

Biography of Ole Rorvig
--Arthur Lewis

June 3, 1926

The pioneers Ole Rorvig and Inga Marie Berg were born of Austin and Christine Rorvig and Ingeborg and Aren Berg respectively.

Ole was born in June, 1849 in Rengebog, Gulbrandsdalen, Norway where he spent his childhood and early manhood. He was married in Oslo, (Christiania) Norway in the year 1872.

As both craved a change of condition and a better chance for advancement, (the United States was then being boomed as "The land of opportunity") they decided to emigrate to the United States. They left Christiania on a sailing vessel. The wind was very irregular in its velocity, sometimes being entirely becalmed and at other times in raging gales. The passengers were almost entirely emigrants from Norway. The majority of the people suffered considerably but Ole, having once been a sailor, was not seasick. As a result he had to take care of many of the passengers and administer to their difficulties.

They arrived in New York and after a short delay set out for Minnesota. They settled near Wilmar, Minnesota, but after a year they went to North Dakota; (there was a land boom there then) where they took up a homestead of 160 acres in Section 34 Willow Township, Griggs County. It was hard to get the exact location of land then as the land had not been surveyed at the time. When it was surveyed, the people found that they had been working parts of someone else's land, while someone else was working a part of theirs.

The first house was made of logs which were hauled by oxen from the Sheyenne River and a few from Red Willow Lake. The logs had to be sawed by hand, which was a slow and crude job. The neighbors, Ole Olson and John Paulson, helped considerably in the construction of the house.

The beasts of burden were oxen which were used for joy riding, such as going to church, as well as work in the fields where they proved quite serviceable when the yoke was used and even more serviceable after harnesses were introduced.

The crops most commonly raised were wheat and oats. The prices were quite high the first few years, but were very low at the time when Cleveland was president. The surplus (which was little) was hauled to Valley City, which was the nearest town at the time, in return for other kinds of necessities.

The first year the crop was destroyed by a severe hailstorm, and in several succeeding years the gophers were quite destructive.

The fuel was wood which was hauled from Red Willow Lake. The hardships were fighting prairie fires in summer and fall, and in the winter it was to survive the wintry gales which swept the treeless plains. There always was plenty to eat and fuel to burn, but there were no luxuries and very little chance for advancement as a farmer.

The descendants of the pioneers were as follows: Mrs. Geo. Marson, Cooperstown, N. Dak.; Mrs. S. H. Koloen, New England, N. Dak.; Mrs. Christ Greenland, Sutton, N. Dak.; Mrs. Selma Lewis, New England, N. Dak.; Mrs. Theo. Kittleson, Cooperstown, N. Dak.; Oscar Rorvig, Binford, N. Dak.; Mrs. Oscar Idsvoog, Cooperstown, N. Dak. There also were two other children born to this union but they died the first years of residence in the United States.

Ole Rorvig died at the home he had settled and improved, May 16, 1924. He was buried in the cemetery of the Binford Lutheran Church, Griggs County, North Dakota.