

Biography of Edward Swanson
--Donald Swanson

May 20, 1929

This old settler of North Dakota was born on August 21, 1875 at Sefle, Sweden in Varmland County or Province.

When he came to America, he was 17 years old. His main reason for coming was his adventurous nature and he wanted to see this "promised land of America" which everyone had been talking about. Of course it was also rumored that there was much fertile land to be had for the taking in this country; also the idea of personal gain had something to do with his decision.

He settled in North Dakota because he found certain ranch land there that was better than he found elsewhere.

He came to North Dakota by rail and boat; on a steamship across the Atlantic and on a train to North Dakota. He came to the Flickertail state in 1895.

Mr. Swanson's first occupation was ranching. He owned a large cattle ranch on the "Missouri Slope" which was the name of that piece of ground between that river and Minot, North Dakota. Later on when land was open for homesteading, he took up land and started farming. His first house was a "Frame House." He did not use sod although he had to go 33 miles for lumber for the new home.

He went to town four times a year for provisions. This trip was 50 miles and when traveled by horse and wagon, took some time so no necessities were left out.

The most severe hardships of this pioneer's early life were blizzards and prairie fires. One special case where a blizzard lasted three days and three nights and which started March 17, 1901, was the most severe of these catastrophes. On another time, the middle of October, 1899, the great prairie fire swept the country. It was about 50 miles wide and swept over the country for a distance of 75 miles. Many thousands of head of cattle were burned to death and thousands of tons of hay. What little was saved was protected by fire break.

Mr. Swanson's nearest neighbors were E. Phearson who lived at a distance of 10 miles.

The machinery used was the mower, rake, and hay stacker. The fuel used was lignite which was hauled from an outcropping twenty-eight miles distant. This was mined by the farmers themselves.

Mr. Swanson was married in 1910 to Miss Sadie Long at Minot, North Dakota. Their present residence is at Cooperstown, North Dakota.