

PIONEER BIOGRAPHY
Amund Gilbertson

To write an ordinary story is difficult but to write a story which is true and at the same time interesting as well as relating all items of interest pertaining to the subject at hand is quite a different undertaking, and such is my task set before me in attempting to write the history of our worthy citizen, Mr. Amund Gilbertson. To be sure, I did feel a little embarrassed as well as oppressed, having to do this, but while having my interview I soon forgot all of this and enjoyed with him all these happenings and incidents, and lived with him in part at least these years in the past. If I can manage my life, in such a way as to accomplish as much accordingly, I shall feel it well worth while.

The story that follows is in a small way the most interesting happenings of his life.

Mr. Amund Gilbertson was born August 22, 1857 in Valres, Norway. His mother's name was Sigrid Gulsdaughter and his father's name was Gulbran Mikkelson. There were four boys and four girls in the family and he was the seventh. He was born on a farm which was located right on the fjord, "The Nevlingen". The farm covered about 200 acres of which about 30 acres were under cultivation. Each farm in those days in Norway had one to two and three horses. Their livelihood came from herding, fishing and logging.

In 1880 at the age of 22 years he decided to come to the United States having heard of wondrous possibilities in this land of ours.

It took him about 12 days to come across the Atlantic Ocean and about two days on the North Sea, taking passage on the Cunard Line. He landed at Boston instead of New York as boats do now. His sister and her husband came also with him. From Boston he went to Kensett, Iowa. He considered settling there but as all the land was already taken, and none to be had for less than ten dollars per acre, he decided to seek for land elsewhere. He left Iowa about May 17, 1881 and went as far by railroad as Blanchard, N. Dak., where the railroad had already been built. From there he went to the Goose River vicinity. He intended to settle here but all the land was taken here too, so found he had to go west again. He stayed in Goose River Valley about one month, then came out here with prospectors, but in June returned to Goose River again and stayed there till the 12 of December working, then he went to Wisconsin and stayed there till March working in a lumber camp, coming back in the spring to Goose River Valley.

In those days one had to make the best of opportunities and earn extra dollars whenever possible. That spring a number of them including Iver Thompson, Torkel Fosholt, Thor Hagen, and a few others all came here seeking for land.

Traveling then was no easy matter and their only way was by foot, following merely a prairie trail.

Having heard of Red Willow Lake and its scenic beauty and the instinct of settling near timber and water near which they had lived all their lives, they went there hoping to find what they wanted. However, the land was too rolling and too stony so they returned here. He visited at Willow Lake for two days with acquaintances however. He filed on May 2, 1882, on the northeast quarter, Section 10, Range 58 west, where the school house is now located and in order to do this he had to go to Fargo, North Dakota. He walked to Mayville and from there he

Amund Gilbertson (continued)

took the train to Fargo. Filing in those days cost from \$16 to \$18 only. Upon coming back he put up a log cabin and in 1883 began breaking with a pair of oxen which he bought north of Portland, N. Dak., for which he paid \$160. Rather aristocratic names they had, Duke and Dime! With these steady oxen he broke about 30 acres.

In 1882 before filing on his land he worked on the Cooper ranch receiving the magnificent sum of \$2.00 a day in harvest and threshing. There were 32 shockers and 18 binders so one can imagine what a large farm it was in those days. It was here Mr. Gilbertson made his first acquaintance with the ripe tomato. It was undoubtedly a cheap food for it was served in place of our common food "sauce.". By adding some sugar it was quite a dish. Fortunately for him, he liked them and the tomato has been his friend ever since. Another incident which he related was the problem of drinking water with so many shockers. It kept one man busy all day long, hauling water. This he did by having a large keg in a buggy, going from one man to the next. By the time the last one had been watered the first one was waiting.

There were no Indians living here when Mr. Gilbertson came but he frequently talked with Indians going through the country who were digging "snake roots". These were to be used for medicinal purposes. The Sibley trail and crossing, however, were very evident, this having been used by Sibley when on his way to fight Indians at the Missouri River.

In 1884 five acres more were broken up on which he raised 130 bushels of wheat. In 1885 he broke 30 acres more on which he raised 1000 bushels of wheat. He sold part of this receiving the paltry sum of \$.38 per bushel. In the same year he bought a plow and harrow in Mayville but borrowed a drill to seed it with. At this time the reaper had no binding attachment as now but the grain was bound by hand. In the year 1883 three neighbors went together and bought a regular binder for \$240, thinking this would solve their harvesting problems. It had a 6 foot cut and McCormick make, but it proved unsatisfactory.

The lure of the trees and sight of water proved too strong for Mr. Gilbertson, and in 1886 he moved from the prairie down near the banks of the Sheyenne river where he lived for many years until moving to the home where he now lives. This time too he built a log cabin for his living quarters.

Food was not abundant but he always had all necessities, never experiencing hunger, which many pioneers did from the lack of food. He boasts of having had one milch cow at this time, but apparently pioneering was too much for her, for she became tangled up in her picket rope and committed suicide by drowning. Imagine the loss!

Chickens were not common then, he having none. Two oxen and one cow, while the cow lived, were all his possessions.

Conditions then were similar to now as far as wheat flour goes. Wheat sold for as little as \$.30 per bushel but flour sold for \$5.00 per 100 pounds.

Groceries he bought in Cooperstown for the railroad came here in 1883. The year 1883 is particularly remembered on account of the lack of rain, no rain at all until July 3, which resulted in very poor crops. 1886 was again dry, 1887 was again remembered as an odd year, there being nothing practically raised but "pig weeds." In 1888 an extremely heavy frost visited this locality and the night of August 16 saw the crops laid waste. No one can quite realize what this hardship meant to the pioneers, especially for those with large families.

Amund Gilbertson (continued)

Mr. Gilbertson told an amusing story in regard to this year. a certain pioneer family whose numbers were rather large were neighbors of his. One of the older girls was at Hope working and her younger sister was with her attending school. After this heavy frost she was extremely worried in regard to the welfare of her people. Her sister who was always an optimist did not quite see it that way. The older sister one day said, "I cannot see what the folks will do, now that the wheat is gone!" "Do," she said, "there's nothing to do, they will just have to eat frozen meat."

In 1891 they experienced a bumper crop, so much so, that they had never had one like it in previous years.

Socially they all seemed to be on the same level, and the good old hospitality which was extended to one and all in those days seems to have been forgotten or else it is that we are not in sympathy with one another's problems as they were then.

Picking buffalo bones was an industry in which Mr. Gilbertson was employed for a while and for which he received \$20 a ton. However, he did not go into it as heavily as many others as he felt he must make use of his time improving his land.

He has enjoyed hunting deer here. John Pitch, a more or less trapper and he used to go hunting with him and at one time they shot a deer weighing about 800 pounds.

When asked if he recalled any happening of particular interest, he told about when going to buy his oxen. On his way home he was caught in a blizzard which proved so severe that both his ears were so badly frozen that they burst open as an after effect. He did not take his oxen with him when he bought them, but went back to Portland for them. Going over he went on skis. The sun and snow were so glaring and dazzling that he became "Snow Blind" which lasted two days, the most painful experience he can recall. He was delayed for some time at Portland and when coming back the oxen had to swim a creek they had to cross which had been so swollen from the spring thaw that both he and the oxen were nearly drowned. Darkness overtook them. They finally came to an old shack where they camped over night without a bite of supper for breakfast. About noon the next day they reached Opheim's where food could be bought, again thankful that the trip was over.

Some of the pioneers Mr. Gilbertson frequently visited were John Pitch, John Atchison, Mr. Vet Pound, Charlie Piatt, and Mr. Park.

Mr. Gilbertson's grain was threshed by Mr. Swen Olgaard for the first 4--5 years, paying usually \$.05 per bushel. After a while he became interested in it too and bought a threshing rig of his own.

Buggies were an unknown luxury. He was the proud owner of a lumber wagon which proved very satisfactory while it rained but during dry weather the tires were always missing.

By the most careful economy a little wealth was acquired, every year adding a small sum to the nest egg. Farm machinery improved, roads were built, homes were enlarged or new ones built, the price of grain advanced, and wheat still remained king of grains. More land was bought to raise more grain to sell more wheat, to get more money, to buy more land, and so the story goes.

However, there came the problem of diversified farming and weed eradication. This compelled the farmers to put forth more effort in farming.

Amund Gilbertson (continued)

Mr. Gilbertson finding help a serious problem decided he had been active long enough so rented his farms. He has always been interested in improvements, betterment and education, having served on township boards as director or various organizations and the like.

Mr. Gilbertson was married to Mary Fitcher in 1888, her father too being a pioneer. To them were born 5 children, three of whom are living. They are Mrs. M. M. Lunde, Jr. living near the Sheyenne in Sverdrup township, Mrs. Fred Melgard living at Grace City, N. Dak., and Mrs. Lloyd W. Roen of Fargo, N. Dak.

He is making his home with his daughter, Mrs. Lunde, his wife passing away over 20 years ago.

Hardships have been endured, disappointments met, and loved ones taken away, yet he is active and alert. Unless knowing no one would guess the change that has come over this state of ours. He has visited his home land, Norway, twice since coming here, the last trip within four years past, yet he is always so happy to come back to his own country, the United States, and to his own state North Dakota.

I might go on telling experiences but I have tried to get the most important facts as he sees it in his life, and hope I have succeeded at least in part, in writing his pioneer days.

--Esther Njaa

Biography of Amund Gilbertson

--Esther Njaa

To write an ordinary story is difficult but to write a story which is true and at the same time interesting as well as relating all items of interest pertaining to the subject at hand is quite a different undertaking, and such is my task set before me in attempting to write the history of our worthy citizen, Mr. Amund Gilbertson. To be sure, I did feel a little embarrassed as well as oppressed, having to do this, but while having my interview I soon forgot all of this and enjoyed with him all these happenings and incidents, and lived with him in part at least these years in the past. If I can manage my life, in such a way as to accomplish as much accordingly, I shall feel it well worth while.

The story that follows is in a small way the most interesting happenings of his life.

Mr. Amund Gilbertson was born August 22, 1857 in Valdres, Norway. His mother's name was Sigrid Gulsdaughter and his father's name was Gulbran Mikkelson. There were four boys and four girls in the family and he was the seventh. He was born on a farm which was located right on the fjord, "The Nevlingen". The farm covered about 200 acres of which about 30 acres were under cultivation. Each farm in those days in Norway had 1 to 2 and 3 horses. Their livelihood came from herding, fishing, and logging.

In 1880 at the age of 22 years he decided to come to the United States having heard of wondrous possibilities in this land of ours.

It took him about 12 days to come across the Atlantic ocean and about 2 days on the North Sea, taking passage on the Cunard line. He landed at Boston instead of New York as boats do now. His sister and her husband came also with him. From Boston he went to Kensett, Iowa. He considered settling there but as all the land was already taken, and none to be had for less than ten dollars per acre, he decided to seek for land elsewhere. He left Iowa about May 17, 1881 and went as far by railroad as Blanchard, N. Dak., where the railroad had already been built. From there he went to the Goose river vicinity. He intended to settle here but all the land was taken here too, so found he had to go west again. He stayed in Goose River Valley about one month, then came out here with prospectors, but in June returned to Goose River again and stayed there till the 12th of December working, then he went to Wisconsin and stayed there till March working in a lumber camp, coming back in the spring to Goose River Valley.

In those days one had to make the best of opportunities and earn extra dollars whenever possible. That spring a number of them including Iver Thompson, Torkel Fosholt, Thor Hagen, and a few others all came here seeking for land.

Traveling then was no easy matter and their only way was by foot, following merely a prairie trail.

Biography of Amund Gilbertson
--Esther Njaa

Having heard of Red Willow Lake and its scenic beauty and the instinct of settling near timber and water near which they had lived all their lives, they went there hoping to find what they wanted. However, the land was too rolling and too stony so they returned here. He visited at Willow Lake for 2 days with acquaintances however. He filed on May 2, 1882, on the northeast quarter, Section 10, Range 58 west, where the school house is now located and in order to do this he had to go to Fargo, North Dakota. He walked to Mayville and from there he took the train to Fargo. Filing in those days cost from \$16 to \$18 only.

Upon coming back he put up a log cabin and in 1883 began breaking with a pair of oxen which he bought north of Portland, North Dakota, for which he paid \$160. Rather aristocratic names they had, Duke and Dime! With these steady oxen he broke about 30 acres.

In 1882 before filing on his land he worked on the Cooper Ranch receiving the magnificent sum of \$2.00 a day in harvest and threshing. There were 32 shockers and 18 binders so one can imagine what a large farm it was in those days. It was here Mr. Gilbertson made his first acquaintance with the ripe tomato. It was undoubtedly a cheap food for it was served in place of our common food "sauce". By adding some sugar it was quite a dish. Fortunately for him, he liked them and the tomato has been his friend ever since. Another incident which he related was the problem of drinking water with so many shockers. It kept one man busy all day long, hauling water. This he did by having a large keg in a buggy, going from one man to the next. By the time the last one had been watered the first one was waiting.

There were no Indians living here when Mr. Gilbertson came but he frequently talked with Indians going through the country who were digging "snake roots". These were to be used for medicinal purposes. The Sibley trail and crossing, however, were very evident, this having been used by Sibley when on his way to fight Indians at the Missouri River.

In 1884 five acres more were broken up on which he raised 130 bu. of wheat. In 1885 he broke 30 acres more on which he raised 1000 bu. of wheat. He sold part of this receiving the paltry sum of \$.38 per bushel. In the same year he bought a plow and harrow in Mayville but borrowed a drill to seed it with. At this time the reaper had no binding attachment as now but the grain was bound by hand. In the year 1883 three neighbors went together and bought a regular binder for \$240, thinking this would solve their harvesting problems. It had a 6 ft. cut and McCormick make, but it proved unsatisfactory.

The lure of the trees and sight of water proved too strong for Mr. Gilbertson, and in 1886 he moved from the prairie down near the banks of the Sheyenne where he lived for many years until moving to the home where he now lives. This time too he built a log cabin for his living quarters.

Biography of Amund Gilbertson
--Esther Njaa

Food was not abundant but he always had all necessities, never experiencing hunger, which many pioneers did from the lack of food.

He boasts of having had one milch cow at this time, but apparently pioneering was too much for her, for she became tangled up in his picket rope and committed suicide by drowning. Imagine the loss!

Chickens were not common then, he having none. Two oxen and one cow, while the cow lived, were all his possessions.

Conditions then were similar to now as far as wheat flour goes. Wheat sold for as little as \$.30 per bushels but flour sold for \$5.00 per 100 pounds.

Groceries he bought in Cooperstown for the railroad came here in 1883. The year 1883 is particularly remembered on account of the lack of rain, no rain at all until July 3rd, which resulted in very poor crops. 1886 was again dry, 1887 was again remembered as an odd year, there being nothing practically raised but "pig weeds". In 1888 an extremely heavy frost visited this locality and the night of August 16th saw the crops laid waste. No one can quite realize what this hardship meant to the pioneers, especially for those with large families.

Mr. Gilbertson told an amusing story in regard to this year. A certain pioneer family whose numbers were rather large were neighbors of his. One of the olderrgirls was at Hope working and her younger sister was with her attending school. After this heavy frost she was extremely worried in regard to the welfare of her people. Her sister who was always an optimist did not quite see it that way. The older sister one day said, "I cannot see what the folks will do, now that the wheat is gone!" "Do", she said, "There's nothing to do, they will just have to eat frozen wheat."

In 1891 they experienced a bumper crop, so much so, that they had never had one like it in previous years.

Socially they all seemed to be on the same level, and the good old hospitality which was extended to one and all in those days seems to have been forgotten or else it is that wer are not in sympathy with one another's problems as they were then.

Picking buffalo bones was an industry in which Mr. Gilbertson was employed for a while and for which he received \$20 a ton. However, he did not go into it as heavily as many others as he felt he must make use of his time improving his land.

He has enjoyed hunting deer here. John ^{Pates} Pitch, a more or less trapperand he used to go hunting with him and at one time they shot a deerweighing about 800 pounds.

Biography of Amund Gilbertson
--Esther Njaa

When asked if he recalled any happening of particular interest, he told about when going to buy his oxen. On his way home he was caught in a blizzard which proved so severe that both his ears were so badly frozen that they burst open as an after effect. He did not take his oxen with him when he bought them, but went back to Portland for them. Going over he went on skis. The sun and snow were so glaring and dazzling that he became "Snow Blind" which lasted two days, the most painful experience he can recall. He was delayed for some time at Portland and when coming back the oxen had to swim a creek they had to cross which had been so swollen from the spring thaw that both he and the oxen were nearly drowned. Darkness overtook them. They finally came to an old shack where they camped over night without a bite of supper or breakfast. About noon the next day they reached Opheim's where food could be bought, again thankful that the trip was over.

Pater Some of the pioneers Mr. Gilbertson frequently visited were John Pitch, John Atchison, Mr. Vet Pound, Charlie Piatt, and Mr. Park.

Mr. Gilbertson's grain was threshed by Mr. Swen Olgaard for the first 4--5 years, paying usually \$.05 per bushel. After a while he became interested in it and bought a threshing rig of his own.

Buggies were an unknown luxury. He was the proud owner of a lumber wagon which proved very satisfactory while it rained but during dry weather the tires were always missing.

By the most careful economy a little wealth was acquired, every year adding a small sum to the nest egg. Farm machinery improved, roads were built, homes were enlarged or new ones built, the price of grain advanced, and wheat still remained king of grains. More land was bought to raise more grain to sell more wheat, to get more money, to buy more land, and so the story goes.

However, there came the problem of diversified farming and weed eradication. This compelled the farmers to put forth more effort in farming.

Mr. Gilbertson finding help a serious problem decided he had been active long enough so rented his farms. He has always been interested in improvements, betterment and education, having served on township boards, as director of various organizations and the like.

Mr. Gilbertson was married to Mary Hagen in 1888, her father too being a pioneer. To them were born 5 children, three of whom are living. They are Mrs. M. M. Lunde, Jr. living near the Sheyenne in Sverdrup township, Mrs. Fred Melgard living at Grace City, North Dakota, and Mrs. Lloyd W. Roen of Fargo, N. Dak.

He is making his home with his daughter, Mrs. Lunde, his wife passing away over 20 years ago.

Hardships have been endured, disappointments met, and loved ones

Biography of Amund Gilbertson
--Esther Njaa

taken away, yet he is active and alert. Unless knowing no one would guess the change that has come over this state of ours. He has visited his home land, Norway, twice since coming here, the last trip within four years past, yet he is always so happy to come back to his own country, the United States, and to his own state, North Dakota.

I might go on telling experiences but I have tried to get the most important facts as he sees it in his life, and hope I have succeeded at least in part, in writing his pioneer days.

Biography of Amund Gilbertson

--Esther Njaa

To write an ordinary story is difficult but to write a story which is true and at the same time interesting as well as relating all items of interest pertaining to the subject at hand is quite a different undertaking, and such is my task set before me in attempting to write the history of our worthy citizen, Mr. Amund Gilbertson. To be sure, I did feel a little embarrassed as well as oppressed, having to do this, but while having my interview I soon forgot all of this and enjoyed with him all these happenings and incidents, and lived with him in part at least these years in the past. If I can manage my life, in such a way as to accomplish as much accordingly, I shall feel it well worth while.

The story that follows is in a small way the most interesting happenings of his life.

Mr. Amund Gilbertson was born August 22, 1857, in Valdres, Norway. His mother's name was Sigrid Gulsdaghter and his father's name was Gulbran Mikkelson. There were four boys and four girls in the family and he was the seventh. He was born on a farm which was located right on the fjord, "The Nevlingen". The farm covered about 200 acres of which about 30 acres were under cultivation. Each farm in those days in Norway had 1 to 2 and 3 horses. Their livelihood came from herding, fishing, and logging.

In 1880, at the age of 23 years he decided to come to the United States having heard of wondrous possibilities in this land of ours.

It took him about 12 days to come across the Atlantic Ocean and about 2 days on the North Sea, taking passage on the Cunard line. He landed at Boston instead of New York as boats do now. His sister and her husband came also with him. From Boston he went to Kensett, Iowa. He considered settling there but as all the land was already taken, and none to be had for less than ten dollars per acre, he decided to seek for land elsewhere. He left Iowa about May 17, 1881, and went as far by railroad as Blanchard, N. Dak., where the railroad had already been built. From there he went to the Goose river vicinity. He intended to settle here but all the land was taken here, too, so found he had to go west again. He stayed in Goose River Valley about one month, then came out here with prospectors, but in June returned to Goose River again and stayed there till the 12th of December working, then he went to Wisconsin and stayed there till March working in a lumber camp, coming back in the spring to Goose River Valley.

In those days one had to make the best of opportunities and earn extra dollars whenever possible. That spring a number of them including Iver Thompson, Torkel Fosholt, Thor Hagen, and a few others all came here seeking for land.

Traveling then was no easy matter and their only way was by foot, following merely a prairie trail.

Having heard of Red Willow Lake and its scenic beauty and the instinct of settling near timber and water near which they had lived all their lives, they went there hoping to find what they wanted. However, the land was too rolling and too stony so they returned here. He visited

2

Biography of Amund Gilbertson
--Esther Njaa

at Willow Lake for 2 days with acquaintances however. He filed on May 2, 1882, on the northeast quarter, Section 10, Range 58 west, where the school house is now located and in order to do this he had to go to Fargo, North Dakota. He walked to Mayville and from there he took the train to Fargo. Filing in those days cost from \$16 to \$18 only.

Upon coming back he put up a log cabin and in 1883 began breaking a pair of oxen which he bought north of Portland, North Dakota, for which he paid \$160. Rather aristocratic names they had, Duke and Dime! With these steady oxen he broke about 30 acres.

In 1882 before filing on his land he worked on the Cooper Ranch receiving the magnificent sum of \$2.00 a day in harvest and threshing. There were 32 shockers and 16 binders so one can imagine what a large farm it was in those days. It was here Mr. Gilbertson made his first acquaintance with the ripe tomato. It was undoubtedly a cheap food for it was served in place of our common food "sauce". By adding some sugar it was quite a dish. Fortunately for him, he liked them and the tomato has been his friend ever since. Another incident which he related was the problem of drinking water with so many shockers. It kept one man busy all day long, hauling water. This he did by having a large keg in a buggy, going from one man to the next. By the time the last one had been watered the first one was waiting.

There were no Indians living here when Mr. Gilbertson came but he frequently talked with Indians going through the country who were digging "snake roots". These were to be used for medicinal purposes. The Sibley trail and crossing, however, were very evident, this having been used by Sibley when on his way to fight Indians at the Missouri River.

In 1884, five acres more were broken up on which he raised 130 bu. of wheat. In 1885 he broke 30 acres more on which he raised 1000 bu. of wheat. He sold part of this receiving the paltry sum of \$.38 per bushel. In the same year he bought a plow and harrow in Mayville but borrowed a drill to seed it with. At this time the reaper had no binding attachment as now but the grain was bound by hand. In the year 1883 three neighbors went together and bought a regular binder for \$240, thinking this would solve their harvesting problems. It had a 6 ft. cut and McCormick make, but it proved unsatisfactory.

The lure of the trees and sight of water proved too strong for Mr. Gilbertson, and in 1886 he moved from the prairie down near the banks of the Sheyenne where he lived for many years until moving to the home where he now lives. This time too he built a log cabin for his living quarters.

Food was not abundant but he always had all necessities, never experiencing hunger, which many pioneers did from the lack of food.

He boasts of having had one milch cow at this time, but apparently

Biography of Amund Gilbertson
--Esther Njaa

pioneering was too much for her, for she became tangled up in her pick-et rope and committed suicide by drowning. Imagine the loss! Chickens were not common then, he having none. Two oxen and one cow, while the cow lived, were all his possessions.

Conditions then were similar to now as far as wheat flour goes. Wheat sold for as little as \$.30 per bushel but flour sold for \$5.00 per 100 pounds.

Groceries he bought in Cooperstown for the railroad came here in 1883. The year 1883 is particularly remembered on account of the lack of rain, no rain at all until July 3rd, which resulted in very poor crops. 1886 was again dry, 1887 was again remembered as an odd year, there being nothing practically raised but "pig weeds". In 1888 an extremely heavy frost visited this locality and the night of August 16th saw the crops laid waste. No one can quite realize what this hardship meant to the pioneers, especially for those with large families.

Mr. Gilbertson told an amusing story in regard to this year. A certain pioneer family whose numbers were rather large were neighbors of his. One of the older girls was at Hope working and her younger sister was with her attending school. After this heavy frost she was extremely worried in regard to the welfare of her people. Her sister who was always an optimist did not quite see it that way. The older sister one day said, "I cannot see what the folks will do, now that the wheat is gone!" "Do", she said, "There's nothing to do, they will just have to eat frozen wheat."

In 1891 they experienced a bumper crop, so much so, that they had never had one like it in previous years.

Socially they all seemed to be on the same level, and the good old hospitality which was extended to one and all in those days seems to have been forgotten or else it is that we are not in sympathy with one another's problems as they were then.

Picking buffalo bones was an unindustry in which Mr. Gilbertson was employed for a while and for which he received \$20 a ton. However, he did not go into it as heavily as many others as he felt he must make use of his time improving his land.

He has enjoyed hunting deer here. John ^{Pates} Pitch, a more or less trapper and he used to go hunting with him and at one time they shot a deer weighing about 800 pounds.

When asked if he recalled any happening of particular interest, he told about when going to buy his oxen. On his way home he was caught in a blizzard which proved so severe that both his ears were so badly frozen that they burst open as an after effect. He did not take his oxen with him when he bought them, but went back to Portland for them. Going over he went on skis. The sun and snow were so glaring and dazzling that he became "Snow Blind" which lasted two days, the most painful experience he can recall. He was delayed for some time at

Biography of Amund Gilbertson
Esther Njaa

Portland and when coming back the oxen had to swim a creek they had to cross which had been so swollen from the spring thaw that both he and the oxen were nearly drowned. Darkness overtook them. They finally came to an old shack where they camped over night without a bite of supper or breakfast. About noon the next day they reached Opheim's where food could be bought, again thankful that the trip was over.

Pater Some of the pioneers Mr. Gilbertson frequently visited were John Pitch, John Atchison, Mr. Vet Pound, Charlie Piatt, and Mr. Park.

Mr. Bilbertson's grain was threshed by Mr. Swen Olgaard for the first 4--5 years, paying usually \$.05 per bushel. After a while he became interested in it too and bought a threshing rig of his own.

Buggies were an unknown luxury. He was the proud owner of a lumber wagon which proved very satisfactory while it rained but during dry weather the tires were always missing.

By the most careful economy a little wealth was acquired, every year adding a small sum to the nest egg. Farm machinery improved, roads were built, homes were enlarged or new ones built, the price of grain advanced, and wheat still remained king of grains. More land was bought to raise more grain to sell more wheat, to get more money, to buy more land, and so the story goes.

However, there came the problem of diversified farming and weed eradication. This compelled the farmers to put forth more effort in farming.

Mr. Bilbertson finding help a serious problem decided he had been active long enough so rented his farms. He has always been interested in improvements, betterment and education, having served on township boards, as director of various organizations and the like.

Mr. Gilbertson was married to Mary ^{Hagen} Fitcher in 1888, her father too being a pioneer. To them were born 5 children, three of whom are living. They are Mrs. M. M. Lunde, Jr. living near the Sheyenne in Sverdrup township, Mrs. Fred Melgard living at Grace City, North Dakota, and Mrs. Lloyd W. Boen of Fargo, N. Dak.

He is making his home with his daughter, Mrs. Lunde, his wife passing away over 20 years ago.

Hardships have been endured, disappointments met, and loved ones taken away, yet he is active and alert. Unless knowing no one would guess the change that has come over this state of ours. He has visited his home land, Norway, twice since coming here, the last trip within four years past, yet he is always so happy to come back to his own country, the United States, and to his own state, North Dakota.

I might go on telling experiences but I have tried to get the most important facts as he sees it in his life, and hope I have succeeded at least in part, in writing his pioneer days.

PIONEER BIOGRAPHY

Amund Gilbertson

by Esther Nyaa

To write an ordinary story is difficult but to write a story which is true and at the same time interesting as well as relating all items of interest pertaining to the subject at hand is quite a different undertaking, and such is my task set before me in attempting to write the history of our worthy citizen, Mr. Amund Gilbertson. To be sure, I did feel a little embarrassed as well as oppressed, having to do this, but while having my interview I soon forgot all of this and enjoyed with him all these happenings and incidents, and lived with him in part at least these years in the past. If I can manage my life, in such a way as to accomplish as much accordingly, I shall feel it well worth while.

The story that follows is in a small way the most interesting happenings of his life.

Mr. Amund Gilbertson was born August 22, 1857, in Valdres, Norway. His mother's name was Sigrid Gulsdaugeter and his father's name was Gulbrah Mikkelsen. There were four boys and four girls in the family and he was the seventh. He was born on a farm which was located right on the fjord, "The Nevlingen". The farm covered about 200 acres of which about 30 acres were under cultivation. Each farm in those days in Norway had 1 to 2 and 3 horses. Their livelihood came from herding, fishing and logging.

In 1880 at the age of 23 years he decided to come to the United States having heard of wondrous possibilities in this land of ours.

It took him about 12 days to come across the Atlantic Ocean and about 2 days on the North Sea, taking passage on the Cunard line. He landed at Boston instead of New York as boats do now. His sister and her husband came also with him. From Boston he went to Keosauqua, Iowa. He considered settling there but as all the land was already taken, and none to be had for less than ten dollars per acre, he decided to seek for land elsewhere. He left Iowa about May 17, 1881 and went as far by railroad as Blanchard, N. Dak., where the railroad had already been built. From there he went to the Goose river vicinity. He intended to settle here but all the land was taken here too, so found he had to go west again. He stayed in Goose River Valley about one month, then came out here with prospectors, but in June returned to Goose River again and stayed there till the 12th of December working, then he went to Wisconsin and stayed there till March working in a lumber camp, coming back in the spring to Goose River Valley.

In those days one had to take the best of opportunities and earn extra dollars whenever possible. That spring a number of them including Iver Thompson, Terkel Fosholt, Thor Hagen, and a few others all came here seeking for land.

Traveling then was no easy matter and their only way was by foot, following merely a prairie trail.

Having heard of Red Willow Lake and its scenic beauty and the instinct of settling near timber and water near which they had lived all their lives, they went there hoping to find what they wanted. However, the land was too rolling and too stony so they returned here. He visited at Willow Lake for 2 days with acquaintances however. He filed on May 2, 1882, on the northeast quarter, Section 10, Range 58 west, where the school house is now located and in order to do this he had to go to Fargo, North Dakota. He walked to Mayville and from there he took the train to Fargo. Filing in those days cost from \$15 to \$18 only. Upon coming back he put up a log cabin and in 1883 began breaking with a pair of oxen which he bought north of Portland, North Dakota, for

which he paid \$160. Rather aristocratic names they had, Duke and Dime! With these steady oxen he broke about 30 acres.

In 1882 before filing on his land he worked on the Cooper Ranch receiving the magnificent sum of \$2.00 a day in harvest and threshing. There were 32 shockers and 18 binders so one can imagine what a large farm it was in those days. It was here Mr. Gilbertson made his first acquaintance with the ripe tomato. It was undoubtedly a cheap food for it was served in place of our common food "sauce". By adding some sugar it was quite a dish. Fortunately for him, he liked them and the tomato has been his friend ever since. Another incident which he related was the problem of drinking water with so many shockers. It kept one man busy all day long, hauling water. This he did by having a large keg in a buggy, going from one man to the next. By the time the last one had been watered the first one was waiting.

There were no Indians living here when Mr. Gilbertson came but he frequently talked with Indians going through the country who were digging "snake roots". These were to be used for medicinal purposes. The Sibley trail and crossing, however, were very evident, this having been used by Sibley when on his way to fight Indians at the Missouri River.

In 1884, five acres more were broken up on which he raised 130 bu. of wheat. In 1885 he broke 30 acres more on which he raised 1000 bu of wheat. He sold part of this receiving the paltry sum of \$.38 per bushel. In the same year he bought a plow and harrow in Mayville but borrowed a drill to seed it with. At this time the reaper had no binding attachment as now but the grain was bound by hand. In the year 1883 three neighbors went together and bought a regular binder for \$240, thinking this would solve their harvesting problems. It had a 6 ft. cut and McCormick make, but it proved unsatisfactory.

The lure of the trees and sight of water proved too strong for Mr. Gilbertson, and in 1886 he moved from the prairie down near the banks of the Cheyenne where he lived for many years until moving to the home where he now lives. This time too he built a log cabin for his living quarters.

Food was not abundant but he always had all necessities, never experiencing hunger, which many pioneers did from the lack of food.

He boasts of having had one milch cow at this time, but apparently pioneering was too much for her, for she became tangled up in her picket rope and committed suicide by drowning. Imagine the loss!

Chickens were not common then, he having none. Two oxen and one cow, while the cow lived, were all his possessions.

Conditions then were similar to now as far as wheat flour goes. Wheat sold for as little as \$.30 per bushel but flour sold for \$5.00 per 100 pounds.

Groceries he bought in Cooperstown for the railroad came here in 1883. The year 1883 is particularly remembered on account of the lack of rain, no rain at all until July 3rd, which resulted in very poor crops. 1886 was again dry, 1887 was again remembered as an odd year, there being nothing practically raised but "pig weeds". In 1888 an extremely heavy frost visited this locality and the night of August 18th saw the crops laid waste. No one can quite realize what this hardship meant to the pioneers, especially for those with large families.

Mr. Gilbertson told an amusing story in regard to this year. A certain pioneer family whose numbers were rather large were neighbors of his. One of the older girls was at Hope working and her younger sister was with her attending school. After this heavy frost she was extremely

worried in regard to the welfare of her people. Her sister who was always an optimist did not quite see it that way. The older sister one day said, "I cannot see what the folks will do, now that the wheat is gone!" "Do", she said, "There's nothing to do, they will just have to eat frozen wheat."

In 1891 they experienced a bumper crop, so much so, that they had never had one like it in previous years.

Socially they all seemed to be on the same level, and the good old hospitality which was extended to one and all in those days seems to have been forgotten or else it is that we are not in sympathy with one another's problems as they were then.

Picking buffalo bones was an industry in which Mr. Gilbertson was employed for a while and for which he received \$20 a ton. However, he did not go into it as heavily as many others as he felt he must make use of his time improving his land.

He has enjoyed hunting deer here. John Pitch, a more or less trapper and he used to go hunting with him and at one time they shot a deer weighing about 800 pounds.

When asked if he recalled any happening of particular interest, he told about when going to buy his oxen. On his way home he was caught in a blizzard which proved so severe that both his ears were so badly frozen that they burst open as an after effect. He did not take his oxen with him when he bought them, but went back to Portland for them. Going over he went on skis. The sun and snow were so glaring and dazzling that he became "Snow Blind" which lasted two days, the most painful experience he can recall. He was delayed for some time at Portland and when coming back the oxen had to swim a creek they had to cross which had been so swollen from the spring thaw that both he and the oxen were nearly drowned. Darkness overtook them. They finally came to an old shack where they camped over night without a bite of supper or breakfast. About noon the next day they reached Opheim's where food could be bought, again thankful that the trip was over.

Some of the pioneers Mr. Gilbertson frequently visited were John Pitch, John Atchison, Mr. Vet Pound, Charlie Piatt, and Mr. Park.

Mr. Gilbertson's grain was threshed by Mr. Swen Olgaard for the first 4--5 years, paying usually \$.05 per bushel. After a while he became interested in it too and bought a threshing rig of his own.

Suggies were an unknown luxury. He was the proud owner of a lumber wagon which proved very satisfactory while it rained but during dry weather the tires were always missing.

By the most careful economy a little wealth was acquired, every year adding a small sum to the nest egg. Farm machinery improved, roads were built, homes were enlarged or new ones built, the price of grain advanced, and wheat still remained king of grains. More land was bought to raise more grain to sell more ~~wheat~~ wheat, to get more money, to buy more land, and so the story goes.

However, there came the problem of diversified farming and weed eradication. This compelled the farmers to put forth more effort in farming.

Mr. Gilbertson finding help a serious problem decided he had been active long enough so rented his farms. He has always been interested in improvements, betterment and education, having served on township boards, as director of various organizations and the like.

Mr. Gilbertson was married to Mary Fitcher in 1888, her father too being a pioneer. To them were born 5 children, three of whom are living. They are Mrs. M. M. Lunde Jr. living near the Cheyenne in

Amund Gilbertson (continued) #4

Sverdrup township, Mrs. Fred Melgard living at Grace City, North Dakota, and Mrs. Lloyd W. Roen of Fargo, N. Dak.

X He is making his home with his daughter, Mrs. Lunde, his wife passing away over 20 years ago.

Hardships have been endured, disappointments met, and loved ones taken away, yet he is active and alert. Unless knowing no one would guess the change that has come over this state of ours. He has visited his home land, Norway, twice since coming here, the last trip within four years past, yet he is always so happy to come back to his own country, the United States, and to his own state, North Dakota.

X I might go on telling experiences but I have tried to get the most important facts as he sees it in his life, and hope I have succeeded at least in part, in writing his pioneer days.

--Esther Njaa

United Norwegian Lutheran
Church of America

REV. OLUF GLASÖE
SUPERINTENDENT HOME MISSION
1805 13TH AVE. SO.
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.,

17 Okt. '12

Lyne søster Johanna!

I dag er jeg saa skral, at
jeg ikke saa klart kan se, hvor
det var hen. Dog bliver tør ha-
sin bornlystige tanker med
det allesammen. Jeg reis
sandsynligvis imorgen ud til
Mandan. Jeg skulde ønske
jeg var saerlig at jeg kunde skæn-
ke dig og hilse paa dig. Det er
necessitet ijen som plaget.

Herom forbarne sig over os
alle sammen! Med hilsener fra

Din bror,

Oluf.