

Biography of Waldemar John Klubben  
--Irvin Loge

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Biography of Waldemore Klubben  
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The western coast of Norway has many narrow fjords which have been made by the worn down land sinking beneath the sea level. Near one of these fjords, this particular one called Nordfjord, near Bergen, lived Elling and Sønnera Klubben. To this worthy couple were born four children--Lars, Eva, Waldemore and Brita. Waldemore, of whom this story is written, was born February 26, 1847. He was five years old when his father died and nine when his mother died, after which he went to live with his aunt. However, he began to make a living for himself at an early age.

As this part of Norway offers little in the line of agriculture due to the uneven and rocky land, the chief occupation of the people was fishing. After repeated attempts Waldemore found that he could not stand the sea, as he always suffered from attacks of sea-sickness. This made it necessary for him to find another way to make his living. He went farther south where a railroad was being built from Stavanger to Egersund, a distance of 50 miles, and here Mr. Klubben found work. Many men were employed here as it was very slow and difficult work building through the mountains.

On June 9, 1878 he was married to Marie Pernila Johansen and lived at Hoiland station three years. While they were there, two children were born to them, Elisa and Susanne.

Although very successful in railroad work, winning confidence and promotion, Mr. Klubben could see no future for himself in railroad work, so he came to the conclusion he better seek his fortune in America, as many of his friends were doing.

On April 10, 1881, he, together with about twenty neighbors, left Norway for England where there was a ship enroute for America. Granite Falls, Minnesota was to be their destination. Just as they were ready to leave Norway, the children got the whooping cough, so the women and children had to remain until the children had recovered, while the men proceeded on the long and tiresome journey. Things went fairly well until they came near New Foundland when the propeller on the ship broke and they were out on the ocean for four days before help came. This help was in the form of a stock ship which pulled them into St. John, New Foundland. Many ships seemed to pass by but did not offer help. They stayed at St. John 10 days, and from there they went to New York; then overland by railroad to Granite Falls, Minnesota.

Arriving here they met friends and old acquaintances and rested about two weeks. They were again reunited with their families who arrived from Norway shortly after the men, since the men had been delayed. They left their families in Granite Falls, while they went to look for a suitable location, (the land around Granite Falls being taken). Supplying themselves with wagons, oxen, etc., they drove to Benson, Minnesota. Here they loaded their possessions on a wheat car and started out for the Dakota Territory. When they reached Fargo, one of the oxen had died and they buried it here. This was not a very encouraging beginning but nevertheless they went on to Valley City where they unloaded their possessions and were soon on their way in covered wagons bound for Devils Lake.



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Coming as far as Sverdrup township on June 8, 1881, twelve miles southeast from the present site of Cooperstown, they found a good deal of land that had not been filed on. Tired of their long and tedious journey, they decided to settle here. They made a large colony. Some chose to live by the Sheyenne River while others chose the level prairies. Having decided where to live, they went to Valley City to file on the land. The land Mr. Klubben took was in Section 26, Range 58, Sverdrup township. The land was not surveyed until that summer.

Here the real pioneer life began. The first house which was of sod, was built on the line between two quarter sections of land, the Klubben family had one room and the Swen Loge family the other. On July 6, 1881, they went to Valley City to get their families, who had remained in Granite Falls for five weeks. Mr. Klubben and family lived in the sod house for three years, when they built a log house. The logs for the house were taken from the Sheyenne River which was a mile away.

Having been advised by neighbors not to break after June 1st, five acres was all Klubben broke the first year. He had only one ox but the neighbors let him use one of theirs. His grain was cleaned and seeded by hand. Christian Lee had a reaper and he cut the grain for all who did not have any other way. R. C. Cooper had a threshing machine and threshed all the grain around there. Mr. Klubben remembers that one year he did not have his grain threshed till 14 days before Christmas. Wheat was the main crop which yielded from 20 to 25 bushels to the acre. They also raised a little oats.

Their nearest town was Valley City, which was thirty miles away. They would make a trip in the fall and bring back enough provisions for the whole winter. It took three days to make the round trip with oxen. Usually two or three would go and bring back provisions for themselves and the rest. Some of the company would walk to Valley City to get the mail for all of them.

Mr. Klubben's nearest neighbors were Swen Loge, Martin Ueland, Betual, Carl and Lars Herigstad, Swen Lunde, Ola Westley, Ola Stokka, Tobias Thime and Andrew Watne.

Hardly a year went by unless prairie fires visited them either in the spring or fall of the year and sometimes both in the fall and spring.

Large bands of Indians moved across the country. Although they never molested them, the pioneers always lived in dread of them; especially the women who were left at home when the men were obliged to leave as they did in the fall, when they went to Valley City to help thresh, thereby earning a little money to help supply their needs.

The winters were very severe with lots of snow and terrible blizzards. The summers were subjected to rain storms. Often during one of these rain storms the people, while in their houses, had to use umbrellas to protect themselves from the rain. Usually after a rain everything had to be taken out and dried.



## Biography of Waldemore Klubben

--Eleanor Askelson *granddaughter*

The fuel used was only wood which was brought from the Sheyenne River.

These were hard times indeed, but the people were young and full of hope for the future. Things were gradually getting better. In 1883 railroad was built to Cooperstown, and oxen were replaced with horses, and more necessary machinery was bought.

Mr. Klubben has been a hard worker and is yet able to be around and do quite a few things. Lately, however, he has been failing, so his long life of usefulness may soon be at an end.

Mrs. Klubben died April 28, 1919 and was buried at the Saron Free Church of which Klubben is a member.

Most of his first neighbors have passed away and new ones have moved in. Martin Ueland and Lars Johnson are about the only ones left. Andrew Watne has returned to Norway.

Mr. Klubben is still living on the old homestead with his oldest son, Edward. Albert, the youngest son, is living about one-half mile from the old place, has the other half of the farm.

The names of his descendents are: Albert and Edward Klubben, Mrs. Swen Haaland, Mrs. John Loge and Mrs. John Askelson, all of Cooperstown and Bertha Klubben of Minneapolis, besides three daughters who are dead. He has eighteen grandchildren of which the writer is one.



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The pioneer's parents names were Elling and Soneve Klubben. His father died when he was five years old and his mother died when he was nine years old. He stayed at his Aunt's until he was able to support himself. The name of the pioneer is Waldemar John Klubben. He was born in 1847, February 26. He was born in Nordfjaard, near Bergen, Norway. Bergen was the closest town, but there was a store closer than Bergen where they went for their provisions.

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They tried to get land in Minnesota but there was not very much there and they heard that there was quite a bit in North Dakota so they came here.

They left Norway April 10, 1881. When they were ready to leave the children got the whooping cough so the women folks had to wait, but the men went. They had to go to England to get on the ship that went to America. They planned on going to New York but after they had been out on the ocean a few days the propeller broke and a stock ship pulled them into St. Johns, Newfoundland. They had to stay there ten days while the ship was being repaired. Then they went to New York. They stayed there for a while and then they took the train to Granite Falls, Minnesota. They stayed at Christian Aarestad's. The men had so much trouble that the women folks came to Granite Falls about the same time as the men. They all stayed at Christian Aarestad's. The men stayed two weeks at Christian Aarestad's. While there they bought oxen and covered wagons. The women folks stayed five weeks in Granite Falls while the men went before so they could build houses before the women folks came. The men took the train to Fargo and drove up the rest of the way. While in Fargo one of the oxen put its head in the door and killed itself so they had to borrow one from one of the men that had three. The women folks left Granite Falls the fourth of July. They took the train to Valley City where they were met by the men in covered wagons. They reached their homes the ninth of July. Klubben came to North Dakota June 12, 1881.

They had planned on going to Devils Lake, but they had been south Valley City looking for land, they did not find any that they liked so they started to go on their way to Devils Lake, and on the way they saw all this land. They thought it looked good and they were tired from their long journey so they stopped here. He took up the land in Sverdrup township in Range 58, and Section 26.

Their first house was a sod shanty which Klubben and Swen Loge built together on the line between their farms. They lived in it for three years and then they built a log house. They had a sod barn.

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Klubben had a plough and one oxen. He had to borrow one oxen from the neighbors. He had to sow the the grain by hand and clean the grain by hand in winter. Christian Lee had a reaper and he cut all the grain that there was around there but they had to tie it by hand. R. G. Cooper had a threshing machine and he threshed all the grain around. Klubben had his grain threshed fourteen days before Christmas. The only crops they raised were wheat and oats. They averaged from 20 to 25 bushels to the acre.

The only fuel they had was wood they had to chop themselves. They got it from the Sheyenne River.

There were snow drifts higher than the barn sometimes. They had to go through a trap door in the roof of the barn and they had to dig tunnels. There was sure to be a fire either in the spring or fall. Once the house just about burned the fire was so close. In the summer time when it rained they had to sit with an umbrella over their heads and after the rain was over they had to take everything out and dry. In the fall the men went down to Valley City and worked during threshing so as to earn some money to buy provisions for the winter.

One thing they will never forget was all the mosquitoes. There were so many mosquitoes, and they could get into the house because there were no windows or doors or floors, so they built a smudge right on the floor.

Mr. Klubben was married to Maria Pernila Johnson, June 9, 1878, in Stavanger, Norway. Mrs. Klubben died April 28, 1919. His descendants are Mrs. John Askelson, Aneta, N. Dak., Mrs. John Loge, Cooperstown, N. Dak., Mrs. Swen Holland, Cooperstown, N. Dak., Bertha Klubben, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Mr. Edward Klubben, Cooperstown, N. Dak., Mr. Albert Klubben, Cooperstown, N. Dak., and Inga, Karen, and Margaret Klubben are deceased.

Klubben now lives on the old homestead with his eldest son, Edward Klubben.



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