery consisted of a walking plow, drag, and some sort of a hand seeder. His teams were oxen. His first crop was only wheat and yielded from 5 to 40 bushels an acre. They used only wood for fuel. He had to work for his fuel.

In October, 1885, Mr. Fuglistad was working with the Swen Olgard Threshing Machine seven miles away. For three days it had been blowing from the west and the air was filled with smoke. The third day the wind increased, so Mr. Fuglistad decided to go home for he believed that a prairie fire was coming. By the time he had reached home he could see the flames. He hurried to one of the neighbors to borrow a plow for he wished to save his wheat stacks by plowing around them. Before he had time to start plowing, the fire was there so he ran into the house for protection. His house was built of sod so it didn't burn. In this way, he lost that year's crop.

On August 12, 1888 they received warning from St. Paul that they must try to save their crops from the frost that was coming from the northwest. It came the 16th of August. They were up all night and put fire to all straw and hay. It was of no use for the frost was so heavy that it destroyed all the crops in North Dakota and part of Minnesota.

In 1883 (while they were staying with their brother-in-law, Andrew Aarestad) a couple days before Christmas, he and his brother-in-law went to Cooperstown to buy provisions for Christmas. They started out walking but luckily they caught a ride with their neighbor, Elling Froiland who had the biggest pair of oxen that Torkel had ever seen. When they started for home, it began to snow so Elling Froiland invited them into his home for supper. After supper they started for home again, but it was snowing so hard that they lost their way. After several hours walking, they came upon an old shack which was so warped that the wind blew right through it. They went in and broke up the floor for a bonfire, which, they say was the only thing that saved their lives. In the morning the snowstorm had ceased, so they started homeward. When they reached home, they found that their wives had also had a sleepless night thinking that their husbands had been frozen to death.

Torkel Fuglistad was married to Miss Abigail Osland in Bjerkrem Stavanger, Norway, June 21, 1880. Nine children filled the family. They are--Stephen T. Fuglistad, Inga, Gudrun, Lisa, Bjorn, Thorwald, Ralph, Edwin and Thelma.

Torkel Fuglistad still lives on his homestead near Cooperstown.

Torkel T, Fuglestad.

By O.D.Purinton, Clerk and Historian of Old Settlers' Association.

Torkel T.Fuglestad, son of Torkel and Inger Fuglestad,was born in Norway in 1856 where he lived until 1883. He was married to Miss Abigal A.Ostlend in 1880, and three years later , came with his young wife to the United States and directly to Griggs County. After three days he filed a homestead on SW¼10-145-59., where he still lives. The homestead is now registered under the name FUGLESTAD.

Mr.Fuglestad had four daughters and four sons.

He has been a member of the Trustees of Lutheran Ladies Seminary at Fargo ,A member of the board of directors of the Norwegian language newspaper FRAM, and a member of the board of directors of the Total AbstinanceAssociation.

Mr Fuglestad had unpleasant experiances with prairie fires and blizzards. He was lost in midwinter of his first winter, on the prairie. He struck a shanty where the only thing was a hat on the wall. He broke up four boards of the floor, and got a fire with the last matches.

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Torkel Fuglestad was married to Miss Abigal Osland in Bjerkrem, Stavanger, Norway, June 21, 1880. They had nine children, who are: Stephen, Inga, Gudrun, Lisa, Bjorn, Thorvald, Ralph, Edwin, and Thelma. Torkel Fuglestad still lives on his homestead near Cooperstown.

Pioneer Biography
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MEMORIES FROM LIFE'S SCHOOL

Autobiography of T.T. Fuglestad, living in Bald Hill Township, Griggs Co.

(Translated from Norse) by Miss Margit Overmoen

I was born March 13, 1856, in Bjerkrean, Fogn, Fjeldbygd, a mountain town on the west coast of Norway. Fuglestad was a Middleston farm, consisting of thirteen or fourteen milk cows, two horses, and sixty to seventy sheep. At the age of 18, I went to Kristiansand and attended the military school. This was a state school and every thing was free. The only thing we had to worry about was underclothes for ourselves. We got three meals a day and if we wanted a lunch we had to pay for it. We received a few pennies each week to buy writing material. This was a very good school and we had to work hard to keep up.

As far as I can remember there were ten or twelve different classes and about half of them was about military instruction. If we wanted examinations, we took the subjects the teachers told us to take; here, in America, the thoughtless young people decide for themselves what to take. The school hours were from 8 to 12, 12 to 1- exercises; 4 to 5 gymnasium classes. The rooms were in the rear of a large exercise hall where the gym apparatus was. There were about 100 pupils from the age of 18 to 23. When we were let out for recess, it was like letting out a flock of calves; some started to dance, others walked up and down the isle studying their lessons; but most of them went to the gymnasium. The apparatus consisted of ropes, poles, bombs, wood horses, etc. The horse was about five feet high, and they used a leather pillow seat to represent a saddle. To test the strength of the pupils' muscles, the pupils were taught to jump on the horse by running from a distance, and take the horse by the mane and jump over it. At times the larger boys could not get on the horse this way. Many of the smaller boys could turn sommersault on the horse, and jump over the horse with a man sitting in the saddle.

The state had to see that we were brought up in Christian training so we didn't turn out to be "heathen". Every morning we had a devotional

hour on command. Each pupil was supposed to be ready to send up a prayer if called upon. We each had a little song book named the Leader; after the singing, the oldest under officer gave the Lord's Prayer with his hand to his head, while we paid strict attention. This was our morning devotion. Here is an example of one of our devotional hours; There was lieutenant by the name of Borgen who directed; one morning we all sang a verse of Today is the Day of Grace; the next verse was what the morning day would have in store for Borgen. Then a voice sang out above the rest, "What the morning day has in store for Lieutenant Borgen." The sober way in which he sang it, filled the others with laughter. When the devotional hour was over, the director commanded all those that laughed during the prayer hour, to march forward, but no one moved.

Every Sunday each troop had to march to the church under the command of an under officer; this was the law. We each had a chair at the end of the room. When the devotional hour was over, we were again commanded to march. The preacher was the song composer, Prof. Dick. None of the soldiers had any conversation with the officers outside of the devotional hours, but we had ideas of their character and behavior. There was one officer with his sober and talkative ways, whom we had very much respect for. He came in the watch room one day when we were playing cards and said, "You mustn't play for money, boys." There was something in that tone of advice that worked on us like a sermon. That was Premier Lieutenant, Vaaler. His personality was brought out also in the attitude he showed to those under him. Between each watch period we could sleep awhile, not undressing. One of the higher officers had his office in a corner. With this opportunity we all laid in the watch room and slept. One of the boys was Tom Burens, who had chewed tobacco since he was eight years old, and had naturally stunted his growth. He laid on his back on a wooden bench. While we were all sleeping, one of the boys went as quiet as a mouse and took two straps with buckles on and strapped Tom to the bench and went back to bed. All of a sudden there was

a cry from the watchman outside, "Up with your guns; the officer has come to visit the watchman." All those sleeping sprang to their feet, grabbed their guns and went for the door to be ready in line. "Where's Tom Burene?" the officer asked. Sensing suspicion, they went into the room, and there on the floor lay Tom Burene with the bench strapped to his back. "They've tied me," we heard him holler inside. Tom was let loose and took his place in front line with the drum in front of him.

We were all afraid we were going to be questioned but not one cross word came from the lieutenant. That's the kind of an officer that wins victory in battle. If this incident had been reported to the head general, Vergeland, there would have been quite a fuss; this mischief maker came in one morning to the head watchman, with full intentions to squeal on the second watchman because he came two minutes too late to his post. This "crank" had watched out the window two o'clock in the morning waiting for the second watchman's return. He soon found out his own watch was wrong. At another time he had about pestered the life out of Bataljoven at Spring Morser. During the examinations, a mob got around him with bayonets etc. and he had to pray for mercy. He later became discharged. He surely was not like his brother, Henrie, whose status stands in Island Park, Fargo. I was in Fargo when the monument was erected. A Jewish rabbi gave the lecture and Henrie Vergeland was the man that opened the door to Norway for the Jews.

Premier Lieutenant Vaaler was married to Prof. Dick's daughter. It was this well known Mrs. Dick Vaaler that was in America a few years ago; trying to locate some Norwegians that had come to America previously; she had been in Cooperstown.

The summer of 1876 I attended a large field maneuver in Smaalene, towards the Swedish border when 10,000 were gathered to fight. I was under the military training then. They were lacking under officers so

they took the students from the upper grades. We landed in the town of Mose and stayed that night. The next day we marched continually with full equipment from seven in the morning til nine at night. Many gave up from exhaustion; they were picked up by Trosset who came after us. Some that wanted to stop and drink during the march were chased back in line with drawed sables (swords). When we reached our destination and put up our tents, our company was ordered out on field watch. This was very trying, but it was wartime. We were allowed to eat after ten O'clock. This lasted a week. We got whiskey from King Oscar who was with, and another time, cigars.

One night the King was with us at our camp ball; we picked out two husky men from Seterdal. They were to dance a "halling" while one played the fiddle. The King six feet high, stood with his cap on the sword. The two men swung past us a couple of times, one lifting the cap off. The third time he landed with his hands on his comrade's shoulder with feet up in the air kicking the cap far away and it landed on his hands. Yes, that was in those days.

The reader will please excuse me for dwelling so long on the thoughts on military life but I am surely cured from the military life now. Three of my boys were drafted in 1917 where one had to go to Germany, but with God's help came back unharmed.

TO AMERICA.

This year 1937 is fifty-fours years since my wife, Abigal, and I packed our clothes and set sail for America. In all these years it has not been with my good will that I am here, but it was God's will, and so it was for my best. There is a feeling of satisfaction and peace to know that you are led by God's Almighty hand.

There was an economic crisis in Stavanger in the beginning of the 80's. I wouldn't overtake my father's farm as he wanted me to, so we

moved to town and tried to get some kind of office work but wherever I came it seemed they were more than filled up. At last I got work at a foundry and ship yard were steamships were being built. Then one day they laid off one hundred men and I was among the unlucky. After that it seemed as though all ways for work were closed. The only way was to set my course westward, across the ocean.

I had often talked to Halvor Nordaas who was the manager of the fire department, and city gardner in Stavanger; if I could get a job as city gardner; just as I was ready to go to America, I got word I could have the job. If I had known it sooner, I would not be here now. Planting of trees and flowers has always been my dearest work. So goodbye, Norway; and I left for the strange country to the Dakota prairies.

About this journey much could be related but I will mention just a few incidents. After fourteen days on the steamship from Rotterdam, Holland, we arrived in New York. We hadn't been ashore two hours when I got the biggest surprise I ever had since I set my feet on American soil. The immigrants were gathered in a large six cornered room, where benches were fastened to the wall. Most of them stood in groups around the room. After living two weeks on spoiled vegetables and half-fried biscuits, we were near starved. I had bought a loaf of rye bread, and had a little butter left from Norway. We sat on the bench with our backs to the wall and ate. The bread lay on the bench between us. I was going to cut myself another slice when to my surprise the bread was gone. We jumped up and looked around but the bread was stolen to say, right out of our hands. Of course, the thief was in one of the other groups looking at us. My wife has always been a hard worker, and soon took her knitting and needles, and started to knit. She laid the large ball of wool yarn by her side on the bench. All of a sudden the end of the thread was in her hands. The ball of yarn had been stollen also. I soon came to the conclusion that the thief was a careless woman who continued

walking back and forth conversing in Norwegian to the people. She sat and talked to my wife and later followed us to the restaurant to purchase some coffee. This was a warning of what I could expect in the new land.

Our route went through the Great Lakes from Buffalo to Duluth and took about a week. We travelled as freight goods; we had our own bedding with, and at night we made our bed under deck among piles of freight good. On the other side of the deck were fourteen milk cows in rows. We were a flock of Finlanders, three Norwegiand and one Swede. Several times we had to move our bedding when the goods was to be taken or assessed; so as not to be in the way, the Swede had made his bed on top of a pile of goods. In the middle of the night, he was awakened by the cry of "Move your bed; we have a daughter." We had noticed that one of the ladies from Finland was rather peculiar and stayed by herself most of the time. She had with her a daughter, two years old. One day on nearing a large city, she took sick and laid down on some sawdust by the cows. The other Finlanders didn't seem to give any aid but stood and stared at her. When the boat reached the shore, I waved and cried out to the people, "Doctor!" that helped. Soon after, a doctor arrived with one of the men and led her to shore. This was a confinement case.

The ship started off with the two year old girl and the mother's baggage. We were waiting and expecting that some of the Finlanders would take care of her; but no one took notice of her. So my wife, Abigal, took her and tried to take the mother's place as we didn't know where the mother's destination was to be. There was nothing for us to do but to take her with us to Dakota until further inquiry be made. She was with us just a few days; when the ship stopped, two young women came aboard; one was a Norwegian and an interpreter. She explained that the girl's father lived at this city and came to take the child. They asked what we wanted for the care of the child. Of course we didn't take anything. We have may times thought it would be fun to see the little passenger again, and to tell her she was on the way to be a Norwegian Dakota dame.

I imagine that she must be married now as she is 56 years old.

After a month's tiresome journey, we reached Valley City, Dakota territory. There I met my brother-in-law, Andrew Aarestad. The next day we followed the train as far as the rails were built, two miles north of the present Hannaford. You will note Mrs. Aarestad and her two small children were in our company to Dakota as Mr. Aarestad had come the previous year.

We unloaded our provisions on the prairie near the Hetland farm where some men were working on the rails. One of them, Mathius Johnson, had oxen with, and drove us two miles to Aarestad's homestead. At last we came to our destination where our future home was to be.

I hadn't been on the Dakota prairies very long, before I felt the urge to hunt. I had taken with me from Norway a small gun and not far from Jens Bull's place, there was a pond where ducks were floating around. There was high grass around, and all of a sudden I saw a pretty animal with a bushy tail and white stripes on its back. I ran after it, but very soon had to retrace my steps. The air was full of a chocking smell. It follwed along with me. I had barely stepped inside the door when I heard the cry "Out! Out!" They threw some clothes out to me and ordered me to bury the clothes I had on. This was a new adventure for me. In my childhood days I had read in Nature's History of the "stenkdynet" (skunk) on the American prairies. It now became more clear to me having experienced it. What did we think of America? Oh, we thought it quite interesting and romantic, and felt at home. And my wife? Yes, it was just one time she lost her courage in all these years following my hunting experience. I came and there she stood, looking very downcast. She pointed to the sod house and said, "Look what people have to live in. If we had money I'd go back home right away." And she meant it. She came from a rich home in Norway, where there was luxury, not making this very inviting; but then we visited some neighbors down by

the Sheyenne river, and there she met some acquaintances from her neighborhood in Norway. These neighbors had been here about two years and had things quite comfortable. Her courage returned, and from then on has been quite satisfied.

I took my homestead three days after I came to Dakota. Elling Johnson (Froiland) and Jens Bull had filed on the same section earlier in the summer. They told me the S.W. quarter of the section(where a shanty was) had not been filed on, and told me I could go to Cooperstown and get papers on it. I had Jens Bull's ten year old daughter to go with me to Cooperstown and be my interpreter. They asked me what section it was; but I didn't know it. Then this little girl (now Mrs. Omund Ashland) said, "It's section ten we live on." The men soon found out the rest, Section 10, township 145, range 59.

MY FIRST HOUSE.

Well, this is like an adventure and here is my history. My three brothers had come to America two years previous. I had received a letter from my oldest brother that If I came to America I should bring some "merskums" smoking pipes because they were so expensive in America. I then bought the finest pipe I could find in Stavanger, with a long stem and pearl band, for speculation.

I now had to build a house on my homestead. Elling Johnson urged me to go to Cooperstown and buy a shanty which stood on his land belonging to Nelson who had left. Mr. Nelson worked at the store in Cooperstown. Since I didn't have any money, I took the only thing I had of any value, which was my pipe and fled to town. I met Mr. Nelson and asked him how much he wanted for the house. He told me $25. I then told him I had no money, but a tobacco pipe that was worth that amount. We made the deal; I got the house and an "overall" and he got the pipe. I wonder if this historical pipeis in existence. We were both well satisified with the deal

Mr. Johnson had two oxen and I had my shanty moved to my quarter on section 10. Later on in the fall came the old bachelor that had squatted on the quarter I filed on and sold the shanty to me.

I was working on the railroad until it came as far as Cooperstown. We workers got meals and lodging in a couple of wagons. Of early settlers that I can remember working on the rails were John and Hans Haugen, Jergen Soma, and L. Herigstad. One day we went with the train south to Dazey to get some work. When night came on the boss went with the train to Sanborn and left us there on the prairie. That day it was 95 degrees heat. During the night it was not far from frost. In my hast I had forgotten my jacket in Cooperstown. I had just a thin cotton shirt on. Three o'clock in the morning the train came from Sanborn and I was nearly frozen stiff. In the morning I had a fever and could hardly raise my head from the pillow. Sometime in the forenoon I got up and told the Norwegian cook I wanted to try to get home. On my way home, I fell over several times and had to lie down awhile. I at last came to Aarestad's. They had put a floor and windows in the sod house. There I laid a whole month with Typhoid fever. It never entered our mind to send for a doctor. We were newcomers from Norway and we never thought of calling the doctor when we felt a little sick. I don't think I was unconscious during the time I was sick but I could not control my speech. If I wanted to talk with my wife and Mrs. Aarestad it was all in a muddle. Then I pointed to the violin for them to give to me, so they could at least hear I wasn't crazy. Crazy musicians can play just as well as another musician.

The same fall of 1883, they were building a bridge six miles east of Cooperstown. I guess it was the best bridge built in Griggs Co. East of the bridge they had to build the road higher through the woods. Knut Thompson and Jamiuson had the contract for this work. Jimeson Jamiuson was later postmaster and merchant in Cooperstown. The two contractors gave out the work to working men for fifteen cents per yard. I got a piece of work to

nearest the hill. There was never any talk of using horses for grading. We had to buy our own spade and wheelbarrow to be sure to be ready before the frost. I hired a couple of men to help me, Emil and Martin Krogsgard. We got our board and room at a Mr. Johnson who had built a log house a little south from where we worked. Others stopped at Mr. Fluto, west of the bridge. In the evening after supper Mr. Johnson read for us about Anderson Village where many prisoners from northern states died of hunger, and other times about "Houseman's Boys", the composer H. A. Fosse. When I païd out my expenses, I found out I had earned $3 a day. It was enough for bread through the winter. For me, these were interesting days. From my youth up I have always been about 30 or 40 degrees below. We had to keep turning around to keep from freezing our faces. At home our wives had also a sleepless night.

After New Year's, 1884 my wife and I were invited to stay at Ole Stokka's when I helped him with the work. I could also take with me the two oxen I had bought. We were glad to move nearer to the Sheyenne valley, where they kept on with debate meetings, choir practices, and devotional meetings on Sunday. Ola Westley acted as preacher. It was hard to pay for the preacher in those days. The first Norwegian preacher that visited the settlement in those days was Panykren. He held a meeting here on Sunday. The best place we had for that use was a half-ready sod barn belonging to Betual Herigstad's father, O. B. Herigstad in Minot. Ola Westley, as mentioned before, was asked to be the song leader. He was son to a song leader in Norway and had a good voice. The prayer, "Lord, I come to Thee in They Holy house etc., he knew by heart and the old man broke down when Ola talked about his church work in God's house. Pastor Luneby was later a missionary for the new Norwegian settlement in that vicinity and laid down his whole life for the mission work. His territory extended from Fort Ransom to Devils Lake, one hundred miles distant.

→ Error, He is son of Betual

One morning in the midst of the cold winter came this ambitious

missionary, driving to Christian Aarestad. He and his horses had spent the night in the bluffs, a quarter of a mile from the house, as a result of the snowstorm, not being able to find his way. But it wasn't just this night he had to spend nights on the prairie. At that time it was a long distance to each settler and often the roads were impassible.

Blizzards

Following, will give the reader an idea how dangerous it was to be out on the prairie in those days. As mentioned before, my wife and I had moved to Stokka. Mr. Stokka was a good and interesting companion. Our chores consisted of two cows, two oxen, and my two oxen. When the weather was nice, we drove two miles down to the river for wood, and had to take the stock there every day for drink.

It was a beautiful sunshine day in the latter part of January, 1884. Over the prairie lay high drifts of snow like waves on the oscean. It was so mild we didn't need to wear our mittens, coats, or jackets. Some of the neighbors drove to town, others went to their relations and friends for a visit. In the afternoon we were going to clean the sod barn that was snowed under. Stokka was inside, and with a long fork threw the manure out an opening. I stood outside and threw it further to the manure pile. It was so still we could hear the men chopping wood down the river; in the northwest a dark cloud came over the horizon and in a little while the whole Heavens were clouded and the snow began to fall. The snow flakes were like many summer birds filling the air. I hollered in through the door, "I'ts snowing." "Is that so?" I heard from inside. Then the storm came as if dripped out from a sack. I then hollered to Mr. Stokka "I can't see the house." (about four rods away) "That is terrible." Stokka remarked, and in such a tone, that it seemed he couldn't collect his thoughts. In the twinkling of an eye we were as though isolated; you'd think we were at the polar region.

A genuine N. Dak. blizzard is a phenomenon that is both interesting and dreadful. If you dare venture out the door, it's as if you are wrapped

in a biting sandstorm that fills your nose and eyes. You seem to gasp for breath, and the wind, like a thunderous noise all the time; it's as though death were staring you in the face. There is a great difference between a snowstorm and a blizzard. On the third day we noticed the storm had somewhat abated. The day after again was real nice as if nothing had happened. When we looked over the prairie where the storm had raged, we could see smoke rising from high snowbanks, where we knew people lived. The prairie was not thickly settled, so it was a long way between neighbors. As we went to inquire, we found they had all come through the storm all right. Some had dug themselves out from the snow that had drifted as high as the house. It was worse for the animals. Many places they had to be without food til the storm ceased. Some tied a rope from the house and went in the direction of the barn. A flock of young people, members of the choir, went one forenoon six miles on the prairie to Mr. Froiland's place. He lived in a sod house and had a large family. The choir intended to go back the same day but had to stay due to the storm. They passed the time away singing songs. Andrew Watne was a humorous and talkative fellow. I guess he was the one who had to sleep on the chair and there wasn't enough room on the floor. A stranger who was overtaken by the storm, set his course towards the Sheyenne river and was saved. His wife who had been visiting down by the river got home before the storm. Those out with oxen and met the storm followed the wind and let the oxen take them home. Those blessed animals have saved many a new settler's life.

It was in 1881 and 1882 that most of the new settlers settled together south and east from Cooperstown. In 1883 the railroad came through. Here they stood, these brave sons and daughters from their respective homelands, thousands of miles away from their country and relatives, far from people, forty miles to the nearest town, Valley City, and to say, almost penniless, but with all bridges burned behind, and with many questions in mind of what

the unknown future will have in store for them in this new country. The future did not look very brightning for them, but with new courage they started to build homes for themselves and children on the lone prairie and where hereafter would be their working field. There were many obstacles that came in their way but the bigger the obstacle the more interesting it was to overcome it. Under such circumstances as this, it showed who could stand the test. There was a strife between life and death. It would be a long story if the new settlers were to tell of their experiences from those days about their sacrifices, hopes, disappointments, strife, and victories; but there, man and wife stood side by side enduring the hardships together. I have many times thought that the wives of the pioneers should have just as much place in the pages of history as the man.

Among the immigrants, represented all types of life's work- taylors, blacksmiths, shoemakers, captains, tanners, etc. They aimed to take possession of the land where the Indians, buffalo and antelope a thousand years, had had their rights. They aim to seek a better land. The first settlers headed for the Sheyenne river where there was plenty of wood. When I came two years later, I found log houses along the woods and sod houses out on the prairie. The settlers in those days were more satisfied and at peace than they are now in their modern homes.

It was a hard time for all the new settlers. If you were to borrow anything, you had to give security, and the collectors were like blood-suckers. It is terrible how these collectors would rob the settlers of their hard earned money, and many gave up not being able to take care of the high rent in borrowing. I put in my first crop, and the oxen, not being broke in, had to be led back and forth on my fourteen acres of breaking. In the midst of my work, the sheriff came and told me I had to come to town. Some one wanted to see me and he told me who it was. I untied my oxen and walked five miles to town. The sheriff could have just as well given me a ride in his buggy, but no.

This certain person had bought a note that I had given to Lawrence Bros. that should be paid in the fall. I presume he had bought it for a less amount. Instead of sending me a letter, he sent the sheriff out without warning me. I was green and did not know the law. In thefall when I paid it, the sum was double. This is no false remarck, but the straight goods. I do not like to write this but it belongs to a new settler's life. Some years later, a business man had a mortgage on my crop. In the fall I needed a little lumber. When I went to town I took with a few sacks of oats to pay for it. The mortgage man had heard that I was to do this, so without warning he hired the sheriff to hire two horses and to come out and drive in all my wheat crop. I had 800 bushels and had sold none. This was too much, the sheriff thought. He came out to the farm and talked to me. I thanked him for his friendliness and the next day I hauled the wheat in myself.

Many of the settlers had different aims in life, and on coming to N. Dak. found they could not achieve that aim. As you see, each person is gifted with some certain aim in life. Others have more than one aim in life and can adapt themselves accordingly. These gifts come from the Almightly Creator, and all these aims are achieved by all prepared men and women. For example, I, the writer, have from youth had an interest in tree planting; and you probably have heard of Keiser Wilhelm chopping wood once a day. In my boyhood days I read in the papers that England's greatest statesman, Gladstone, took a trip to the woods every day and chopped down trees. Well, I plant trees, Gladstone chops them down, and the Dieser saws them; so we three fill our aim in life to a certain degree.

I'm not quite sure if I, myself, got my right start in life. A methodist preacher, by placing his hands on our head could tell us just what we were able to do. He must have studied Frenology. This preacher had come to Cooperstown. It was Andrew Watne who mostly wanted our heads analized. It cost fifty cents for each person. We also got a character

book for him. Here's what he said about me; "You should have been an office man or a hand laborer, but you will manage pretty well on the farm." And now fifteen years have passed since, and I can say as Ferje Viken, that things happen for the best.

Nowadays when the Americans take homesteads, they receive papers on them. I wonder how many of our Norwegian settlers had recieved papers on their first piece of land when they took homesteads. I think that most of them have not been interested enough to spend a dollar to get registered Norwegain names on their farm, so the coming generation can know who first broke the land on the wild prairie. It seems that our Norwegian forefathers who landed in America nine hundred years ago had more historic sense than many of our people today. History tells that Carlsefne in the year 1007 with the company of 151 people landed in Vinland to establish a colony in Mass., leaving after them a stone that tells of their establishment.

We moved to our own farm in the year 1884 when the weather was warm enough to live in a shanty. Our two oxen and one cow with a calf, we tied on the prairie within the reach of water. If a man gets up in the wee hours of the morning in the spring, when nature wakes up after a winter's sleep and you examine Mother Nature's plants, animals, bird life, prairie chickens, each one in their own place, and the ducks splashing in the water, it all seems like a prairie romance. Here was also our place. Our life's work was to clean away and build up our new land. We cultivated the wild prairie, following our Creator's commandment to till the soil. With my oxen and two borrowed oxen I got my fourteen acres of land broke up. It was the same piece I was working on when the sheriff came. That summer I used a fork and scythe to gather the hay. Elling Johnson and I helped each other on the farm during the haying season. One night when I came home there were two calves on the farm and my wife who always was alone when I was away, told me that a man came

by, driving in a wagon with a cow tied behind and a calf following. She ran after him and asked him if he wanted to sell a calf. He told her he was alone on his claim and didn't want to bother with the calf and that he was on his way to Cooperstown to sell it. She bought the calf for $5. It so happened she didn't have any money. He waited while she ran a half-mile to the neighbor to get $5. The cow had milk enough to feed the calves. I thought my wife made a pretty good deal.

Prairie Fires.

It was October the year 1885. For three days the air was filled with smoke and a strong wind was raging from the northwest. The third day the wind increased and the smoke became thicker. I was with Swen Olgard out threshing seven miles away. I knew my wife was home alone with a little child. Right after dinner I started for home. I had just stepped in the door and said hello when I was out again and I fled to the neighbors to borrow oxen to plow around the wheat stacks, but just then I saw flames half-mile away and in a few minutes the flames were over us. There was no danger for the house, barn and haystack, I had summer fallowed around them and mostly around the side where the storm came from. We were not afraid for our lives but it was horrid to see flames all around us. We had lot of rain that summer and the grass stood very high, which gave the flames a better chance to spread; but the flames swept past like a wind with a thunderous noise. When we came outside, the prairie was black, and worse, the air was full of smoke. The third largest stack of wheat in my fourteen acres went up in flames. The third stack, somewhat smaller, I had put inside the breaking near the sod barn, and was spared. This was my first crop. Later, a threshing machine came nearby, and the neighbors hauled this stack on wagons to the machine and threshed it. I got fifty bushels from it. I was out threshing at the time and knew nothing of it. That's the type of neighbors we had in those days. When one lost a cow, the neighbors would chip together and buy a cow for him.

Many of the settlers' cows that were tied here and there where there was green grass, jerked loose and ran. One cow became so badly burned, it had to be butchered. Many lost their crops; some lost them after it was threshed and put in the granary. It was difficult to meet a fire like this. The wind threw large bunches of straw over the breaking. The fire lasted three days with a steady wind. Where it came from, we do not know, but it covered a territory of not less than one hundred miles. The state was unsettled westward. The fire stopped when it reached the Sheyenne river.

My wife related she had thought of taking the baby and going to the neighbors, the time I came home from threshing, during the other prairie fire. If she would have gone that time she would have been right in the midst of the fire. It is, after all, the interesting to see how different people can meet such a situation. Some can take a glance and know just then what to do. Others get so upset and frightened they lost their senses entirely. Here is an example: When one farmer saw the fire coming towards his sod house, he lost his nerve and sprang in the sod house, took a horse harness and threw it in the fire. I shall here relate a few experiences I had the first years. It was in the spring two years after this big fire. South of us it had burned for many days; but the weather was still, and the fire made no headway. There were many large and small sloughs. All of a sudden there came a strong wind from the south. I began to realize there was danger for my neighbor as the wind went right in his direction. I then went over to my other neighbor who was plowing with his oxen. We decided to plow two of the furrows between two large sloughs so we could check the fire. We then plowed around the neighbor's home where the grass was very high; but in the south the fire had already reached some of the tall grass and smoke was thick in the air. Then it was that Pierre, who we were helping, lost his senses and before we could hinder him he had set a fire inside of the breaking. In a minute the flames were over the housetop. If I had noticed it when he took the match, I would have dragged him outside

of the breaking. After a hard fight we saved the building.

At another time, the same farmer, Pierre, wanted to burn some stubble on an eight acre field that he hadn't plowed. As the flames came to the end of the field, it started to burn on the prairie. But then Pierre woke up. I was in the barn working at the time. I heard a loud shout. I went out and there was Pierre swinging around with his coat in the air trying to put out the fire. He screamed and shouted all the time. Once in a while I heard himsay, "O this is terrible! O this is terrible! For goodness sake!" I saw there was no danger. I thought to myself, you ought to know better before you ever set fire to that. It wasn't very nice of me, but I laughed so heartily, I held my stomach, it was so comical. At last I barely heard his voice. I then went over and asked him as nice as I could, "Did you start a prairie fire, Pierre?" He said, "Yes, I never thought it would start out like that. There was a fence there with two wires on, and it was in the pasture." So I said, "Pierre, come, we'll set a fire along the roadside and it will die out by itself."

It was during noon hour. I have never had the habit of taking a rest after dinner because I never had the time, so I went over to Pierre to pass away the time. I found him sleeping on the bench. I sat down and took the paper (Scandinavian) to read. I hadn't been sitting there very long when a little girl came storming in, "There's fire in the hen house. Wake up!" Pierre sprang up and was going to take a chew before he went. The tobacco box fell on the floor, so he hurried to get his shoes on and went out, I after him with an empty pail. The hen house was partly sod house along a slough. For a roof, brush and posts were used. Close by the chicken cellar, he had, the year before, threshed a little oats and from the straw pile he had taken some straw and put on the chicken roof. Between the chicken house and threshed oats was lots of straw. Pierre wanted to burn just the little straw pile, and then went back for his after dinner nap. That very dry straw stack was burned up in a short time. The chickens inside were making a noise as if nothing had happened. There was no great damage but

we carried water and quenched the fire.

Pierre could never keep quiet when he was involved in anything like this. His mouth kept going all the time, and it became so comical to me, I had to laugh when I wouldn't be seen. Prairie fires are now a thing of the past. But last summer, 1936, all vegetation was dried up and thousands of haystacks were burned in N. Dak., S. Dak., and Minn. I hadn't plowed around my haystacks for I had just one oxen that could work and that was loaned to the neighbor; the other oxen was sick.

I worked out with Mr. Olgard's threshing machine as long as I could as we needed the money for home. The prairie fire had mostly gone through where Olgard was going to thresh. We had quite an amount of trouble with the machine one day, so Swen Lime who was with, suggested we gather up seed from the trees in the woods. He had the same interest in trees that I had. He gathered the ash seed and I gathered the box elder. The next spring I seeded in the breaking my box elder seed. The next spring I seeded in the breaking my box elder seed. It laid there two years. I plowed around the north side where it would come up. Fifty years have passed and my trees are standing high and fresh.

SOD HOUSE

In the spring of 1884, when the weather permitted, we moved in the shanty. The roof and walls were of rough boards. Late in the summer I got some men to help me build a sod house. I received information from someone who understood how the sod house should be built. The first thing was to find out the best material to use, and that had to be a certain sod of strong grass roots. We found that along a slough. We had to break the chunks carefully, three or four inches thick. We cut it in big chunks. When the chimney was made, sand was put between each layer. We left an opening for a double window in the south and east, and for a door on the north, where we later built a room with a slant roof, and a door on the east. Here in the summer we had the stove. We had five elm logs; we put

one on the top, one on each side, and one on the chimney. On these we nailed the rough boards from the shanty, and then tar paper. We had grass three feet long that we laid layer upon layer next to the sod so as to keep out the water. We laid the sod gradually as we cut it; then the house was considered ready so far. It was then to fix the inside, to smooth out the walls as smooth as a plastered wall. We swept the walls good with a broom so that the grass pieces should hold the plastering. We then found some gumbo or white clay on the edge of a large slough, which we used for the walls. This stayed on the walls as long as we lived there (8 yrs.). After, my helper, Mr. Krogsgard, suggested we white wash the walls with the same stuff. It became quite a bit lighter. Later on, when we could afford it, we whitewashed it with plaster, It was a good house, warm in the winter and cool in the summer. We never had fire at night. In those years it never even froze the water in the house. The rain went through just once, during the cloudburst.

After the grass was burned, I noticed there was quite a bit of stone on my place. I imagine it were the stones that scared away the first squatters. The land was quite rolly and the stones were mostly on the small hills. I've about through with the stones now, and it was fun to dig them as I was used to it from Norway. In fifty-three years I have more or less every year dug up stones and hauled them away in the winter as I didn't need them. At times I would plaster them and make stone fences, put the larger stones on the bottom, the small stones in the middle, the middle-sized stones on each side. I built the fence three feet high and it kept the horses, cattle, and pigs out. That was the cheapest and best fence material that could be found, and still there are many loads of stones in fields not made use of.

When the grass was burned we found buffalo bones all over. Some were so old they were buried partly in the ground. We gathered them up and sold them at Cooperstown for $8 a ton. At one time I found quite a number of

fresh bones from an ox. They were all crushed to pieces. I have horns that were real fresh when I found them, the largest I have ever seen.

One Cold Summer Night

There was a dry period in the spring of 1888 and the wheat which was seeded was nearly withered the first part of June. We soon got a nice rain and following, an awful heat wave that made everything grow fast. We also had lots of rain in June and July. It was cold and cloudy and the grain got no headway. In the middle of August lot of the wheat was still in bloom. On the twelfth day of August we were notified from St. Paul that we had to watch the wheat as it was prophesied we would get frost in N.Dak. the 16th of August; so we prepared as best we could. We put hay and straw on the northwest side of the field. Jens Bull, my neighbor, and I worked together. Between two and three o'clock in the morning we made a fire, but it was just like a drop in the bucket. We then went over to our neighbor, Elling Froiland, to see what he thought about the frost. He was always very talkative. We found him in the shanty cooking coffee. It was so cold he had to make a fire in the stove. He gave us coffee and something to eat. We lit our pipes (Jens used chewing tobacco) and took time about things. We then went out to look at the thermometer and it showed many degrees heat. We didn't realize it was hanging on the outside wall from where the kitchen stove was. We went to our own homes with the best of hope. In the morning the wheat was froze over all N. Dak. and northern Minnesota. We will remember the Sunday morning when the sun thawed the frost from the fields. This was a new experience in this strange country. I had fooled myself to seed twelve acres of wheat in March. I received no. 2 grade for my wheat, enough seed for myself and others. The greater part of my crop froze. This was quite hard for the new beginners as they were more or less in debt. This was a trial with those irregular Nature's laws, especially when the frost completely destroyed the crops. Some threshed a little for chicken feed, others burned their

fields, some plowed and some drove a roller which flattened out the straw, and then plowed it. I made up my mind I was going to let mine stand till spring; then I would burn it and harrow it in. I plowed just twelve acres. I started to haul logs from the woods near the Sheyenne river. Here was a good chance. Barnard a brother-in-law of R.C.Cooper, had gone bankrupt due to the poor crops. We then sold the woods on one quarter and we could take as much as two oxen or horses could pull, for seventy-five cents a load. I had two oxen that pulled big loads. I drove home lot of nice elm logs. Brother Godfrey who stayed with us that winter, suggested we build a log house. He volunteered to help build it.

The next summer, 1889 was a dry summer. The average got five bushels to the acre for that which was plowed in the fall. That which was burned in the spring and dragged with a tooth harrow, got eighteen bushels. It was the snow the wind had blown in the straw, which caused the moisture to get in the ground, that helped the crop grow. Then my neighbor, Jens said, "Yes, the lazy one get the crop, and I that worked so hard and plowed, didn't get anything." He that runs around and picks berries, gets the crops." There was no emnity with Jens however, as he was a Christian and a good optimist. This life with all the hard work etc. was a good school for the beginners. They had to help themselves with what had to be done. It is wonderful what a person can do when he has to depend on himself. We tried to be jack of all trades- blacksmith, harness maker, and butcher. It didn't go so smooth at times but we managed someway. Here are two examples; One was going to butcher a pig and Froiland's son helped him. He took the ax and was going to strike the pig in the head; (as was our custom in Norway) but instead he struck the pig on the snoot. Just then the pig jumped up and wanted to run but the man struck it on the back. By that time the animal was so scared it ran away. The boy went for the fun but the pig was like a wild animal. He shot it at a quarter of a mile distant from the pig. Another neighbor was going to butcher a pig. There were a half dozen small pigs in the pen and they

and they all looked alike. I was going to be with and butcher. The boy came with a hammer, the same kind of hammer we used in breaking up the prairie to thin out the plow-lays. He ran around trying to strike the pig. At last one fell over. The more we butchered, the more learned and better experienced we became.

A New Child Play

It seemed as though the children in those days were always up to something. Two small children played with an empty barrel. They worked and worked to get it up a high hill. They let it roll down again. Then one suggested one of them go in the barrel and get a free ride down the hill. No sooner said than done. This story was told to me. These two girls are now grown up and experienced housewives. I imagine they have long ago forgotten these childish pranks.

N. Dak.'s Record Year

The year 1891 is a year to be remembered. My neighbor Jens Bull, and I hired a machine which was to thresh our shocks. We had trouble with the machine more or less, all the time. One morning we asked the machine owner to thresh, but he said, "Aw, go home with you." We went home and started to stack the wheat. This was my luck I think all the old settlers will remember the record year for N. Dak. The wheat bundles were heavy as stone and the average yield was 40 to 50 bushels to the acre. Those that finished their threshing that fall were lucky. They got seventy-five cents per bushel.

It was already the last part of October and no sign of getting anything threshed. There were just a few machines around. The crops were big and there was lots of rain that fell. Then we heard of two men by the names of Qualey and Johnson near Mardell who wanted to sell their machine. My neighbor, Mr. Ashland, and myself decided to buy this machine for $600. We had to promise to thresh three of their jobs that was left on their route. It went fine. We had good weather and was through in a week. Qualey and Johnson were paid $600. We owned the machine with no debt against it.

We moved the machine to our own farm on the other side of Cooperstown; but before we moved the heavy machine, the first snow came. We each had two oxen. It was a job to pull the heavy machine through the loose snow.

Ashland had promised to thresh some stacks for Christian Lee, four miles south of Cooperstown, but I told him he ought to save his own first which stood in shock. "Aw, what's the difference. The collectors will take it all and I'll get nothing." He moved his rig to Lee's place. We sure found out how hard it was to thresh with a damp machine full of snow and frost. It got so cold we had to keep fire in the machine all night. We hauled water from Cooperstown. The water froze in the tank so there was just a little place open for the water. We had to sweep and pound the snow off the stacks. It went real heavy through the machine. The straw carrier began to trouble, so we threw it away. We set two men to pitching straw in a fire which we started. This was a hard job and the men worked hard.

X

Memories From Life's School

Autobiography of T. T. Fuglestad, living in Bald Hill township, Grigg Co.

~~I have been asked to write my biography and also memories from pioneer days.~~

I was born March 13, 1856, in Bjerkrean, Sogn, Fjeldbygd, a mountain town on the west coast of Norway. Fuglestad was a Middleston farm, consisting of thirteen or fourteen milk cows, two horses, and sixty to seventy sheep. At the age of 18, I went to Kristiansand and attended the military school. This was a state school and every thing was free. The only thing we had to worry about was underclothes for ourselves. We got three meals a day and if we wanted a lunch we had to pay for it. We received a few pennies each week to buy writing material. This was a very good school and we had to work hard to keep up.

As far as I can remember there were ten or twelve different classes and about half of them was about military instruction. If we wanted examinations, we took the subjects the teachers told us to take; here in America, the thoughtless young people decide for themselves what to take. The school hours were from 8 to 12, 12 to 1- exercises; 4 to 5 - gymnasium classes. The rooms were in the rear of a large exercise hall where the gym apparatus was. There were about 100 pupils from the age of 18 to 23. When we were let out for recess, it was like letting out a flock of calves; some started to dance, others walked up and down the isle studying their lessons; but most of them went to the gymnasium. The apparatus consisted of ropes, poles, bombs, wood horses, etc. The horse was about five feet high, and they used a leather pillow seat to represent a saddle. To test the strength of the pupils' muscles, the pupils were taught to jump on the horse by

running from a distance, and take the horse by the mane and jump over it. At times the larger boys could not get on the horse this way. Many of the smaller boys could turn sommersault on the horse, and jump over the horse with a man sitting in the saddle.

The state had to see that we were brought up in Christian training so we didn't turn out to be "heathens". Every morning we had a devotional hour on command. Each pupil was supposed to be ready to send up a prayer if called upon. We each had a little song book named the Leader; after the singing, the oldest under officer gave the Lord's Prayer with his hand to his head, while we paid strict attention. This was our morning devotion. Here is an example of one of our devotional hours: There was lieutenant by the name of Borgen who directed; one morning we all sang a verse of Today is the Day of Grace; the next verse was what the morning day would have in store for Borgen. Then a voice sang out above the rest, "What the morning day has in store for Lieutenant Borgen." The sober way in which he sang it, filled the others with laughter. When the devotional hour was over, the director commanded all those that laughed during the prayer hour, to march forward, but no one moved.

Every Sunday each troop had to march to the church under the command of an under officer; this was the law. We each had a chair at the end of the room. When the devotional hour was over, we were again commanded to march. The preacher was the song composer, Prof. Dick. None of the soldiers had any conversation with the officers outside of the devotional hours, but we had ideas of their character and behavior. There was one officer with his sober and talkative ways, whom we had very much respect for. He came in the watch room one day when we were playing cards and said, "You mustn't play for money, boys." There was something in that tone of advice that worked on us like a sermon. That was Premier Lieutenant, Vaaler. His

personality was brought out also in the attitude he showed to those under him. Between each watch period we could sleep awhile, not undressing. One of the higher officers had his office in a corner. With this opportunity we all laid in the watch room and slept. One of the boys was Tom Burene, who had chewed tobacco since he was eight years old, and had naturally stunted his growth. He laid on his back on a wooden bench. While we were all sleeping, one of the boys went as quiet as a mouse and took two straps with buckles on and strapped Tom to the bench and went back to bed. All of a sudden there was a cry from the watchman outside, "Up with your guns; the officer has come to visit the watchman." All those sleeping sprang to their feet, grabbed their guns and went for the foor to be ready in line. "Where's Tom Burene?" the officers asked. Sensing suspicion, they went into the room, and there on the floor lay Tom Burene with the bench strapped to his back. "They've tied me," we heard him holler inside. Tom was let loose and took his place in front line with the drum in front of him.

We were all afraid we were going to be questioned but not one cross word came from the lieutenant. That's the kind of an officer that wins victory in battle. If this incident had been reported to the head general, Vergeland, there would have been quite a fuss; this mischief maker came in one morning to the head watchman, with full intentions to squeal on the second watchman because he came two minutes too late to his post. This "Crank" had watched out the window two o'clock in the morning waiting for the second watchman's return. He soon found out his own watch was wrong. At another time he had about pestered the life out of Bataljoven at Spring Mo rser. During the examinations, a mob got around him with bayonets etc. and he had to pray for mercy. He later became discharged.

He surely was not like his brother, Henric, whose statue stands in Island Park, Fargo. I was in Fargo when the monument was erected. A Jewish rabbi gave the lecture and Hemrdd Vergeland was the man that opened the doors to Norway for the Jews.

Premier Lieutenant Vaaler was married to Prof. Dick's daughter. It was this well known Mrs. Dick Vaaler that was in America a few years ago, trying to locate some Norwegians that had come to America previously; she had been in Cooperstown.

The summer of 1876 I attended a large field maneuver in Smaalene, towards the Swedish border when 10,000 were gathered to fight. I was under the military training then. They were lacking under officers so they took the students from the upper grades. We landed in the town of Mose and stayed that night. The next day we marched continually with full equipment from seven in the morning til nine at night. Many gave up from exhaustion; they were picked up by Trosset who came after us. Some that wanted to stop and drink during the march were chased back in line with drawed sables (swords). When we reached our destination and put up our tents, our company was ordered out on field watch. This was very trying, but it was wattime. We were allowed to eat after ten o'clock. This lasted a week. We got whiskey from King Oscar who was with, and another time, cigars.

One night the King was with us at our camp ball; we picked out two husky men from Seterdal. They were to dance a "halling" while one played the fiddle. The King six feet high, stood with his cap on the sword. The two men swung past us a couple of times, one lifting the cap off. The third time he landed with his hands on his comrade's shoulder with feet up in the air kicking the cap far away and it landed on his hands. Yes, that was in those days.

The reader will please excuse me for dwelling so long on the thoughts

on military life but I am surely cured from the military life now. Three of my boys were drafted in 1917 where one had to go to Germany, but with God's help came back unharmed.

To America

This year 1937 is fifty-four years since my wife, Abigal, and I packed our clothes and set sail for America. In all these years it has not been with my good will that I am here, but it was God's will, and so it was for my best. There is a feeling of satisfaction and peace to know that you are led by God's Almighty hand.

There was an economic crisis in Stavanger in the beginning of the 80's. I wouldn't overtake my father's farm as he wanted me to, so we moved to town and tried to get some kind of office work but wherever I came it seemed they were more than filled up. At last I got work at a foundry and ship yard where steamships were being built. Then one day they laid off one hundred men and I was among the unlucky. After that it seemed as though all ways for work were closed. The only way was to set my course westward, across the ocean.

I had often talked to Halvor Nordaas who was the manager of the fire department, and city gardner in Stavanger, if I could get a job as city gardner; just as I was ready to go to America, I got word I could have the job. If I had known it sooner, I would not be here now. Planting of trees and flowers has always been my dearest work. So goodbye, Norway; and I left for the strange country to the Dakota prairies.

About this journey much could be related but I will mention just a few incidents. After fourteen days on the steamship from Rotterdam, Holland, we arrived in New York. We hadn't been ashore two hours when I got the biggest surprise I ever had since I set my feet on American soil. ~~The~~ The immigrants were gathered in a large six cornered room, where benches were fastened to the wall. Most of them stood in groups around the room.

After living two weeks on spoiled vegetables and half-fried biscuits, we were near starved. I had bought a loaf of rye bread, and had a little butter left from Norway. We sat on the bench with our backs to the wall and ate. The bread lay on the bench between us. I was going to cut myself another slice when to my surprise the bread was gone. We jumped up and looked around but the bread was stolen to say, right out of our hands. Of course, the thief was in one of the other groups looking at us. My wife has always been a hard worker, and soon took her knitting and needles and started to knit. She laid a large ball of wool yarn by her side on the bench. All of a sudden the end of the thread was in her hands. The ball of yarn had been stolen also. I soon came to the conclusion that the thief was a careless woman who continued walking back and forth conversing in Norwegian to the people. She sat and talked to my wife and later followed us to the restaurant to purchase some coffee. This was a warning of what I could expect in the new land.

Our route went through the Great Lakes from Buffalo to Duluth and took about a week. We travelled as freight goods; we had our bedding with, and at night we made our bed under deck among piles of freight good. On the other side of the deck were fourteen milk cows in rows. We were a flock of Finlanders, three Norwegians and one Swede. Several times we had to move our bedding when the goods was to be taken or assessed; so as not to be in the way, the Swede had made his bed on top of a pile of goods. In the middle of the night, he was awakened by the cry of, "Move your bed; we have a daughter." We had noticed that one of the ladies from Finland was rather peculiar and stayed by herself most of the time. She had with her a daughter, two years old. One day on nearing a large city, she took sick and laid down on some sawdust by the cows. The other Finlanders didn't seem to give any aid but stood and stared at her. When the boat reached the shore, I waved and cried out to the people, "Doctor!" that helped. Soon after,

a doctor arrived with one of the men and led her to shore. This was a confinement case.

The ship started off with the two year old girl and the mother's baggage. We were waiting and expecting that some of the Finlanders would take care of her; but no one took notice of her. So my wife, Abigal, took her and tried to take the mother's place as we didn't known where the mother's destination was to be. There was nothing for us to do but to take her with us to Dakota until further inquiry be made. She was with us just a few days; when the ship stopped, two young women came aboard; one was a Norwegian and an interpreter. She explained that the girl's father lived at this city and came to take the child. They asked what we wanted for the care of the child. Of course we didn't take anything. We have many times thought it would be fun to see the little passenger again, and to tell her she was on the way to be a Norwegian Dakota dame. I imagine she must be married now as she is 56 years old.

After a month's tiresome journey, we reached Valley City, Dakota territory. There I met my brother-in-law, E. Aarestad. The next day we followed the train as far as the rails were built, two miles north of the present Hannaford. You will note Mrs. Aarestad and her two small children were in our company to Dakota as Mr. Aarestad had come the year previous.

We unloaded our provisions on the prairie near the Hetland farm where some men were working on the rails. One of them, Mathius Johnson, had oxen with, and drove us two miles to Aarestad's homestead. At last we came to our destination where our future home was to be.

I hadn't been on the Dakota prairies very long, before I felt the urge to hunt. I had taken with me from Norway a small gun and not far from JamseBull's place, there was a pond where ducks were floating around. There was high grass around, and all of a sudden I saw a pretty animal

with a bushy tail and white stripes on its back. I ran after it, but very soon had to retrace my steps. The air was full of a choking smell. It followed along with me. I had barely stepped inside the door when I heard the cry "Out! Out!" They threw some clothes out to me and ordered me to bury the clothes I had on. This was a new adventure for me. In my childhood days I had read in Nature's History of the "stenkdynet" (skunk) on the American prairies. It now became more clear to me having experienced it. What did we think of America? Oh, we thought it quite interesting and romantic, and felt at home. And my wife? Yes, it was just one time she lost her courage in all these years following my hunting experience. I came and there she stodd, looking very downcast. She pointed to the sod house and said, "Look what people have to live in. If we had money I'd go back home right away." And she meant it. She came from a rich home in Norway, where there was luxury, not making this very inviting; but then we visited some neighbors down by the Sheyenne river, and there she met some acquaintances from her neighborhood in Norway. These neighbors had been here about two years and had things quite comfortable. Her courage returned, and from then on has been quite satisfied.

I took my homestead three days after I came to Dakota. Elling Johnson (Froiland) and Jens Bull had filed on the same section earlier in the summer. They told me the S. W. quarter of the section (where a shanty was) had not been filed on, and told me I could go to Cooperstown and get papers on it. I had Jens Bull's ten year old daughter to go with me to Cooperstown and be my interpreter. They asked me what section it was; but I didn't know it. Then this little girl (now Mrs. Omund Ashland) said, "It's section ten we live on." The men soon found out the rest, section 10, township 145, range 59.

#9

My First House

Well, this is like an adventure and here is my history. My three brothers had come to America two years previous. I had received a letter from my oldest brother that if I came to America I should bring some "merskums" smoking pipes because they were so expensive in America. I then bought the finest pipe I could find in Stavanger, with a long stem and pearl band, for speculation.

I now had to build a house on my homestead. Elling Johnson urged me to go to Cooperstown and buy a shanty which stood on his land belonging to Nelson who had left. Mr. Nelson worked at the store in Cooperstown. Since I didn't have any money, I took the only thing I had of any value, which was my pipe and fled to town. I met Mr. Nelson and asked him how much he wanted for the house. He told me $35. I then told him I had no money, but a tobacco pipe that was worth that amount. We made the deal; I got the house and an "overall" and he got the pipe. I wonder if this historical pipe is in existence. We were both well satisfied with the deal.

Mr. Johnson had two oxen and I had my shanty moved to my quarter on section 10. Later on in the fall came the old bachelor that had squatted on the quarter I filed on and sold the shanty to me.

I was working on the railroad until it came as far as Cooperstown. We workers got meals and lodging in a couple of wagons. Of early settlers that I can remember working on the rails were John and Hans Haugen, Jergen Soma, and L. Herigstad. One day we went with the train south to Dazey to get some work. When night came on the boss went with the train to Sanborn and left us there on the prairie. That day it was 95 degrees heat. During the night it was not far from frost. In my haste I had forgotten my jacket in Cooperstown. I had just a thin cotton shirt on. Three o'clock in the morning the train came from Sanborn and I was nearly frozen stiff.

In the morning I had a fever and could hardly raise my head from the pillow. Sometime in the forenoon I got up and told the Norwegian cook I wanted to try and get home. On my way home, I fell over several times and had to lie down awhile. I at last came to Aarestad's. They had put a floor and windows in the sod house. There I laid a whole month with Typhoid fever. It never entered our mind to send for a doctor. We were newcomers from Norway and we never thought of calling the doctor when we felt a little sick. I don't think I was unconscious during the time I was sick but I could not control my speech. If I wanted to talk with my wife and Mrs. Aarestad it was all in a muddle. Then I pointed at the violin for them to give to me, so they could at least hear I wasn't crazy. Crazy musicians can play just as well as another musician.

The same fall of 1883, they were building a bridge six miles east of Cooperstown. I guess it was the best bridge built in Griggs Co. East of the bridge they had to build the road higher through the woods. Knut Thompson and Jamiuson had the contract for this work. Jamiuson was later postmaster and merchant in Cooperstown. The two contractors gave out the work to working men for fifteen cents per yard. I got a piece of work to do nearest the hill. There was never any talk of using horses for grading. We had to buy our own spade and wheelbarrow to be sure to be ready before the frost. I hired a couple of men to help me, Emil and Martin Krogsgard. We got our board and room at a Mr. Johnson who had built a log house a little south from where we worked. Others stopped at Mr. Fluto, west of the bridge. In the evening after supper Mr. Johnson read for us about Anderson Village where many prisoners from northern states died of hunger, and other times about "Houseman's Boy", the composer H. A. Fosse. When I paid out my expenses, I found out I had earned $3 a day. It was enough for bread through the winter. For me, these were interesting days. From my youth up I have always been

interested in trees and other vegetation, and here were pine trees were made by Nature's hands. It brought back memories. Here they stood from two to three hundred year old elm trees and bass wood, the oak still older. More or less here and there lay dead branches. The river was loaded with mink and muskrat, and in those days also Otter and Beaver. We could find traces of the beaver by the edge of the river, and many years later big branches of trees they had gnawed at for building material. Then a cleaning up of all this began. Harold Johnson from Sharon with shovel and wheelbarrow cleared the way through the woods, now highway No. 7. We considered ourselves as a help to furthur civilization.

It was a few days before Christmas in the year 1883 that Mr. Aarestad and I were going to town to buy provisions for the holidays. We got a ride with Elling Johnson who had the largest yoke of oxen I've ever seen. It was towards evening coming from town when we reached Johnson's, where we ate our supper. About 8 o'clock we started for home, one mile from there. It was very dark and not a star to be seen. We started out in the right direction but very soon we found we were going the wrong way. We noticed we had gone west instead of south. Then we tried to go the direction of the railroad, but that went a different way. At 11 o'clock we ran against a wall of a claim shanty. We went in but the only thing we found was a hat on the wall. We took up a few pieces of board from the floor and tried to make a fire. We had three matches and wasted the two. The third match lit, and saved us from being frozen. It was under zero weather; we had wool overcoats on but in the shanty were cracks in the walls where the wind blew in. When we were too cold on one side we turned on the other. The smoke from the fire filled the whole room. When morning came we had burned up eight twelve-inch boards. This was later Peter Larson's farm in Sec. 4, Bald Hill township. It was a cold morning

about 30 or 40 degrees below. We had to keep turning around to keep from freezing our faces. At home our wives had also a sleepless night.

After New Year's, 1884 my wife and I were invited to stay at Ole Stokka's when I helped him with the work. I could also take with me the two oxen I had bought. We were glad to move nearer to the Sheyenne vikey, where they kept on with debate meetings, choir practices, and devotional meetings on Sunday. Ola Westley acted as preacher. It was hard to pay for the preacher in those days. The first Norwegian preacher that visited the settlement in those days was Panykren. He held a meeting here on Sunday. The best place we had for that use was a half-ready sod barn belonging to Betual Herigstad's father, O. B. Herigstad in Minot. Ola Westley, as mentioned before, was asked to be the song leader. He was son to a song leader in Norway and had a good voice. The prayer, "Lord, I come to Thee in Thy Holy house etc., he knew by heart and the old man broke down when Ola talked about his church work in God's house. Pastor Ludeby was later a missionary for the new Norwegian settlement in that vicinity and laid down his whole life for the mission work. His territory extended from Fort Ransom to Devils Lake, one hundred miles distant.

One morning in the midst of the cold winter came this ambitious missionary, driving to Christian Aarestad. He and his horses had spent the night in the bluffs, a quarter of a mile from the house, as a result of the snowstorm, not being able to find his way. But it wasn't just this night he had to spend nights on the prairie. At that time it was a long distance to each settler and often the roads were impassible.

Blizzards

Following, will give the reader an idea how dangerous it was to be out on the prairie in those days. As mentioned before, my wife and I had moved to Stokka. Mr. Stokka was a good and interesting companion. Our chores consisted of two cows, two oxen, and my two oxen. When the weather

was nice, we drove two miles down to the river for wood, and had to take the stock there every day for drink.

It was a beautiful sunshine day in the latter part of January, 1884. Over the prairie lay high drifts of snow like waves on the ocean. It was so mild we didn't need to wear our mittens, coats, or jackets. Some of the neighbors drove to town, others went to their relations and friends for a visit. In the afternoon we were going to clean the sod barn that was snowed under. Stokka was inside, and with a long fork threw the manure out an opening. I stood outside and threw it further to the manure pile. It was so still we could hear the men chopping wood down the river; in the northwest a dark cloud came over the horizon and in a little while the whole Heavens were clouded and the snow began to fall. The snow flakes were like many summer birds filling the air. I hollered in through the door, "It's snowing." "Is that so?" I heard from inside. Then the storm came as if dropped out from a sack. I then hollered to Mr. Stokka "I can't see the house." (about four rods away) "That is terrible." Stokka remarked, and in such a tone, that it seemed he couldn't collect his thoughts. In the twinkling of an eye we were as though isolated; you'd think we were at the polar region.

A genuine N. Dak. blizzard is a phenomenon that is both interesting and dreadful. If you dare venture out the door, it's as if you are wrapped in a biting sandstorm that fills your nose and eyes. You seem to gasp for breath, and the wind, like a thunderous noise all the time; it's as though death were staring you in the face. There is a great difference between a snowstorm and a blizzard. On the third day we noticed the storm had somewhat abated. The day after again was real nice as if nothing had happened. When we looked over the prairie where the storm had raged, we could see smoke rising from high snowbanks, where we knew people lived. The prairie was not thickly settled, so it was a long

way between neighbors. As we went to inquire, we found they had all come through the storm all right. Some had dug themselves out from the snow that had drifted as high as the house. It was worse for the animals. Many places they had to be withouthfood til the storm ceased. Some tied a rope from the house and went in the direction of the barn. A flock of young people, members of the choir, went one forenoon six miles on the prairie to Mr. Froiland's place. He lived in a sod house and had a large family. The choir intended to go back the same day but had to stay due to the storm. They passed the time away singing songs. Andrew Watne was a humorous and talkative fellow. I guess he was the one who had to sleep on the chair anithere wasn't enough room on the floor. A stranger who was overtaken by the storm, set his course towards the Sheyenne river and was saved. His wife who had been visiting down by the river got home before the storm. Those out with oxen and met the storm followed the wind and let the oxen take them home. Those blessed animals have saved many a new settler's life.

It was in 1881 and 1882 that most of the new settlers settled together south and east from Coopersstown. In 1883 the railroad came through. Here they stood, these brave mons and daughters from their respective homelands, thousands of miles away from their country and relatives, far from people, forty miles to the nearest town, Valley City, and to say, almost penniless, but with all bridges burned behind, and with many questions in mind of what the unknown future will have in store for them in this new country. The future did not look very brightning for them, but with new courage they started to build homes for themselves and children on the lone prairie and where hereafter would be their working field. There were many obstacles that came in their way but the bigger the obstacle the more interesting it was to overcome it. Under such

circumstances as this, it showed who could stand the test. There was a strife between life and death. It would be a long story if the new settlers were to tell of their experiences from those days about their sacrifices, hopes, disappointments, strife, and victories; but there, man and wife stood side by side enduring the hardships together. I have many times thought that the wives of the pioneers should have just as much place in the pages of history as the man.

Among the immigrants, represented all types of life's work- taylors, blacksmiths, shoemakers, captains, tanners, etc. They aimed to take possession of the land where the Indians, buffalo and antelope a thousand years, had had their rights. Theyáim to seek a better land. The first settlers headed for the Sheyenne river where there was plenty of wood. When I came two years later, I found log houses along the woods and sod houses out on the prairie. The settlers in those days were more satisfied and at peace than they are now in their modern homes.

It was a hard time for all the new settlers. If you were to borrow anything, you had to give security, and the collectors were like blood-suckers. It is terrible how these collectors would rob the settlers of their hard earned money, and many gave up not being able to take care of the high cent in borrowing. I put in my first crop, and the oxen, not being broke in, had to be led back and forth on my fourteen acres of breaking. In the midst of my work, the sheriff came and told me I had to come to town. Someone wanted to see me and he told me who it was. I untied my oxen and walked five miles to town. The sheriff could have just as well given me a ride in his buggy, but no.

This certain person had bought a note that I had given to Lawrence Bros. that should be paid in the fall. I presume he had bought it for a less amount. Instead of sending me a letter, he sent the sheriff out without warning me. I was green and did not know the law. In the fall when I paid it, the sum was double. This is no false remark, but

the straight goods. I do not like to write this but it belongs to a new settler's life. Some years later, a business man had a mortgage on my crop. In the fall I needed a little lumber. When I went to town I took with a few sacks of oats to pay for it. The mortgage man had heard that I was to do this, so without warning he hired the sheriff to hitch two horses and to come out and drive in all my wheat crop. I had 800 bushels and had sold none. This was too much, the sheriff thought. He came out to the farm and talked to me. I thanked him for his friendliness and the next day I hauled the wheat in myself.

Many of the settlers had different aims in life, and on coming to N. Dak. found they could not achieve that aim. As you see, each person is gifted with some certain aim in life. Others have more than one aim in life and can adapt themselves accordingly. These gifts come from the Almighty Creator, and all these aims are achieved by all prepared men and women. For example, I, the writer, have from youth had an interest in tree planting; and you probably have heard of Keiser Wilhelm chopping wood once a day. In my boyhood days I read in the papers that England's greatest statesman, Gladstone, took a trip to the woods every day and chopped down trees. Well, I plant trees, Gladstone chops them down, and the Kieser saws them; so we three fill our aim in life to a certain degree.

I'm not quite sure df I, myself, got my right start in life. A methodist preacher, by placing his hands on our head could tell us just what we were able to do. He must have studied Frenology. This preacher had come to Cooperstown. It was Andrew Watne who mostly wanted our heads analized. It cost fifty cents for each person. We also got a character book from him. Here's what he said about me: "You should have been an office man or a hand laborer, but you will manage pretty well on the farm." And now fifteen years have passed

since, and I can say as Ferje Viken, that things happen for the best.

Nowadays when the Americans take homesteads, they receive papers on them. I wonder how many of our Norwegian settlers had ~~getten~~ received papers on their first piece of land when they took homesteads. I think that most of them have not been interested enough to spend a dollar to get registered Norwegian names on their farm, so the coming generation can know who first broke the land on the wild prairie. It seems that our Norwegian forefathers who landed in America nine hundred years ago had more historic sense than many of our people today. History tells that Carlsefne in the year 1007 with the company of 151 people landed in Vinland to establish a colony in Mass., leaving after them a stone that tells of their establishment.

We moved to our own farm in the year 1884 when the weather was warm enough to live in a shanty. Our two oxen and one cow with a calf, we tied on the prairie within the reach of water. If a man gets up in the wee hours of the morning in the spring, when nature wakes up after a winter's sleep and you examine Mother Nature's plants, animals, bird life, prairie chickens, each one in their own place, and the ducks splashing in the water, it all seems like a prairie romance. Here was also our place. Our life's work was to clean away and build up our new land. We cultivated the wild prairie, following our Creator's command-ment to till the soil. With my oxen and two borrowed oxen I got my fourteen acres of land broke up. It was the same piece I was working on when the sheriff came. That summer I used a fork and scythe to gather the hay. Willing Johnson and I helped each other on the farm during the haying season. One night when I came home there were two calves on the farm and my wife who always was alone when I was away, told me that a man came by driving in a wagon with a cow tied behind and a calf following. She ran after him and asked him if he wanted to

sell a calf. He told her he was alone on his claim and didn't want to bother with the calf and that he was on his way to Cooperstown to sell it. She bought the calf for $5. It so happened she didn't have any money. He waited while she ran a half-mile to the neighbor to get $5. The cow had milk enough to feed the calves. I thought my wife made a pretty good deal.

Prairie Fires

It was October the year 1885. For three days the air was filled with smoke and a strong wind was raging from the northwest. The third day the wind increased and the smoke became thicker. I was with Swen Olgard out threshing seven miles away. I knew my wife was home alone with a little child. Right after dinner I started for home. I had just stepped in the door and said hello when I was out again and I fled to the neighbors to borrow oxen to plow around the wheat stacks, but just then I saw flames half-mile away and in a few minutes the flames were over us. There was no danger for the house, barn and haystack. I had summer fallowed around them and mostly around the side where the storm came from. We were not afraid for our lives but it was horrid to see flames all around us. We had lot of rain that summer and the grass stood very high, which gave the flames a better chance to spread; but the flames swept past like a wind with a thunderous noise. When we came outside, the prairie was black, and worse, the air was full of smoke. The third largest stack of wheat in my fourteen acres went up in flames. The third stack, somewhat smaller, I had put inside the breaking near the sod barn, and was spared. This was my first crop. Later, a threshing machine came nearby, and the neighbors hauled this stack on wagons to the machine and threshed it. I got fifty bushels from it. I was out threshing at the time and knew nothing of it. That's the type of neighbors we had in those days. When one lost a cow, the neighbors would chip together and buy a cow for him.

Many of the settlers' cows that were tied here and there where there was green grass, jerked loose and ran. One cow became so badly burned, it had to be butchered. Many lost their crops; some lost them after it was threshed and put in the granary. It was difficult to meet a fire like this. The wind threw large bunches of straw over the breaking. The fire lasted three days with a steady wind. Where it came from, we do not know, but it covered a territory of not less than one hundred miles. The state was unsettled westward. The fire stopped when it reached the Cheyenne river.

My wife related she had thought of taking the baby and going to the neighbors, the time I came home from threshing, during the other prairie fire. If she would have gone that time she would have been right in the midst of the fire. It is, afterall, interesting to see how different people can meet such a situation. Some can take a glance and know just then what to do. Others get so upset and frightened they lose their senses entirely. Here is an example: When one farmer saw the fire coming towards his sod house, he lost his nerve and sprang in the sod house, took a horse harness and threw it in the fire. I shall here relate a few experiences I had the first years. It was in the spring two years after this big fire. South of us it had burned for many days; but the weather was still, and the fire made no headway. There were many large and small sloughs. All of a sudden there came a strong wind from the south. I began to realize there was danger for my neighbor as the wind went right in his direction. I then went over to my other neighbor who was plowing with his oxen. We decided to plow two of the furrows between two large sloughs so we could check the fire. We then plowed around the neighbor's home where the grass was very high; but in the south the fire had already reached some of the tall grass and smoke was thick in the air. Then it was that ~~Jens,~~ Peirs, who ~~we were~~ helping,

lost his senses and before we could hinder him he had seta fire inside of the breaking. In a minute the flames were over the housetop. If I had noticed it when he took the match, I would have dragged him outside of the breaking. After a hard fight we saved the building.

At another time, the same farmer, Pierre, wanted to burn some stubble on an eight acre field that he hadn't plowed. As the flames came to the end of the field, it started to burn on the prairie. But then Pierre woke up. I was in the barn working at the time. I heard a loud shout. I went out and there was Pierre swinging around with his coat in the air trying to put out the fire. He screamed and shouted all the time. Once in a while I heard him say, "O this is terrible! O this is terrible! For goodness sake!" I saw there was no danger. I thought to myself, you ought to know better before you ever setfire to that. It wasn't very nice of me, but I laughed so heartily, Iheld my stomach, it was so comical. At last I barely heard his voice. I then went over and asked him as nice as I could, "Did you start a prairie fire, Pierre?" He said, "Yes, I never thought it would start out like that. There was a fence there with two wires on, and it was in the pasture." So I said, "Pierre, come, we'll set a fire along the roadside and it will die out by itself."

It was during noon hour. I have never had the habit of taking a rest after dinner because I never had the time, so I went over to Pierre to pass away the time. I found him sleeping on the bench. I sat down and took the paper (Scandinavian) to read. I hadn't been sitting there very long when a little girl came storming in, "There's fire in the hen house. Wake up!" Pierre sprang up and was going to take a chew before he went. The tobacco box fell on the floor, so he hurried to get his shoes on and went out, I after him with an empty pail. The hen house was partly sod house along a slough. For a roof, brush and posts were used.

Close by the chicken cellar, he had, the year before, threshed a little oats and from the straw pile he had taken some straw and put on the chicken roof. Between the chicken house and threshed oats was lots of straw. Pierre wanted to burn just the little straw pile, and then went back for his after dinner nap. That very dry straw stack was burned up in a short time. The chickens inside were making a noise as if nothing had happened. There was no great damage but we carried water and quenched the fire.

Pierre could never keep quiet when he was involved in anything like this. His mouth kept going all the time, and it became so comical to me, I had to laugh when I wouldn't be seen. Prairie fires are now a thing of the past. But last summer, 1936, all vegetation was dried up and thousands of haystacks were burned in N. Dak., S. Dak., and Minn. I hadn't plowed around my haystacks for I had just one oxen that could work and that was loaned to the neighbor; the other oxen was sick.

I worked out with Mr. Olgard's threshing machine as long as I could as we needed the money for home. The prairie fire had mostly gone through where Olgard was going to thresh. We had quite an amount of trouble with the machine one day, so Swen Lime who was with, suggested we gather up seed from the trees in the woods. He had the same interest in trees that I had. He gathered the ash seed and I gathered the box elder. The next spring I seeded in the breaking my box elder seed. It laid there two years. I plowed around the north side where it would come up. Fifty years have passed and my trees are standing high and fresh.

Sod House

In the spring of 1884, when the weather permitted, we moved in the shanty. The roof and walls were of rough boards. Late in the summer I got some men to help me build a sod house. I received information from

someone who understood how the sod house should be built. The first thing was to find out the best material to use, and that had to be a certain sod of strong grass roots. We found that along a slough. We had to break the chunks carefully, three or four inches thick. We cut it in big chunks. When the chimney was made, sand was put between each layer. We left an opening for a double window in the south and east, and for a door on the north, where we later built a room with a slant roof, and a door on the east. Here in the summer we had the stove. We had five elm logs; we put one on the top, one on each side, and one on the chimney. On these we nailed the rough boards from the shanty, and then tarpaper. We had grass three feet long that we laid layer upon layer next to the sod so as to keep out the water. We laid the sod gradually as we cut it; then the house was considered ready so far. It was then to fix the inside, to smooth out the walls as smooth as a plastered wall. We swept the walls good with a broom so that the grass pieces should hold the plastering. We then found some gumbo or white clay on the edge of a large slough, which we used for the walls. This stayed on the walls as long as we lived there (8 yrs.). After, my helper, Mr. Krogagard, suggested we white wash the walls with the same stuff. It became quite a bit lighter. Later on, when we could afford it, we whitewashed it with plaster. It was a good house, warm in the winter and cool in the summer. We never had fire at night. In those years it never even froze the water in the house. The rain went through just once, during the cloudburst.

After the grass was burned, I noticed there was quite a bit of stone on my place. I imagine it were the stones that scared away the first squatters. The land was quite rolly and the stones were mostly on the small hills. I've about through with the stones now, and it was fun to dig them as I was used to it from Norway. In fifty-three years I have

more or less every year dug up stones and hauled them away in the winter as I didn't need them. At times I would plaster them and make stone fences, put the larger stones on the bottom, the small stones in the middle, the middle-sized stones on each side. I built the fence three feet high and it kept the horses, cattle, and pigs out. That was the cheapest and best fence material that could be found, and still there are many loads of stones in fields not made use of.

When the grass was burned we found buffalo bones all over. Some were ~~so old that they were b~~ so old they were buried partly in the ground. We gathered them up and sold them at Cooperstown for $8 a ton. At one time I found quite a number of fresh bones from an ox. They were all crushed to pieces. I have horns that were real fresh when I foundthem, the largest I have ever seen.

One Cold Summer Night

There was a dry period in the spring of 1888 and the wheat which was seeded was nearly withered the first part of June. We soon got a nice rain and following, an awful heat wave that made everything grow fast. We also had lots of rain in June and July. It was cold and cloudy and the grain got no headway. In the middle of August lot of the wheat was still in bloom. On the twelfth day of August we were notified from St. Paul that we had to watch the wheat as it was prophesied we would get frost in N. Dak. the 16th of August; so we prepared as best we could. We put hay and straw on the northwest side of the field. Jens Bull, my neighbor, and I worked together. Between two and three o'clock in the morning we made a fire, but it was just like a drop in the bucket. We then went over to our neighbor, Elling Froiland, to see what he thought about the fire. He was always very talkative. We found him in the shanty cooking coffee. It was so cold he had to make a fire in the stove. He gave us coffee and something to eat. We lit our pipes (Jens used chewing tobacco) and took time about things. We then went out to look at the thermometer and it showed many

degrees heat. We didn't realize it was hanging on the outside wall from where the kitchen stove was. We went to our own homes with the best of hope. In the morning the wheat was froze over all N. Dak. and northern Minnesota. We well remember the Sunday morning when the sun thawed the frost from the fields. This was a new experience in this strange country. I had fooled myself to seed twelve acres of wheat in March. I received no. 3 grade for my wheat, enough seed for myself and others. The greater part of my crop froze. This was quite hard for the new beginners as they were more or less in debt. This was a trial with those irregular Nature's laws, especially when the frost completely destroyed the crops. Some threshed a little for chicken feed, others burned their fields, some plowed and some drove a roller which flattened out the straw,and then plowed it. I made up my mind I was going to let mine stand till spring; then I would burn it and harrow it in. Iplowed just twelve acres. I started to haul logs from the woods near the Sheyenne river. Here was a good chance. Barnes, a brother-in-law of R. C. Cooper, had gone bankrupt due to the poor crops.. He then sold the woods on one quarter and we could take as much as two oxen or horses could pull, for seventy-five cents a load. I had two oxen that pulled big loads. I drove home lot of nice elm logs. Brother Godfrey who stayed with us that winter, suggested we build a log house. He volunteered to help build it.

The next summer, 1889 was a dry summer. The average got five bushels to the acre for that which was plowed in the fall. That which was burned in the spring and dragged with a tooth harrow, got eighteen bushels. It was the snow the wind had blown in the straw, which caused the moisture to get in the ground, that helped the crop grow. Then my neighbor, Jöns said, "Yes, the lazy ones get the crop, and I that worked so hard and plowed, didn't get anything." He that runs around and picks berries,

gets the crops." There was no enmity with Jens however, as he was a Christian and a good optimist. This life with all the hard work etc. was a good school for the beginners. They had to help themselves with what had to be done. It is wonderful what a person can do when he has to depend on himself. We tried to be jack of all trades - blacksmith, harness maker, and butcher. It didn't go so smooth at times but we managed someway. Here are two examples: One was going to butcher a pig and Froiland's son helped him. He took the ax and was going to strike the pig in the head; (as was our custom in Norway) but instead he struck the pig on the snoot. Just then the pig jumped up and wanted to run but the man struck it on the back. By that time the animal was so scared it ran away. The boy went for the fun but the pig was like a wild animal. He shot it at a quarter of a mile distant from the pig. Another neighbor was going to butcher a pig. There were a half dozen small pigs in the pen and they all looked alike. I was going to be with and butcher. The boy came with a hammer, the same kind of hammer we used in breaking up the prairie to thin out the plow-lays. He ran around trying to strike a pig. At last one fell over. The more we butchered, the more learned and better experienced we became.

A New Child Play

It seemed as though the children in those days were always up to something. Two small children played with an empty barrel. They worked and worked to get it up a high hill. They let it roll down again. Then one suggested one of them go in the barrel and get a free ride down the hill. No sooner said than done. This story was told to me. These two girls are now grown up and experienced housewives. I imagine they have long ago forgotten these childish pranks.

#26

N. Dak.'s Record Year

The year 1891 is a year to be remembered. My neighbor Jens Bull, and I hired a machine which was to thresh our shocks. We had trouble with the machine more or less, all the time. One morning we asked the machine owner to thresh, but he said, "Aw, go home with you." We went home and started to stack the wheat. This was my luck I think all the old settlers will remember the record year for N. Dak. The wheat bundles were heavy as stone and the average yield was 40 to 50 bushels to the acre. Those that finished their threshing that fall were lucky. They got seventy-five cents per bushel.

It was already the last part of October and no sign of getting anything threshed. There were just a few machines around. The crops were big and there was lots of rain that fall. Then we heard of two men by the names of Qualey and Johnson near Mardell who wanted to sell their machine. My neighbor, Mr. Ashland, and myself decided to buy this machine for $600. We had to promise to thresh three of their jobs that was left on their route. It went fine. We had good weather and was through in a week. Qualey and Johnson were paid $600. We owned the machine with no debt against it. We moved the machine to our own farm on the other side of Cooperatown; but before we moved the heavy machine, the first snow came. We each had two oxen. It was a job to pull the heavy machine through the loose snow.

Ashland had promised to thresh some stacks for Christian Lee, four miles south of Cooperstown, but I told him he ought to save his own first which stood in shock. "Aw, what's the difference. The collectors will take it all and I'll get nothing." He moved his rig to Lee's place. We sure found out how hard it was to thresh with a damp machine full of snow and frost. It got so cold we had to keep fire in the machine all

night. We hauled water from Cooperstown. The water froze in the tank so there was just a little place open for the water. We had to sweep and pound the snow off the stacks. It went real heavy through the machine. The straw carrier began to trouble, so we threw it away. We set two men to pitching straw in a fire which we started. This was a hard job and the men worked hard.

"In Those Days" by T. T. Fugelstad

A memory from 34 years ago.

At Stavanger Laget in Williston, I met a man who, when he heard I was from Cooperstown, related that he had been there in threshing in the fall of 1891, in a snowstorm and zero weather. He was with a party who had bought a threshing machine from someone who wished to quit threshing as a business. Is that so, said I, it was my neighbor, O. Ashland and myself that were along. The story is this:

Another neighbor, Jens Bull, and I had contracted for a machine to thresh shocks but that machine had been giving trouble and it was delayed. One morning I went over together with Jens and asked them to come and thresh. We received the curt reply: "Oh, go on home with you." Well, I went home and began to stack and that was later my good luck.

The old settlers will remember that the winter of 1891 is the record year for a wheat crop in North Dakota. It ran commonly 40-50 bu. to the acre. Those who were able to thresh that fall made good money at the current price of 75¢ per bushell.

It was nearing the end of October and still no prospects of getting the threshing done. There were few machines, a heavy crop and much rain that fall. It was Qualey and Johnson that wanted to sell their thresher. Neighbor Ashland and I agreed between us to buy the machine for $600; but we had to promiseto thresh three jobs they had already contracted for. It went well. We had nice weather, finished the threshing for the three farmers. These were supposed to pay for the threshing direct to Johnson and Qualey and it amounted to $600. Now we owned the machine free of encumbrance. We could then move to our own farms on the other side of town; but before we could move the heavy machinery, the first snow came and two pair oxen for each machine had all they could do to pull them in the loose snow. Ashland had

promised to thresh some stacks for Christian Lee, four miles south of Cooperstown, but he ought to try to save his own crop, thought I. "Oh, shaw, the collectors will take it all and I won't get anything anyway." But the collectors took 12% on the papers which were good for several years.

Now we surefound out how impractical it wasttothresh with steam engine in snow and frost; it became so cold we had to keep the engine going all night. We hauled water from town, four miles. Ice formed around the edges of the water container so there was only a small capacity in the middle for water. We had to sweep and beat the snow off the stacks, and it went heavily and slowly through the machine. The straw carrier troubled allethe time so we discarded that and two men pitched the straw. This was a hard job so these two could not spare themselves.

Then we moved to my farm. It was continually bitterly cold. One night we kept on til 8:00 P. m. We set fire to each bucking straw to give light for the laborers. It was so cold that when a person did not work they would have to go in the house and the little new log house was pretty small, but the strangers were gone for the most part, so the neighbors were helping all they could. To keep the workers in good humor, I bought a box of cigars, my partner who was "wet" treated whiskey to those who cared for it.

I gave up threshing a couple oat stacks and some bundles of millet in order to help my brotherinlaw Aarestad thresh his wheat stacks. We had threshed about half of his wheat when we had a terrific snowstorm sothour threshing machine was snowed under which stood between two half stacks. Then Aarestad gave up.

A few days later when it looked like better weather was in the offing, Emil Krogsgaard came and offered to push the machine out and

move it over to his stacks if we would thresh for him. And that went good. But he was unable to get out enough men but we threshed 1200 bushels. By this time it was way out in December. Those who threshed in the spring, among these my partner, had to sell the wheat for feed at 24-25¢.

When I think back to those days, it seems almost unbelievable that we could keep on threshing under such circumstances, but they all helped the best they could and we did it.

I sold my share in the machine in the spring following for what I could get.

~~T. T. Fuglestad~~

Bib: T.T. Fuglestad wrote the above under the title, "In Those Days" - (a memory from 34 years ago.)

Translated by miss Marit Avermoen
Cooperstown, N. D.

EARLY DAYSS IN GRIGGS COUNTY

by T.T. Fuglestad

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Bib: T.T. Fuglestad wrote the above in Norse under the title "In Those Days"
(A memory of 34 years ago)

Translated by Miss Marit Overmoen, Cooperstown, ND.