

Biography of John E. Qualey
--Judith Qualey

The pioneer's parents were Mr. and Mrs. Edland Qualey. The pioneer himself is John Qualey. He was born in Sogn, Norway, in 1835. He came to the United States with his parents when he was six years old. John Qualey lived in Dodge County, Minnesota, before coming here. He left Minnesota because of the cinch bug, grasshoppers and other insects that ate the crops.

Mr. Qualey had been to South Dakota but didn't find the kind of place he wanted. He started from his home in Minnesota without knowing where he would land but said he would go west until he came to a river with trees by it and where the soil was rich. When he came to the Sheyenne River he decided this was the place he had been looking for. Mr. Qualey and family, wife, and five children, drove in a covered wagon. They camped along the road. They crossed the Mississippi River at Fort Snelling in a ferry boat. One day when they had stopped for dinner the sheep had gone a little way out into the woods. They had started out again and had gotten quite a ways from where they had stopped before they noticed that they had forgotten the sheep. Then some of the men had to go back and get them. They drove both the sheep and the cattle. The chickens were put in some crates and fastened on behind the wagon. One day, somehow, the crates had been broken and all the chickens got out. The men looked for them that evening and found nearly all of them. I think there was one that they didn't find.

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Usually they went to town twice a year. The nearest town was Valley City which was forty miles away. These trips were made spring and fall. It took two or three days to make these trips.

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John Qualey married Martha Gilderhus at Dodge County in July, 1864. The descendants are Mrs. Albert Larson, Mrs. A. I. Monson, Mr. Nels Qualey, all of Cooperstown, North Dakota, Mrs. Clara Windness of Finley, North Dakota, Mrs. J. M. Jenson of Bozeman, Montana, Siver Qualey of Silverton, Oregon, and Edwin Qualey of Saskatchewan, Canada.

John Qualey died in October, 1920, at Finley, North Dakota, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Clara Windness. He was buried at the Sheyenne Valley Church. Mrs. Qualey died a few years before.

Biography of John Qualey
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Mr. and Mrs. John Qualey emigrated to North Dakota from Dodge County, Minnesota, in July 1, 1880 and to a homestead ten miles east of Coopers-town and eight miles west of Finley. They celebrated the fourth of July by taking the top of the wagon off and setting it on the ground and eating their first meal on the ground for two months.

John Qualey was of Norwegian parentage and came to America from Norway at the age of five. Mrs. John Qualey was Martha Gilderhus before marriage and was the first white baby born in Wisconsin. Her father built the first church in Wisconsin. He was a Master Work-Man in carpentering and made many small things such as candlesticks, chairs, dishes and other articles which were hard to get.

Mr. and Mrs. John Qualey had five children when they came to North Dakota. They were: Edwin, Dorothea, Nels, Mathilda and Sever and Clara, Gunhild and Anna were born in North Dakota.

Mr. and Mrs. John Qualey came to their present homestead after having gone some way farther up the river, but Mr. Amond Opheim and Ivar Seim persuaded him to stay here as it was ideal farming land. John Qualey built a log house with an upstairs which was quite a novelty for the people at that time as it was the only one in the vicinity. There were two rooms downstairs.

They left Minnesota because of the cinch bug, grasshoppers and other pests which persisted in eating the crops, so they came to North Dakota and homesteaded because there was land to be had for nothing. They had six oxen, 15 cattle, 4 pigs, 4 sheep and 15 or 20 chickens to take with them from Minnesota. They crossed the Mississippi near St. Paul on a ferry-boat.

The nearest town from their home was Valley City, a distance of fifty miles. Mr. Qualey used to make this trip three or four times a year and bought provisions for the entire family. The trip took about three days driving with oxen.

Every spring the river used to rise several feet from the large rains and snow, and it happened several times that the house was flooded, and so the whole family would have to move out and live with the neighbors till the house was dry and the river back to normal size.

The neighbors were Amond Opheim, who came in 1879, Ivar Seim in 1880, John Johnson and Evan Monson in 1881.

There were no Indians right in the locality, but sometimes they used to come down the river and stay around for a few days. There were two that came and stayed in the neighborhood for about two weeks. The two oldest sons, Edwin and Nels, used to go and visit them and bring them tobacco because the Indians like it. One time they had brought some bread along for the Indians, but they did not dare eat it till one of the boys had taken a bite to show that it was alright. The boys relate that the Indians live on fresh meat that they catch and eat it perfectly raw while the animal heat is yet in it. When they eat it they

just cut a piece where they can eat it and do not bother to skin it.

The farm machinery of that time consisted of a walking plow pulled by one horse, a seeder (some sowed by hand), a packer made from a log with a frame attached and a reaper which cut the grain, but it had to be bound by hand. However, it was not so very long before a binder could be purchased for about \$250. The grain prices were very low, not more than about fifty cents per bushel for wheat.

Mr. Nels Qualey bought the farm and is now the present owner of the farm. Nels Qualey married Annette Windloss on July 17, 1903. Annette was the daughter of another early pioneer living out by Goldenlake. She had been a school teacher.

Mr. and Mrs. N. J. Qualey have four children. They are: Maxine, going to high school in Cooperstown; Richard, a first grader in school; Mercedes, a fifth grader; and Judith, an eighth grader. All the girls and the boy are at home. There was one boy who died while he was just a little baby. He would have been eighteen years.

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