

Biography of Ben Hans Overby
Martin Adrian

Mr. and Mrs. Hans Overby lived in Norway. They are the parents of the pioneer, Mr. Ben Hans Overby. Mr. Overby was born in the year 1873 on January 25, in Norway, near Gjovick. Mr. and Mrs. Hans Overby left Norway and sailed for America when Ben Hans Overby was one and one half years old.

While reaching America they moved to southern Minnesota by railroad. Their business was mostly lumbering. For some reason they could not make a success and decided to go to North Dakota. They came up on the train. Ben Overby and his father stayed in the box car with their stock. They arrived in Cooperstown in the month of May, 1886. They began to raise cattle upon their arrival. Ben H. Overby was the cow boy herding hundreds of cattle. Ben was very strong and was noted for being the strongest in the country, therefore, he liked the hardships of herding cattle. Even now he says, "The most fun I ever had was in herding cattle."

The first land they took up in North Dakota was a homestead south of Binford on Section 12, Bryan township. Their home and barn ~~g~~ was built of sod. They went to Cooperstown for their provisions. Sometimes they got lost in storms, then they sometimes had to get out on their knees and crawl around until they found the hard track again. They often took kerosine lamps along on these trips to use in the darkness ~~sr~~ in case they got lost as last resort in case they got cold. The kerosine sometimes froze and then they could not light them. Because of this they carried a bottle of oil in their pocket and thus this would never freeze unless they themselves froze to death. One time Ben Overby got lost in a storm so bad that he lost his way. When he knew he was lost he turned the wagon box up side down and camped there over night.

He did not have very many neighbors as there were not very many people living in the state at that time. Some of his nearest neighbors were Carl Vaughen, John Vaughen, Gilbert Gilbertson, Deers, Frank Kingsley. They did not use much machinery in the early days. They had a walking plow and a wagon and besides their machinery they had four horses, forty chickens, three pigs and also a few cows. They tried to raise crops but did not succeed to first because of drought. They could not raise crops for five years. On the sixth year there was a good crop but a hail storm swept the country and destroyed it entirely. After that they raised a good crop each year, The kinds of crops raised were wheat, oats, and flax. The Overby's tried to raise corn but never made a success of it. The grain crops yielded on an average 20 to 25 bu. to the acre at that time.

As they were poor they could not buy coal and had to haul wood from the Sheyenne River to use as fuel. They used wood as fuel in the winter and in summer they burned hay or straw. When hay and straw was scarce they burned cow chips. Ben Overby and some one else as a companion went after a load of wood. On their return Ben's companion drove. When going down a hill the load tipped over and the driver got under the pile of wood. Mr. Overby worked for a half an hour to get

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him out. His companion had to be sent to the hospital for a short period.

Another incident of great importance was a fire which started on the Sheyenne River. It burned a long ways southeast of Binford. Ben's farm being in line got burned.

Buffalo hunting was a great incident of that time although Ben Overby himself never took part in any hunt. He kicked the meat off the bones and hauled the bones to Cooperstown and sold them for \$16.00 a ton. Ben Overby was a very good horseback rider. He could ride almost any kind of a horse. In McHenry there was a horse trained to buck. Nobody could ride it except Ben. Ben rode it for a ways but had to stop because he got the nosebleed. He did not get the prize, however, none got the prize.

Ben Overby was married to Miss Larson in Cooperstown in the year of 1904 on the fifth day of May. Soon afterwards they moved to Rosendal township, section 12, and took up the eighty north of the buildings of his farm. He now is a renter.

They are the parents of many children whose names and addresses are as follows: Mrs. Henry Hagle of Binford, Mrs. Clarence Hackenson of McHenry, Husel Overby of Mose, and Hans Overby, Sigfred Overby, Leonard Overby, Clara Overby, Alma Overby, and Albin Overby, all these last being in Mose, North Dakota.

The present home of Ben Overby is on section thirty four, Rosendal Township of Griggs County.

PIONEER BIOGRAPHY
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