

Biography of Swen Loge
--Ernest Tang

Swen Loge was born on a farm called Loge in Thime sogn (same as our county) which is near Stavanger, Norway, on October 27, 1852. His parents, Swen and Elizabeth, owned both a farm and a blacksmith shop. Swen stayed at home working a while on the farm and other times in the blacksmith shop, until he was married. He then bought a gaard (some land) called Fosse, not very far from home.

This was when he was about twenty-six years old, he being married to Serina Thime. They lived here about two years, then became interested in sailing for America hoping to find a better home. They left Stavanger, Norway, April 9, 1881. The members of the party were Mr. and Mrs. Swen Loge and child and also Ola Westly and family, which consisted of nine; Bettell Herigstad consisting of three; Swen Lunde; Andreas Watne; Lars and Carl Herigstad and John Klubben all of whom were his neighbors.

During the trip across the Atlantic, the child took sick, and when not very far from New York City, she died and was buried in New York. While they stayed in New York, a son was born.

From New York City they went by train to Saint Paul, having taken seven weeks from the time they left Stavanger to here. From Saint Paul they went to Granite Falls, Minnesota. Here he and Klubben, one of his near neighbors, bought three oxen, a plough, and a harrow together. There being no land here, they were informed by their friend, Aarestad, (who had lived in Minnesota eight years) that they could get land for nothing. He went with them to help locate a place.

As there were no houses in which they could live, it was decided that these men (his neighbors) should go to North Dakota first and build them.

They left Granite Falls with their oxen and a few other implements in a wheat car, there being no stock car in which they could go.

They came to Fargo on July 6, 1881. While unloading their property, it was discovered that one ox had killed itself, having caught his horns in the car.

From Fargo Swen and his friend John went over the country by means of their oxen until they came to a place near the Sheyenne river which they liked very much. This land was later found to be in Sverdrup Township, Section 28, Range 58.

Their first task was deciding where to build a house upon this land. This house they built across the quarter line having two rooms, one on each side of the line. One room was for each family, Loge and Klubben. This house was only a sod house with no floor. They had a small opening for a door and had no windows. They did not have very much furniture. When company came they had to bring in "stumps" to have them sit on.

Having built the house, they went to Valley City to get their families who had come this far from Granite Falls which they left on July 5.

The trip of thirty miles was made by oxen. It took a few days each way in coming.

When they had settled down, it was June 12. As this was quite late they did not break more than nine acres of land. This land was sown in with wheat which they sold for ninety cents a bushel that fall. As there was not enough to provide them through the winter, Swen and John went to Valley City to get work in threshing.

The provisions of the first winter were three sacks of flour, two gallons syrup and two gallons kerosene. The only meat they had was prairie chickens. These would come and sit on the housetop, and every morning Swen would ask how many he had to shoot that day. Once he was able to shoot an antelope, so then they had meat for a while. At Christmas they had a wooden floor built in the house. Their fuel was taken from the Sheyenne river.

The next spring when they were out of provisions, they had to make a trip to Valley City. When within twelve miles from Valley City, they had to turn around and go home again because the Sheyenne river at Sibley's Crossing was so high, that it was impossible to cross.

A few days later they heard that Cooper had some provisions which he kept in wagon boxes. They left to see if they could obtain some provisions from him until the river went down. Here they got a few provisions that lasted for a while.

The sod house was replaced by a log house three years later. In this year they raised a big crop which seemed a great difference to them. The sod house was so poorly built that when it rained, umbrellas were used to keep them dry. They thought it was a great relief to have a house that did not leak.

As years went by the country became more densely settled and more towns grew up so that material was easy to get. During these years they added more rooms to the log house. About thirty-two years after this log house had been built, they replaced it by a modern home.

In the fall of the year 1901, Swen went to visit his old home in Norway. He stayed for a few months and then returned to America again..

A little later he purchased some lots in the eastern part of Cooperstown on which he built a house. Then he and his family moved into town.

Mr. Loge did not live long after he moved to Cooperstown. He died the seventeenth of August, 1906 at the age of fifty-three at Cooperstown and was buried at Saron Free Church of which he was a member. Those now living are his wife, Serina, Swen and Lars, who are living on the old farm, Elizabeth, now Mrs. Asplund, Martin, Bernard, Pauline, Now Mrs. Everett, Inga, now Mrs. Ueland and Hans Loge.