

Biography of C. P. Bolkan. ✓

by Dorcas Bolkan

C. P. Bolkan, early settler and pioneer of Griggs county, was born in 1854 near Thronhjem, Norway. In 1866 he came with his parents to America where they settled in Rock county, Wisconsin, about 25 miles south of Madison.

For nine years they resided here, until Mr. Bolkan moved to Iowa, where his folks had gone a couple of years before. He stayed here five years, until 1880 when he came to North Dakota. Besides himself he had two companions, John Dahl and Ole ^{Harwick} Harwick. They travelled by railroad to Fargo and then took a steamboat up to Colton, a small town one and a half miles from the R. D. River. In those days, Colton, although only having a few families, was the county seat of Troil county. Troil county, then, included Griggs and Steele too.

As there were no branches off the main railroad running through Fargo to Bismarck the three men were forced to walk from Colton to the beyond valley, which was ^{their} their destination. This distance was about sixty miles.

The country was thinly settled all over and on this side of what is now Portland, there were practically no inhabitants. In one instance, the men passed the last settler's shanty about noon and were forced to sleep out on the prairie. It was the last part of April and the ground was wet and slushy for there had just been a fierce snow storm. Besides, they had no

blankets or overcoats so altogether they spent a very disagreeable night. The next morning they set out on foot again and reached the hills of the Shyenne valley at about the place where the Arneson home east of F. Riley now is. However, they did not believe that they had reached the Shyenne River, for they had been told that the country was very hilly and also that the timber was very thick. They soon met two men, though, and they were informed that they had reached their destination and that they were only one mile and a half from Mr. Ephim's claim, he being the first settler in the Shyenne valley.

The next thing these men did was to take out claims. Of course, the land was not surveyed so the only way by which they could have the land was to stay and live on it. All three of the men decided to stay and Mr. Balkan took out his claim on section 34 in Washburn Township or on the place where Chester Piatt now has his farm. In 1881 the land was surveyed and the claims officially recorded so after a couple of years the land was probed and Mr. Balkan went out working during the summer and fall months. As there was very little work to be obtained around here he went to farms around Valley City and Casselton.

In 1884 Mr. Bolkan was married to Pauline Spilde, one of the first schoolteachers around here. They have had nine sons, all of whom are living except one. They are: Rudolph, Freeman, Edwin, George, Alfred, Albert, Carl, & Peter.

The Bolkan family lived in several places before moving into the city of Coupers-town where they still reside. They came in here in 1907.

Mr. and Mrs. Bolkan had five sons in the service during the World War. George, Edwin and Alfred were overseas and Carl and Albert in training here in the United States.

At the present time Mr. Bolkan is 74 years of age.

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World History.