

PIONEER BIOGRAPHY  
Ole Alfson

by Signa Boyer

- The parents of Mr. Ole Alfson were Mr. Alf Thorson and Ingeborg Jerome. The pioneers name is Mr. Ole Alfson. Mr. Ole Alfson was born in Telamarken, Norway, near the town Skjien. He was born May 5, 1850. He came to the United States to become a citizen. He came to Dakota County, Minnesota and farmed for a few years. He learned of the land in North Dakota which could be taken up as homestead and decided to come to North Dakota so that he might become a landowner. He loaded his four horses, 8 cattle and burniture and got all ready to ship it on the train. His was the first immigrant carload to come on train as far as Mayville. The railroad went only as far as two miles from Mayville. Mrs. Ole Alfson was the first woman to come on the train with her three children to North Dakota. He took his load on two wagons and started on his journey of about 50 miles. It took two days to reach the land on which he took his preemption near Sheyenne River. He filed his preemption March 1881 and proved it May 22, 1882 at Valley City.
- He got two men to help him cut wood for the house and barn. It was built from the logs. The outside was plastered with mud. The roof was made of brush and hay filled in with dirt. There were two half windows and a door in the house.
- His near neighbors were Ralph Johnson, Ole Groff, and Elef Oleson. His preemption was in township 148, range 59.
- In April 1882 a flood came so they had to move out of their home. The water was as high as 3 feet in the house. They put the flour on top of the table, they hung the sacks of potatoes in the ceiling and put the sewing machine on chairs. There was a neighbor that moved on top of the house and lived for a few days till he got help to move. The cattle swam across and the calves were taken in the wagon boxes made from logs which were used as boats. They had to move to the neighbors that were safe from the flood and live for 3 weeks. There were as many as 3 families living in one small log house, 15 people in all. On June 3, 1882 he took up his homestead and July 5 he moved on the homestead about 5 miles from his preemption in Pilot Mound. He was the first one to take land so far from the rivers. He had no neighbors until the next summer. He moved the log house he had built to the homestead.
- The nearest town they first had to get their provisions from was Mayville which was about 50 miles. It would take them about 3 days in the winter to make the trip. They would stay at the farmhouses along the way at night. In the summer time they would camp by their wagons.
- The early farm machinery he used was the Deering binder, which used wire instead of twine, McCormick mower, Monitor broadcasting seeder, walking plow, and breaking plow. They used horses on this machinery. The early crops raised were wheat and oats. The fuel used in those days was wood which they got from the trees by the river. They would have to chop the wood they used for fuel. The storms in those days were bad and would last several days. Many times when people were out in those storms and would get lost they would unharness the horses and tie them to the rig. The people would cover up in the clothes and stay until they could find their way.
- Mr. Ole Alfson came to N. Dak. the last of October 1881. He was married to Kari Osmundson, February 8, 1873, Dakota County, Minnesota Farmington. The descendants of Mr. Alfson are Mrs. Lewis Berg, Cooperstown, N. Dak., Mr. Albert Alfson, Binford, N. Dak., Mr. Henry Alfson, Binford, N. Dak., Mr. Alfred Alfson, White Tail, Mont., Mrs. George Olstad, Binford, N. Dak. Ole Alfson lives at Binford, N. Dak.



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Ole Alfson (continued)

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--Signa Boyer