

Biography of Peter Gunderson

--Myrtle Herberg - *granddaughter*

Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Everson were the names of the parents of the pioneer. The name of the pioneer is Peter Gunderson. The pioneer was born October 15, 1860, Vernon County, Wisconsin, in a small log shanty. Lanvas was where they got their groceries and mail. There was just one store and a post office in Lanvas. Many times they had to go to LaCrosse, thirty miles, to get their provisions.

The pioneer left Minnesota on account of hard times, no crops, the bugs ate up what little crop they did get, and he went to North Dakota because he thought he could make a better living and because he could get free land. He had heard that people that had gone to North Dakota were making a much better living. He worked in Minnesota for four years to earn enough money to get some and to get to North Dakota.

The trip from Minnesota to North Dakota was long and tiresome. Peter Gunderson and his brother, Ed, bought a team and covered wagon from their father. They took feed and food for the horses along. When they reached Fergus Falls in Minnesota they had no more money so they traded their team for a team of oxen. It was dark when they started from Fargo and soon they had to park for the night. They unhooked their oxen and tied them to the wagon along side of the road. Early next morning before his brother Ed was awake the farmer living close by the road came over to them and was very angry telling them they were camping on his land and said that their oxen were eating his grain, but they were not. They were parked in the road. Their oxen were fat and nice and one hot day when they were about to cross a bridge the oxen waked into the river in place of crossing the bridge. So they had to unhitch and put a log chain on to pull the wagon and oxen out of the river again. South of Fergus Falls they camped ϕ for the night. There were about forty other covered wagons besides theirs in the camp. They camped all day one Sunday close to a farmers buildings. They washed their clothes and after they got through they were very hungry so his brother, Ed, went over to the farmer and bought some eggs. They boiled the eggs and fixed up a good dinner. When they sat down to eat they opened the eggs and found they were full of chicks. When they came to Moorhead they crossed the river to Fargo on a raft. Then they went from Fargo to Mayville. They drove from Mayville to the Sheyenne river. Then he went back to Minnesota, worked a few months, and then came back to North Dakota where he is still living.

The pioneer came to North Dakota in May, 1881, The pioneer took up a homestead near the Sheyenne River. He built a house there and lived there for many years. The land was near the Sheyenne River about fourteen miles north of Cooperstown in Griggs County, Lenora Township, and in Range fifty-eight.

The first home was a log shanty. He and his brother, Ed, built it. They went to the woods and chopped it themselves. They used straw and brush for the roof. There were not any windows in the log cabin. They did not even have a stove. It was very cold in the winter. They went forty-five miles to Mayville for provisions. It took three days of hard traveling. Sometimes he walked to Mayville and carried the provisions.

The pioneer's near neighbors were Ole Moen, McCrae, Ellert Olson, Ole Groff, Hegna, and Goltrait.

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*-M. David Nyaa
-d. 1950-*

The pioneer did not have more than a walking plow, smoothing drag, and a broadcast seeder. He did not have horses. He had to use oxen which were very slow.

The first crop the pioneer raised yielded twenty-five bushels to the acre. He had one hundred fifty bushels of number one wheat the first year. Rier Anderson threshed for him the first year with a horse-power thresher. The pioneer cooked for the threshers himself. They had home made tables of boards. They had to sit on boxes or anything they could find. He even baked his own bread.

For fuel they used wood which was gotten by the Sheyenne River. They had to chop it as they used it. The wood was sometimes raw and hard to burn.

There was much snow and many blizzards the first three winters. Sometimes they had to shovel their way to the barn. There was once a prairie fire in January. It was very cold and they did not have much clothing, but they all had to go and help put out the fire.

The pioneer married Anna Koloen in eighteen eighty three. (1883) They were married at home in a log cabin. The pioneer had eleven children, five girls and six boys. Their names and addresses are: Mrs. Theodore Herberg, Aneta, N. Dak., Mrs. Ludvig Stokkeland, Aneta, N. Dak., Mr. Alfred Gunderson, Lone Rock, Alberta, Canada, Mr. Gilbert Gunderson, Aneta, N. Dak., Mr. Palmer Gunderson, Aneta, N. Dak. Mr. Adolph Gunderson, Secretan, Sask., Canada, Mr. Edwin Gunderson, Secretan, Sask., Canada, Mrs. Henry Weberg, Waldof, Ontario, Canada, Miss Minnie Gunderson, Aneta, N. Dak., Miss Esther Gunderson, Wheatland, N. Dak., Mr. Henry Gunderson, deceased.

The present home of the pioneer is in Lenora township, near the Sheyenne River in Griggs County, North Dakota. His two sons are farming the land.

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